CHAPTER-VII
RECENT EXCAVATION OF SANNATI

7.0 Introduction

Sannati situated at Lat. 16.49 N Long 76,54’ E is in Chitapur Taluk of Gulbarga District and is one of the most important ancient sites of Buddhist art and architecture. Today’s Sannati is a small village, situated on the bank of the river Bhima, a tributary of the river Krishna. To reach this interesting site, one has to travel by Bus from Gulbarga which is about 90 km, from Sannati, or from Yadagira another Taluka head quarters of the same district. Sannati is also approachable by train from Gulbarga or from Bangalore upto Nalwar one has to travel by means of Road transportation.

The importance of this site, is relation to Buddhism, was for the first time noticed by the late Kapatral Krishna Rao¹ in the year 1954. Until then Sannati was otherwise famous for its Shaktaic association and indeed still today it is a famous centre of Pilgrimage to the temple dedicated to the Goddess Chandralamba, situated on the left bank of the river Bhima at about 2 kms away from the village Sannati. Sannati, Chandralamba in the local legend, infers that Rama and Sita were born as the sage Narayana and Chandralamba. A king named Seturaja tried to molest Chandravadana and perished by her curse. It is interesting to note that the local estuary called Seturajanakatte is
named after the same who is said to have drowned in the river and died. However Seturajanakatte is properly identified by K.V.Ramesh\(^2\) as Satavahanakote i.e., the fort of the Satavahanas.

### 7.1 Explorations

A systematic survey of this site was carried out by M.Seshadri\(^3\) S.M.Rahman and S.Nagaraju,\(^4\) respectively in 1964-65 and 1966 and the scholars belonged to the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums of the then Mysore state. The survey resulted in the publication of articles, focusing on the importance of the Sannati sculptures and epigraphs. The inscriptions, which serve as the label inscription. These help in fixing the chronology of the site from 1st Cent. A.D. to 3rd Cent. A.D. Since then, P.B. Desai\(^5\) of Karnataka University studied this site and recorded it as the biggest Buddhist site in Karnataka.

Sannati today, receives many archaeologists for its rich archaeological remains. The surrounding areas of the site abound with cultural remains from palaeolithic period to the early historical period. Therefore the rich cultural relics of this region including Sannati attract the researchers and archaeologists.

The history of Sannati can be traced from the pre-historic period. During the course of explorations carried out on the bank of the river Bhima.\(^6\) a good number of
Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Microlithic tools have been discovered. Which clearly indicate that it was one of the important prehistoric settlements in Karnataka.

The explorations carried out by the Department of Archaeology and Museums in Karnataka and Archaeological Survey of India have yielded a good number of inscriptions, terracotta figurines and other archeological remains. In recent years the place has gained prominence due to the pending threat of submergence of the area under the Bhima Barrage project. It was therefore decided to take-up the exploration and the excavation at Sannati. The systematic exploration in recent years, were carried out by C.S. Patil of the Department. He collected a number of antiquities, especially of the palaeolithic period. He also researched into a number of temples on the bank of the river Bhima such as at Sirival, Kolluru and Anabi. The temples in these villages belong to the Rashtrakuta and Kalyani Chalukya period. These evidences confirm the continuous activity in this area even after Satavahanas. Cultural remains from palaeolithic period can be noticed, in this region.

### 7.2 Site

Geographically, Sannati site is spread out over a large area of about 5 kms, from the east of Ranamandala site, to Kanaganahalli. In the same vicinity is situated a great stupa, whose foundation has now remained. On the other side of the river Bhima are the villages, Harasgundgi and
Sirival. The former is known for a few Buddhist mounds and the latter for its temples of Rashtrakuta period. There are some more stupa mounds which are today, merely mounds and in some, only foundations can be traced. Ranamandla, is very close to the modern village of Sannati. The Ranamandala has a large fortification wall measuring in meters. The outer wall runs along the bank of the river Bhima and the inner at the outskirts of the present village. It clearly indicates that the site was previously enclosed by a good fortification wall which may be identified as Satavahana kote. To substantiate this view of the Satavahana association, the epigraphs found in this site mention the names of the Satavahana kings. To discover the cultural heritage of Sannati, the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums conducted excavations in Ranamandala area for the two seasons of 1993-95. The results of the excavations are presented in brief in the following pages. Prior to this discussion it is necessary note the earlier excavations in the site conducted by A.Sundra in 1986.

