

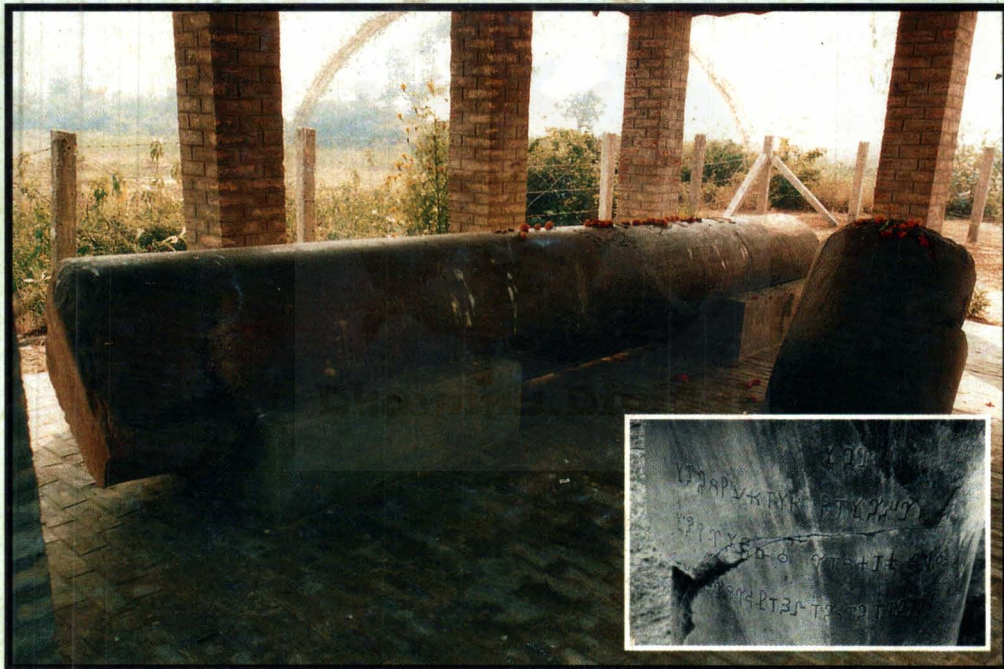
LUMBINI

BUDDHA JAYANTI

Year 8

NO. 8

Baishakh 2546th, 26th May 2002



The Asoka Pillar at Niglihawa

INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST SOCIETY

BUDDHA NAGAR, LUMBINI, NEPAL



Wishes on
Happy New Year 2059
&
2546th Buddha Jayanti

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NIGLIHAWA

(Historical and Archaeological Outline)

- Basanta Bidari,
Chief Archaeologist,
Sacred Garden, Lumbini

1. Location:

Presently, Niglihawa lies about 32 km. northwest of Lumbini by all weather roads, about 8 km. northeast of Taulihawa, District Headquarter of Kapilavastu district. It is within the Niglihawa Village Development Committee, ward no. 9. The easiest route to reach there is by the Taulihawa-Jitpur road through Bhawani Bhichchu Chowk, just 7 km. northeast by blacktopped road. Another route to reach this site is via. Sagrahawa, (the site where the Sakyas were massacred), and is about 1.5 km. east. It is 400m. north of Thumwa, a small village market near the site.

2. Importance of the site:

2a. Archaeological:

It is a very significant archaeological site in this region. Here is a large tank, which is commonly known as Nigli Sagar. Close to the tank, there lies two parts of a broken Asokan pillar. The lower part of the pillar is in a slanted position emerging from the ground. The upper part was lying in the bank of the tank, half merged in water. In 1996 Lumbini Development Trust protected this part and placed near the lower part. Both the pieces are given the shelter to protect from the weather.

2b. Religious:

This site is regarded as a very important religious place for the Buddhists and the research scholars of the whole world. It is believed that Kanakamuñi Buddha was born, enlightened, and met his father in this place. He was one of the earlier Buddhas before Sakya muni Buddha.

