

Art at Sannati - an early historic Buddhist settlement in North Karnataka, India

Hema Thakur

Ph.D Scholar

National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, India

Sannati (taluk Chittapura, district Gulbarga) is a Maurya-Satavahana settlement with some evidence for the megalithic age. Sannati, particularly Kanaganahalli and other adjacent sites such as Anegutti, Benagutti, Hasargundgi are well endowed with structural remains of Buddhist affiliation, particularly stupas. The Mahastupa at Kanaganahalli is richly embellished with sculptural representations many of which are stories from Jatakas, depictions of royalty including portrait of emperor Asoka, Dhamachakra depictions, stupa and worship of relics, monastic complexes, Nagas, Yakshis, wheel of life (Bhavachakra), noblemen, retinue, vehicles and mounts, common men and servants, etc. There are many standing and seated images of Buddha. The sculptural art is immensely useful for understanding contemporary society and prevailing religious beliefs and practices. It is important to bear in mind that there must have been wealthy sections that supported typical Buddhist art and other associated paraphernalia. Here, inscriptions provide useful information. Inscriptions palaeographically datable from 3rd BC to 2nd AD in Brahmi characters and Prakrit language have been found. At Kanaganahalli alone two hundred and seventy inscriptions have been reported. Many of these inscriptions are donative and provide information about the social background of the donors and places where they hailed from. The main

aim of the paper would be to understand the socio-political and economic context of the contemporary art.

Key Words - Art, Buddhism, Sannati