7.3 Earlier Excavations

The Directorate of Archeology and Museums in Karnataka conducted a small excavation in Ranamandala area in 1986, under the guidance of A.Sundara the then Director of this Directorate. This excavation revealed a rectangular brick structure. This structure of a peculiar type, consists of small rooms, fully constructed with the typical Satavahana bricks. A number of antiquities, datable
to the Satavahana period were collected from the surface level as well as in the course of the excavation. Apart from this, A.S.I in collaboration with James Howell, a Research Fellow, of the Society for South Asian Studies, jointly excavated a huge mound near Sannati, on the main road from Sannati to Nalwar. The result of his excavation were published in 1989.\(^9\) From all these studies and excavations, the most important finding is the discovery of a slab edict of Emperor Ashoka. This slab was discovered by J.Varaprasada Rao.\(^{10}\) The study of these inscription give a clear picture of early activities at Sannati.

The antiquities collected prior to the present excavation are largely from the surface level. They are; terracotta figurines and sculptural slabs, found near the so called great stupa on the river bank, near Kanaganahalli. The sculptures are presently housed in Gulbarga Museum. The sculptures strongly establish the flourishing state of Hinayana Buddhism in Sannati, and hence, the same can be compared to the early Buddhist art of Amaravati and Nagarajunakonda. It should be noted that the major part of Karnataka came under the influence of Buddhism right from the Asokan period. It is also said that, the Buddhist monks Thara Mahadeva and Thera Rakkhita were sent to Vanavasa and Mahishmandala to propagate the religion. These are identified as Banavasi and Mysore regions. Besides these, the prevalence of Asokan rock edicts at Maski, Koppal, Siddapura, Udegolam, Brahmagiri and
Jatingarameswara clearly establish the expansion of Buddhism during the reign of Asoka. It may be surmised that in all probability the cultural activity began at Sannati, during the Asokan period.

Another important fact is that Sannati is physically close Andhra sites and also to the Ter (ancient Tagara) in Maharashtra. These sites were possibly closely connected to Sannati, during those days and might have been one of the centres of equal importance. In view of all these reasons, the present excavation was planned to explore further material evidence. The present excavation yielded antiquities of great importance.

7.4 Description of the Structure

The rectangular brick structure faces cast and is provided with two entrances; one on the southwest and another on the cast with a flight of step. The building is 9.60 m. long, 9.90 m. broad and 3.95 m. height from the bottom to the top of the maximum extant portion. The roof is now completely collapsed only the base of the structure is intact.

The roof tiles in large quantities were found fallen inside. The rooms and front portion are considerably damaged. The structure raised on the massive platform consists of a central corridor 70 cm. wide with a series of small squarish rooms on either side. Measuring 1.50 m. to
2.40 m. the rooms are connected by inner openings in the partitions. The front walls facing the river have entrances to the rooms and are 60 m. wide and one to the corridor. The floor of the rooms is slightly higher than the corridor, excellent and strong, made of river sand and lime mortar on river pebble bedding. Both the platform and the building is constructed in what is generally described as the English bond method. However on the floor of the central corridor forming the top course of the platform and the bricks are laid obliquely at an angle of 45° to the wall of the rooms, probably to increase the stability of the structure and to give the effect of an attractive simple floor design. The exterior wall of the building on three sides is unusually and enormously thick (1.50-2.70m) The bricks are mainly of two sizes 55x27x8 cms, and 30x19x6 cm. The walls the rooms are also lime plastered.

7.5 The Present Excavation 1993-95

Sannati is a fortified area roughly more than 200 hectares. As noted earlier, it is enclosed within a brick fortification wall approximately 4 m. wide and 2.3 m. height. The fort on the bank of the river, locally known as Ranamandala (war field) is a citadel. With a view to understanding the potentialities of the citadel, an excavation was on the early phase of habitation of circa 2-3 century B.C. was undertaken.
7.6 Description of Trenches

For the present excavation, the Ranamandala area was selected. This is in view of extending the previous excavation (1986), in which the above discussed structure was found.