3. History of Kanakamuni Buddha:

According to G. P. Malalasekera, Konagamana (Kanakamuni) Buddha was "the twenty four Buddhas and the second Buddha to be born in the Bhadda kappa. He was born in the Subhagavati park in Sobhavati, the capital of king Sobha, his father being the Brahmin Yannadatta and his mother Uttara. He lived in the household for three thousand years, in three palaces, Tusita, Santusita and Santuttha; his chief wife was Rucigatta and their son was Sathavaha. Konagamana left the world on an elephant and practiced austerities only for six months, at the end of which time he was given milk-rice by the daughter of the Brahmin Aggisoma and grass for his seat by the Yavapalaka Tinduka. His bodhi was an *Udumbara* tree. His first sermon was preached in the Migadaya near Sudassana nagar, at the foot of a Maha-sala tree. He held only one assembly of his disciples, who numbered thirty thousand. His body was thirty cubits in height. He died in the Pabbatarama at the age of thirty thousand. His relics were scattered. His Chief disciples were Bhiyya and Uttara among monks and Samudda and Uttara among nuns, his constant attendant being Sotthiya. His Chief patrons were Ugga and Somadeva among laymen, and Sivala and Sama among laywomen, the Bodhisatva was a Khattiya named Pabbata of Mithila. He held an alms giving, heard the Buddha preach and joined the order. The banker Ugga built for the Buddha a Sangharama half a league in extent.

On the day of the Buddha's birth a shower of gold fell all over Jambudipa, hence he was called Kanakagamana, Konagamana being a corrupt form of that word.

According to the Ceylon Chronicles Konagamana visited their Island (then known as Varadipa), with thirty thousand disciples, accepted the Mahanoma garden at Vaddhamana, given by King Samiddha, and preached the doctrine. At the conclusion of his sermon, thirty thousand people realized the truth. At the Buddha's wish, the nun Kantaka nanada (Kanaka Dutta) brought to Ceylon a branch of the Bodhi Tree. The Buddha also preached at the Ratanamala, the Sudassanamala and the Nagamalaka and gave the girdle for the people's worship. He left the Mahasumba and Kantakananda to look after the new converts.

In Konagamana's time, Mount Vepulla was known as Vankaka, and the people living on the Mount were called Rohitassa, their term of life being thirty thousand years. Konagamana held the Uposatha once a year. In the Northern books Konagamana is called Kanakamuni, Konakamuni and Kanakaparvata (Malalasekera, 681-682:1983).

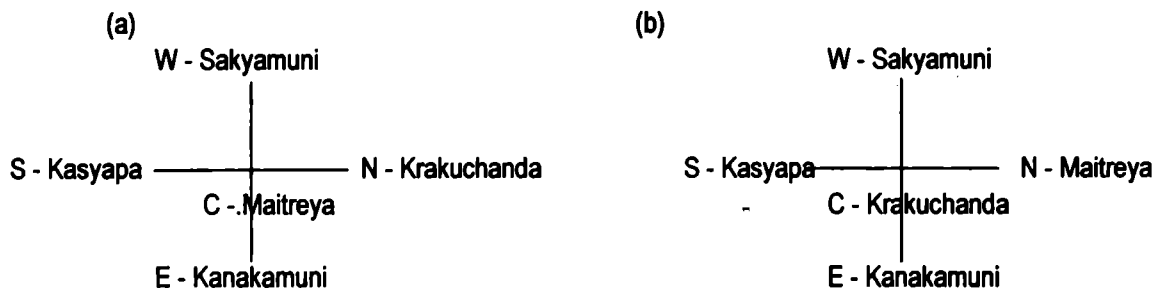
According to Ven. Rahula Sankrityayana and Ven. Jagadish Kasyap, Konagamana Buddha belonged to Kasyapa Gotra (name of the clan). He was born under the Gular or Dumri (*Ficus glomerata*) tree. Both Venerable accepted the existence of Kanakamuni Buddha based on the Deegha Nikaya's Mahapaduma Sutra (Sankrityayana and Kasyapa, 96-97:1979).

4. Existence of Kanakamuni Buddha:

Snodgrass has given details of the existence of human Buddhas. According to him "The human (manusi) Buddhas are the Buddhas of present aeon. According to both the Hinayana and Mahayana teaching Sakyamuni was not only the Buddha to appear in the present kalpa (aeon) but was preceded by the Buddha Krakuchanda, Kanakamuni and Kasyapa, thus forming a group of four Buddhas of the present era. The group is frequently enlarged to a quinary by the addition of Maitreya, the Buddha who is yet to come, and there are also frequent textual references and representations of seven, and occasionally eight Buddhas of the past. Each of these Buddhas, whether he belongs to a group of four, five or seven or eight, commemorates the beginning of the present era.

Each of the Manusi Buddha is associated with a direction of space. The correspondence is usually given as Krakuchanda at the centre, Kanakamuni to the east, Kasyapa to the south, Sakyamuni to the west, and the future Buddha Maitreya to the north. But on the stupa another schema of correspondence operates: Maitreya, who is distinguishable by his Bodhisattva garb, is connected at the centre and the first of the terrestrial Buddhas, Krakuchanda is moved to the north.

Places of the five manusi Buddhas at the stupa:



(Courtesy: Snodgrass, Fig.76)

(The five Manusi Buddhas and the directions of space (a) the usual correspondence of the five Manusi Buddhas and direction (b) the location of the five Manusi Buddhas in the stupa).

Arranged in this manner, the Manusi Buddhas appear on stupas in many parts of Asia. They are present among the sculptures at Sanchi. The celebrated Nanda temple in Myanmar enshrines statues of the four Manusi Buddhas in the four directions and the latter three tiered stupa temples of Myanmar often have a central Buddha image at the second story and the four Manusi Buddhas in chapels at the cardinal point of the story below. The Swedagon in Rangoon is said to contain relics of the Manusi Buddhas buried within the building in the four directions. The arrangement is found in Sri Lanka (notably in the Wata-da-ge) and in Nepal, where legend said that Asoka established the proto type for the form by building four stupas in the four directions to commemorate the four ages of the world. The formula recurs in Thailand, Laos and Kampuchea (Snodgrass, 131-134:1992).

Bhattacharya listed seven Tathagatas and opines that "The Hinayanists, even in their earlier stages, recognized twenty four bygone Buddhas, each having a peculiar Bodhi tree. The Mahayanists also give several lists, though not systematically and thirty-two different names have been recovered. The last seven Tathagatas are well known, and are designated by the Mahayanists as Manusi or Mortal Buddhas. These are Vipasvi, Sikhi, Viswobhu, Krakuchanda, Kanakamuni, Kasyapa and Sakyasimha. The historicity of these Buddhas is still uncertain excepting of course that of the last, but there are good grounds for thinking that Kanakamuni and Krakuchanda really were historical personages (Bhattacharya, 76: 1968).

5. Location of Kanakamuni's place:

Buddhist literary sources and Chinese travellers account point out the location of Kanakamuni's enlightened, and the place where he met his father. Kanakamuni Buddha was the Pratyeka Buddha (Pratyeka Buddha is the solitary sage of Indian life whose ideal was incompatible with that of the Bodhisattva, in that he "walked alone" and having attained his enlightenment, passed into Nirvana, in different to the woes of men (Humphreys, 152: 1976), and his nirvana place was a Tirtha (holy place). This shows that the cult of the previous Buddhas was prevalent in the 3rd century B.C. (Banerjee, 74:1980).

6. Naming of the place:

According to Dr. Fuhrer the pillar is known far and wide to the people of the Tarai under the name of Bhimsena-ki-nigali, or "Bhimsena's smoking pipe" (Fuhrer, 23: 1972).

Mukherjee states this in another ways and says Lori-ki-nigali or "smoking pipe of Lori" (Mukherjee, 30: 1969). Nigalo in Nepali is a kind of small bamboo, which is very easily available in the Tarai of Nepal and possibly Nigali derived from Nigalo. So the name of the place Nigli and Hawa, a local dialect for a small village or settlement or hamlet possibly known as Niglihawa. Some scholars suggest that Nigli in Sanskrit is for blue and the water of the tank is blue (Nigli) and the village near the tank is Hawa, thus the name of the place is known as Niglihawa.

7. Early Visitors:

7.1 Asoka

The conversion of Emperor Asoka after the massacre and bloodshed in the divesting battle of Kalinga (Present Orissa state in India) was a milestone in the history of Buddhism.

The patronage of a great and powerful emperor provided a strong stimulus propagation of Buddhism. Among many other things Emperor Asoka, exhibition of his intense devotion to the Buddhist faith, instituted *Dharma yatra* (state pilgrimage) to replace *Vihara yatra* (pleasure tour). Evidence of such pilgrimage can still be seen in the inscriptions on pillars in Lumbini and Niglihawa.

Asoka is credited with the construction of a large number of stupas enshrine relics of the Buddha or Buddhist saints all over Northern India; and with them were erected monasteries or viharas for the monks (Loughust, 17:1979).

His pious activities also led to the formation of schools of arts, their main concern being in propagating and popularizing the Buddhism through artwork. His noble examples were followed the rulers who succeed him. In fact, the history of Buddhism from the days of Asoka is intimately linked with that of Buddhist art.