Beside the above discussed structure, actual excavation of this season began in horizontal pattern, having 20x20 mt. trenches, area extending from previously marked C1, C2, to D1, D2 and continued up to J1 and J2. These trenches traced the pavement beginning from the original structure and diagonally moving into the trench D2 and abruptly ending at a corner of the same trench. Further on, was traced a foundation like-stone pavement, moving, diagonally towards the F1, F2 trenches. A good number of potsherds and potteries and brick remains were noticed during the course of the excavation. To the north of the structure, in trenches I-1, and I-2, were found two brick structures in circular form. These structures measure 1.15 meter in diameter and 1.50 in height. The bricks of these structures measured 28x22x27 cm. The shape and quality of the bricks used for these structure possibly indicate that these might have served as granaries or some ‘well’ like thing. It is interesting to note that similar structures were discovered in and J2. This resembles the foundation like structure. In J2, adjacent to this is found a chullah (oven) which was also unearthed. Besides these, a number of antiquities have been collected during the course of the excavation. These are of different varieties; terracotta
figurines, toy carts; household objects like grinder, and grinding stones; religious antiquities, like miniature stupa made out of ivory, Lajjagauri figurines; Jewellery like, a number of places of ear rings and bangles. During the process was uncovered a number of punchmarked copper and led coins, dated to the Satavahana period. The total excavated area gives a clear picture of the continuation of the structural remains from the rectangular brick structure.

Pavement: A Pavement runs east-west from the structure. It is 2.50 mt. wide packed with lime and pebbles and covered with flat-stones. It seems to have served as one of the major paths in the Ranamandala to the structure.

Further on, in trenches F1-F2 and G1-G2 were found traces of the pavement, apparently a continuation of the earlier, this pavement being of flat stone construction of varying sizes, runs north-south.

In trenches H1-H2, were several postsherds and stone labs. The former being remnants of the then existing pottery and the latter being the flatstones, now disturbed, which then formed a part of the pavement.

In trenches J1-J2 and K1-K2 is a row of stones ‘L’ shaped, probably a part of the extended pavement, or a structure, now indeterminate, whose identity needs to be established from the remnants of potsherds and stone slabs.
found around this area. A large earthen pot in K2 and a chullah in another quadrant of K2, may indicate a habitable structure in this part of the excavation.

7.7 Stratigraphy

In the excavation at Sannati, different stratigraphical cultural layers are marked out. The cultural deposits are divided into four layers. They clearly mark the cultural remains, as of early historic period in their sequence of the deposits of earth. This sequence indicates that the remains found belong to a period approximately 400 years, between 1st Century B.C. at the lowest layer and 3/4 Century A.D. at the topmost layer.

The stratigraphy of trench E1, E2 (facing north) exposed in the excavation at Ranamandala, Sannati, is under discussion.

Layer I: The top most layer consists of reddish brown earth.

Layer II: Is reddish brown with ashy like streaks. Lime stone chips bedding has been noticed. A post hole with remains of wooden poles and clay flooring is noticed in the same layer.

Layer III: Is similar to layer II.
Layer IV: Is ashy with black soil. It is loose without brick bats. The natural soil lies just below the layer IV.

From the above marking of the layers and notices, it may be surmised that the inhabitants of Layer IV might have used clay flooring and wooden superstructures. It was only some time later people began to construct the building in bricks as evidenced by the layers II and III, and continued till the end of surface level at Ranamandala.

7.8 Antiquities found in Excavation

The excavation has yielded a good number of important antiquities. They have been noticed from all the layers which we have mentioned in the stratigraphy. The last layer i.e., lower most layer may be associated with the pre-Shatavahana period, as such, we have a few pieces of the Northern black polished pottery, a sand stone with Mauryan polish and a disc-stone (Medallion) object recovered from the lower most surface. The stone and terracotta figurines, an ivory stupa in miniature form, and punchmarked copper and lead coins, roulette ware, red polished wares and inscribed potteries were found in the other layers. Beads of different varieties were also collected from all the layers.

7.9 Pottery

The pottery found in the excavation mainly belongs to the early historical period and is significant for its fabric.
During the course of the excavation, many types of pottery, datable from 3rd Century B.C, to 4th Century A.D. have been noticed. Among the potteries recorded in excavation, a very few of them are worth mentioning because of their unique qualities and shapes. The Northern Black polished pottery knows as NBP, an imported quality of fine red ware, rouletted ware russete-coated-white painted pottery and decorated potteries, such as etched and pinched decorations sometimes both the decorations appear on single pot. The other important local variety red-ware, in which we have many shapes, such as cups, bowls, vases, conical vases, globular-round bottomed pots and many other large sized pots. These pots appear in fragments. There are large, thick jars of bright red-ware with heavy beaded rim, vases with externally beaded or thickened shoulders having an undercut or collared rim and a globular body, cups with flat bottom, flaring and fluted sides and featureless edge of coarse red ware, bowls with found bottom, vertical sides and featureless edge of red ware; shallow dishes with flat bottom, slightly convex sides and flattened edge. The red ware vases, are of externally beaded or pinched design or thickened surface under cut. There are also potteries with covered rim and globular body of bright red-ware.