According to the Northern Buddhist sources in the year 269 B.C. Asoka acceded the throne, on consolidating his sole authority over Maurya Empire. After fourteen years of consecration, he celebrated first five yearly festival (*Pancavarsika*) involving another pilgrimage. He ordered to repair and rebuilt the stupa in honor of the Buddha Konagamana making it double in original size (Guruge, 21-22:1997).

7.2 Inscription on Niglihawa Pillar:

In his Rock edict viii, Asoka states that ten years after his coronation, he visited Sambodhi i.e., the Bodhi tree at Bodh-gaya. He was already a Buddhist but not a jealous one for the first year, and after that period he espoused the cause of the faith in right earnest. Whether he joined the *Sangha* at Bodh-gaya, as asserted by some scholars, is however, not clear. In any case he undertook further pilgrimages. In the fourteenth year after his coronation, he enlarged the stupa enshrining the relics of the Buddha Kanakamuni to double its size. Six years later he visited the spot in person, offered

worship at the place and caused a stone pillar to be erected there. It was possibly the part of a larger pilgrimage that the king undertook in the twentieth year of his reign (Chattopaddhyaya, 130:1977).

7.3 The Text of the Inscription on the Nigllhawa Pillar:

The Inscription on the Niglihawa pillar in the Brahmi script and Pali language reads as follows, with the restored letters shown within parenthesis.

Devanam piyena piyadasina lajina- chodasavasa bhisitena

Budhasa Konakamanasa thube- dutiyam vadhite

visativa sabhisitena - cha atana- agacha- mahiyite

silathabe- cha usa papite (ii)

Dr. Fuhrer has translated this as follows:

King piyadasi, beloved of gods, having been anointed fourteen years, increased for the second time the stupa of Buddha Konakamana and having been anointed (twenty years) he came himself and worshipped (and) he caused (this stone pillar to be erected) (Fuhrer, 34; 1972).

V. Smith has interpreted the same as follows:

"His Majesty King Priyadarsina in the 14th year of his reign enlarged for the second time the stupa of the Buddha Kanakamuni and in the 20th year of his reign, having come in person, did reverence and set up a stone pillar " (Pradhan, 63; 1979).

E.J. Thomas offers the following translation:

"King Priyadarshi, after he had been consecrated King for fourteen years, increased the stupa of Buddha Kanakamuni to the double and having been consecrated twenty years came himself and worshipped (Pradhan, 63; 1979).

Konakamana was "increased" or enlarged for the second time in Asoka's fifteenth years, it would appear that the monument had been erected before the beginning of the King's reign, or before B.C. 259. Konakamana belongs to the long series of purely mythical predecessors of the historical founder of Buddhism. The mythology of Buddhism must not only have been developed, but the myths must have been fixed locally, before it could accure to the faithful to build stupas in honor of their heroes. It seems difficult to believe that all those stages of the development could have been accomplished in a short time" (Buhler, 5: 1998).

8. Chinese Travellers at Kanakamuni's Place:

About the seventh century A.D., when Europe was steel in the "Dark Ages ", India and china lived an intense political, intellectual, religious and artistic life. The common bond created between them by Buddhism generated a great current of humanism, which spread from Ceylon to Japan. After the thousand years of eventful development, Buddhist mysticism reached its apogee and Indian aesthetics and philosophy received fresh inspiration from it (Bapat 225: 1987)

The Chinese pilgrims visited the important holy places of Buddhism in India and Nepal from 4th century A.D. They traveled in order to obtain valuable books on Buddhism, to witness the proper Buddhist practices, to learn Sanskrit and to study Buddhist doctrines under learned Indian monk-teachers. There were many pilgrims of less reputed, who found their way to the land of the Buddha before or after Fa-hsien, Yuan Chwang and I-tsing. Liang-chi-chao states that about one hundred and sixty-nine pilgrims visited India from China during six hundred years i.e., between the third and eight centuries of the Christian era (Sen, 2: 1956).

The most reputed travelers were Fa-hsien and Yuan Chwang who visited Lumbini, Kapilavastu and Ramagrama in the 5th-7th century A.D.

8.1 Fa-hsien:

An eminent Buddhist monk of China, who along with his friend Tao-Ching and fellow student, Fa-hsien left Changan for India in 399 A.D. His main aim was to procure authentic text of Buddhist books on monastic discipline. He studied in India for some years and personally copied the Buddhist scriptures. In 403 A.D. (Pradhan, 43: 1995) he visited Kapilavastu, Lumbini and Ramagrama and then India. From India he went to Ceylon, where he studied Buddhism for two years. After traveling more than ten years and visiting more than thirty countries he went back to China by the sea route in 413 A.D. He collected manuscripts, images and paintings and carried these to China. His book *A Record of the Buddhist Countries* provides valuable reference materials for the study of ancient Kapilavastu, Lumbini and Ramagrama.