Shallow dishes with flat bottom slightly convex sides and flattened edge in red ware are commonly found. The types and fabrics are comparable with the pottery of the
early historic period found in Maski, Chandravalli and Brahmagiri in Karnataka, and Nagarjunakonda, Veerapuram, Vaddamanu etc. in Andhra Pradesh. The discovery of the Northern Black polished ware in this site is an important finding. Roulette wares, Russet-coated-white painted shards, Red polished wares, fine of Roman wares and celadon wares are also equally noteworthy in the discoveries from the excavation. The Roman pottery typologies made it clear that, Sannati, besides its Buddhist association, possibly was an active trade centre or an important centre on an ancient trade route.

a) **Northern Black Polished Ware (NBP)**

The excavation has yielded some important findings of pottery. The northern black polish potsherds has been traced for the first time in Karnataka and its occurrence is a great event in the early history of Karnataka. The NBP found at Sannati from the lower most layer (layer-IV) is comparable to the Northern Black Polished ware pot shards of Amaravati, Vaddamanu etc. of Andhra Pradesh.

The NBP ware is of fine quality with a smooth and highly lustrous surface. The color of core ranges from dull grey of ash-grey. The normal thickness of the fabric ranges from 2.2 mm to 5 mm. This thickness is confined to the rims and occasionally at the shoulder. The deep bowls show thin convex sides and featureless rimes, vertically cut on the
exterior and slightly flared rims. It is interesting to note that one of the pot-shards has a copper bindings.

b) **Fine Red-ware shard**

During the course of the excavation at the site, only one shard of fine red-ware was found. This particular pottery has fine core and has the shape of a globular bowl. It has outwardly turned flaring neck and has thin band decoration on the portion of the body. It appears to be an important ariety.\(^\text{14}\)

c) **Rouletted-ware**

Layer-I was yielded a few potsherds of rouletted wares of fine variety and it resembles the types found at Amaravati, Veerapuram, Salihundam, Vaddamanu, Arikamedu etc. The rouletted-ware occurs in black shards of fine fabric with the section made out of well lavigated clay. The high workmanship of the design is finely executed on the interior base of the disc which also sounds metal-like.

d) **Russette-coated-white painted ware**

Two shards of the Russette-coated white painted ware have been unearthed in the excavations. Though the fabric is the same, in the painted designs both are different. In the first variety the painting lines are more closer and create the diamond shaped design. Excepting the top portion, the other portion has clear diamond shapes.
In the second variety, the diamond design is conspicuous on the lower part, whereas the upper portion has the painted lines.

e) Red Polished Ware (RPW)

The Red polished ware is made of well levigated clay and uniformly burnt to brick red colour and its surface smooth and shining. This kind of finish is noticed in sprinklers, spouted ware and disc-based bowls and this example may be one of that kind.

f) Inscribed Potter

The excavation at Sannati has yielded a good number of inscribed potsherds. They are fragmentary in nature with incomplete inscriptions. These are burnished red wares found in various shapes i.e., vases, dishes, bowl etc., having Brahmi inscriptions reading “Ma” “Kamsa”. Paleographically the letters are similar to those found in pre and early Satavahana period.

g) Decorated Pottery

In the above mentioned variety we have eight different types of decoration, where as the fabric is the same. This variety can be dated to the early historical period. In this period, incised and pinched decorations were commonly found in the other sites such as, Chandravalli, Brahmagiri etc.
The first variety has only the pinched i.e., finger impressed decoration on the body, which is slightly projected from the surface. The second variety has two outwardly projected "V" shaped band at an equal distance from the centre of the pinched finger decoration. The centre decoration resembles the first variety and has oval shape.

The third variety of this class because of the technique of the decoration used, i.e. in this case, both the pinching and entire decoration used on the surface, the lower portion has the pinched decoration and also connected by an angled decoration. The upper portion has incised lines and leaf-like decoration.

The fourth variety has three bands of decoration prominently appearing on the body. The lower most portion has the leaf design, the middle zone is decorated with oval shaped designs connected to a groove, at an equal distance like a beaded necklace. The upper portion has "V" shaped design.

The fifth variety is more or less similar to the earlier in decoration, but it has more number of grooves.

The sixth variety has simple decoration loaded by parallel lines in the form of squares. The seventh variety is having only the parallel lines on the top and a zig-zag
decoration in the centre. The last variety – i.e. eight has only one band of decoration with curvilinear lines.

The designs created on the above discussed potteries is obviously achieved by pottery decorated tools. They are mainly made out of the hard material like wood and metal and help in getting impression on the pots.

h) Miniature Red Wares

The miniature red-ware variety consists of mainly cups, bowls, followed by globular round bottomed pots, vases and conical vases. Especially, the shapes of a few cups-bowls and vases are noteworthy for their varieties.

(i) Cups

The illustrated cups can further be classified into two sub varieties i.e. cups with a flat based shallow cups with wide opened mouths. Only one cup is unique in its shape and resembles the shape of a Wine-cup. The deep cups have a flat bottom with outwardly turned body without decoration. A few cup have straight sloppy bodies, while some of them have slightly curvilinear bodies. The shallow cups apparently have the thick bottoms rather than the earlier ones.

(ii) Bowls

The bowls are of shallow, deep and decorated varieties. The shallow and deep bowls found with minor variation in
the shape of their bottoms. Some of the examples have the flat and projected bottoms, while the others are of insignificant flat bottomed-ones. Almost all the bowls have the featureless similar edges.

Of the bowls, two specimens have the round bottoms and shallow shape. One of these has thick core.

The decorated bowls are interesting for their shapes. One of the bowls has outwardly projected body and narrow and flat bottom, while the mouth is slightly bigger than the bottom and has the feature less edge.

The second variety of this has round ad curvilinear body, and the other features are similar to the above.

(iii) Conical Vase

Two specimens of this variety were noticed during the excavation. One of these is very much similar to the Megalithic conical wares. This pot has a thin hole in the bottom. The second one is slightly different in the shape. The bottom is round pointed projection and the rim also as projected edge and lop is turned inside.

(iv) Miniature pots/vases

There may be classified into a few varieties. The first variety in this section has globular body with round bottom slightly carinated rim, and another pot has slightly flaring
rim. the second variety has a bulbed belly, flat bottom and elongated jar like neck with featureless edge.

The third variety has the thick rim and has carination on the neck. There are grooves on the body and this pot is flat bottomed.

The vases are represented with round body and raised neck, the other vase is also of similar type and has shallow body and shrinkened globular shape.

(v) Cup-like Terracotta decorated object

The object under discussion was found during the excavation. It is in the shape of a flat-bottomed cup and has a small hole in the centre of the flat surface. The body is decorated with miniature type symbols like man, lion, fish, disc, bird, "Swastika" and other symbols. Though the purpose of making these symbols is not immediately clear, it may be inferred that these are purely auspicious symbols and repeat on the body of the cup. The purpose of having a small hole in the centre reminds a similar object with human and animal forms found in Vadagaon-Madhavapur. This may be one of the ritual objects or may be a decorated piece.

7.10 Sculptures

The sculptures of Sannati are known for their rich style and theme. The sculptures now housed in the Govt.
Museums at Gulbarga and Banlagore, collected during the exploration of the site about three decades back include stone slab-reliefs and terracotta figurines. Of these, the stone slabs might have possibly embellished the stupas, the vicinity while the terracotta figurines belonged to a separate group.

a) Stone Sculptures

The excavation at Sannati has yielded a good number of lime stone sculptural pieces displaying the earliest art of Karnataka. The sculptures of Sannati are comparable in style with the early sculptures of Goli, Bhattiprolu, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in Andhra-Pradesh. Four broken sculptures resembling human figures are found during this excavation. They include a female figure incomplete and rough, a male head, lajjagauri and the lower part of a seated male figure, identified as Kubera. Four architectural fragments found in the excavation, a bull-capital with a square pedestal and fluted abacus over an inverted lotus seem to be a part of a larger sculpture; the second; a composite animal of a seated lion with a peacock, probably a piece of railing; the third a corner stone engraved on two sides with incised lines depicting female figures, and the last a small fragment depicting a portion of the louts. These sculptures undoubtedly exhibit the features similar to those already found on surface collection and now preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Gulbarga.
The sculptures of Sannati preserved in Gulbarga and Bangalore Museums are predominantly carved in high relief. There are also stary instances of the sculptures in round; such as a dwarf Yaksha. The theme of these sculptures in a noteworthy aspect of their representation. There are the symbolic representations of the Buddha. The Nagamucchalinda, Vijrasana with foot prints and head dress etc. The other category of the sculptural theme is mother and child, which is evidently the figure of Hariti, who forms a part of the Buddhist legend. The sculptures of donor couples, memorial stones and Ayaka pillars are other groups. Also found are some sculptures, probably connected with the depiction of Buddhist Jataka tales.

The sculptures have stylistic affinities with those of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. The figures in the relief sculptures are meaningfully composed. They are show in different gestures. In the mother and child sculptures, the mother is shown as seated on a chair-like pedestal and the child is depicted on her lap as playing with her or some times sleeping. The female figures are always shown as beautiful and voluptuous. They are decorated with fine hairdos, heavy anklets and armlets. The male figures are also decorated with similar jewellary. They are always depicted along with their female counter parts. Besides these, bullock carts, and horse are also depicted. The sculpture of a horse being led out by a person may be indentified as the Buddha leaving the palace or
Parinishkarmana. The sculptures of Sannati in general belong to a similar mode of development as is seen in the Andhra context.

b) Terracotta figurines

Among the recent collection, an interesting one is the terracotta Lajja-gauri. The small tablet has the depiction of the nude goddess. The legs are kept apart and widened. The body is depicted in the Pumaghata (Kumbha) form, which is undoubtedly the symbol of fertility. The image of Lajjagauri in stone has similar features as the terracotta one.

Of the Sannati sculpture, the terracotta sculptural art is also equally important like the stone slab sculptures. Terracotta figurines have varied themes such as Yakshas, female-heads, male-heads. Lajjagauri, Mahisa-mardhini, horse, ram, elephant and other animals as well as utilitarian household objects. These are made of red clay and kaolin.

The technique of preparing these terracotta figurines is quite enticing. They are usually made from two moulds. Individual moulds are prepared at first and clay is pressed on the individual moulds and lifted out carefully. Then the two impressions are joined back to back. After drying the figurines are burnt in a kiln.
The most important example among these figurines is Mahishsuramardini. A small plaque of this figurine is found while the major portion of the body and head are lost. The lower portion of the Devi is shown standing on the Mahisha. Only the head of Mahisha is visible. A dwarf, depicted next to the figurine is seen to hold the cloth of Devi.

The portraits of males and females are depicted with great care and they have almost similar feature. The thick round lips, wide open eyes and broad nose are the common features in both male and female. The females have designed hair decoration with a diadem over the fore-head, whereas the male figures are decorated with conical wiglike caps which are divided in parts and have the beads on either side of the caps. The Yaksha types are shown as if they are in a riding position, as their legs are half bent and the hand bent and raised up. The thick locket like necklaces and yagnopavita are conspicuous in the figures as forms of decoration.

The animal figurines are also given equal attention in their fine finish. They are shown with a high degree of exquisite details on the surfaces. Composite animal figurines are found in Sannati. The horse, elephants, birds and toy objects equally receive great attention in their workmanship. Further, detailed studies on these will definitely throw a fresh light in reconstructing the sequence of the early art at Sannati.
7.11 Ivory Stupa

From the ivory pieces unearthed in the excavations the observations are: a fragment of chatra; a finial of stupa and a circular vedibanda ‘of stupa’ which form a part of the votive offerings to the Buddhist shrine in the region, probably by an ascetic monk or a tradesman’s offering. The hemispheric dome (anda) is untraceable.

7.12 Coins

The excavation at Sannati has yielded a good number of punch-marked led and copper coins. They belong to the Satavahana dynasty. During 1993-95 season, 20 pieces of coins have been collected from all the layers. Among them a few are intact while the others are corroded.

7.13 Medallion and Roman Clay Pendant

a) Medallion/Disc stone

Among the antiquities found in the excavation the disc-stone and the Roman clay pendent are noteworthy objects. The circular Medallion (i.e. disc-stone) of dia 5 cms, and thickness 1 cm. has exquisite bas-relief carvings on the side. The other side is flat and smooth. The upper face of the disc stone is divided into three parts, separated by the depiction of plam tress and palm-date trees. In between these are carved three standing nude goddesses on either sides by horse, lion, elephant, deer, stag and ram. At the feet of the goddess on either side and swans, peacocks and symbols Yakshi Similar Medallions have been found at
ancient cities of Nanda-Mauryan region in North India viz. Vaishali, Rajagriha, Sankisa and Kaushambi. These are datable to the pre-Satavahana period.\textsuperscript{15} It is noteworthy that the Medallion from Sannati is the first of its kind in South India and probably carry the same connotation as the others found in North India.

b) Roman clay Pendant

Another important antiquity of the excavation is the Roman Pendant of clay. It is 2 cm in diameter with a bust of Tiberius on the obverse. The reverse depicts livia in a dotted circle. At the top is a loop. This pendant is datable to circa 1-2 century A.D.

7.14 Beads and Jewellery

Beads of different varieties were also collected from all layers. These beads are of black, red, green, jasper, carnelian Lapislazuli and terracotta. The shapes of beads found in this excavation are mostly spherical cylindrical, barrel bicone, lenticular, collared lenticular and tablet type. The spherical spear-shaped and amalaka re the main types in terracotta. It is important to note that these were also commonly found at Maski, T.Narasipura, Chandravalli and Brahmagiri in Karnataka and Kondapur, Nagarjunakonda, Veerapuram, Vaddamanu etc., in Andhra Pradesh. Ivory shell bangles, Khol-stick, hair pins, crystal objects and metal objects viz. copper rings and iron knives and cups were found during the excavation. Besides the above
mentioned beads, a unique variety of bead having the shape of a bird in orange carnelian is noteworthy. It has the tread-hole drilled diagonally at the neck and chest. The details of the features and foot are conspicuous by their linear inscribed lines.

The Sannati excavations of 1993-95 have yielded antiquities that indicate the importance of this site in the 1st -2nd Centuries A.D.

The NBP discovered in this site is the first of its kind in Karnataka of this period and its importance in the early history of Karnataka need to be investigated in greater detail, so as to establish the existence of this place in the contemporary history if the region and beyond.

The disc stone of the Mother goddess and her role in the cult of birth-rebirth of the environment with the associated practices in agriculture and animal husbandry is a noteworthy feature and recalls the Mauryan influence as evidenced in the important centres of Mauryan culture as in Vaishali, Rajagriha, Kumarhara, Sankisa and Koshambi centres.

The Roman clay pendant, rouletted wares and the fine-ware of Roman pottery suggest active trade contacts with the Roman Empire. Sannati on the banks of the River
Bhima may have been in the earliest period on a trade route in the Deccan.

The sculpture of Kubera is likely to be the earliest of its kind in Karnataka indicating Buddhist influences in the region in the 1st-2nd A.D. Kubera the lord of the Yakshas represented as seated on a cushioned seat, with the leather bag suspended to the left him, straddled from the abundant waist carved in a gracious manner is prominent deity in the Buddhist hierarchy and his worship acknowledges a permanent settlement of Buddhists in the region. Kubera? Yaksha, the God of Wealth in Buddhist legend is here indentified (though the upper portion of the sculpture is lost), from hi sposutre and the leather purse at his hip.

The Sannati excavations of 1993-95 and its findings indicate a settlement of the 1st-2nd C.A.D. The excavations reveal a probable settlement of Buddhist affiliation and the stupas in the vicinity and their embellishments suggest the existence of a sizable number of merchants and tradesmen in the region.

The slab edict of Asoka and the instances of the epigraph mentioning the Satavahana regime suggests that the region was at one time a part of the two dynasties respectively. The donor-inscriptions on the sculptural slabs in the vicinity (now preserved in the Gulbarga Museum) suggest that the region was a civilian outpost not much
subjected to an armed garrison. The association of this site with Buddhism is supported by the numerous stupas present in this region and further excavations may confirm its position on the map of Buddhist India.

Further investigations, planned by the Directorate in the coming years, may reveal more evidence of the purpose of this site and its relationships – either religious or trade – with the corresponding sites in the larger region of the Deccan plateau and its place in the history of India.

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