Fa-hsien gives a brief reference to the place of Kanakamuni Buddha. He mentions "Going north from this place (Napi-ka, for detail, read 'Lumbini' year 7; No.7, 2001, I.B.S., Lumbini) less than one yojana we arrived at a town where Kanakamuni Buddha was born, there are towers also erected here over similar places at the last"(Beal, xlix: 1983).

Fa-hsien places the old city of Krakuchanda, (called by him *Ku-Lu-Chin* Buddha) twelve yojanas (about 96 miles) to the south east of Sravasti, and he tells us the city had at his time topes and viharas (that is, commemorative). He gives the Name of this city as *Na-Pi-Ka* which perhaps for Nabhika the name of the town in the far north. Less than a yojana to the north of Krakuchanda Buddha's city, Fa-hsien relates, was the city of *Ku-na -han* (Kanakamuni, in the Pali texts Konagamana) Buddha, also with tops. This latter city was according to Fa-hsien less than a yojana to the west of Kapilavastu. There is thus as Cunningham has observed, a service difference between the pilgrims as to the situation of these two old cities. According to Yuan Chwang, as we have seen, Krakuchanda's city was 50 *li* to the south east of Kapilavastu, while Fa-hsien places Kanakamuni's city to the west and Krakuchanda's city to the southwest of Kapilavastu. Yet the two pilgrims are in tolerable agreement as to the distance and direction of Sravasti from Kapilavastu.

In the Buddhist books various names are given to the cities feigned to have been the homes or birthplaces of the two past Buddhas of this passage, but without any indication as to the localities in which the cities were situated. Thus Krakuchanda Buddha's city is called *Wu-wei* or fearless and *An-ho* or peaceful harmony and *Shu* (sometimes written Lun) - *ha-li-ti-na*) or Suhrudin, perhaps the original for *An-ho*.

The city of Kanakamuni is called *Chuang-yen* "adomed", a translation of Subhavati and *Ching-ching* or "purity" and *Cha-mo-yue-ti* or Kshamavati and *Ku-na* or *Kona*. The tope over the relics of Krakuchanda Buddha is represented as having been built by a king contemporarily with that Buddha and named Asoka, or in one book, Subha.

On the pillar recently discovered in the Nepalese Tarai, near Niglihawa, is an inscription in which King Asoka records that he had twice enlarged the tope of Kanakamuni and worshipped. This information is very interesting, but it does not tell us that the great events in Buddha's career, the tope commemorated. Yet some Indian Archaeologists do not hesitate to call it the Nirvana tope of Kanakamuni Buddha. Fa-hsien, who places the two old cities on the west side of the capital, does not mention the presence of Asoka pillars, and Yuan Chwang who places the two old cities the eastward of the capital, records the existence of the pillars. He represents the inscriptions on the pillars as giving particulars of the decease of the two Buddhas, but the inscription on the Niglihawa pillar does not give such particulars (Watters, 6-7: 1973).

8.2 Yuan Chwang:

After Fa-hsien, another important pilgrim from China visited this holy site. He is known as Hiuen Tsang, Huan Chwang or Yuan Chwang. He journeyed to India in the seventh century A.D. Hazra mentions "he wrote valuable accounts of India which are full of descriptions giving interesting glimpses of Buddhism in the seventh century A.D.

For a study of the history of Buddhism and for the reconstruction of some of the lost chapters of the religious history of ancient India, his record deserves special attention and should be of great value" (Hazra, x: 1983).

B.L. Pradhan has given a short description of the work and achievements of this monk as follows:

"Hsuan Tsang, the the youngest son of Hui, was a man of brilliant and upright character who had mastered the classics at early age. From his very childhood Hsuan Tsang showed nobility of mind and outstanding brilliance. Influenced by the example of his elder brother who had become a monk of the Buddhist monastery at Loyang, Hsuan Tsang, as a boy started the study of Buddhism. By virtue of his precocity he managed to obtain a special permission for ordination at an early age at the age of thirteen. He gave a sermon from the pulpit the audience was taken back at the marvelous way he spoke. He was already a reputed monk in 629 A.D. set out on his journey with an eager desire to find out the authentic scriptures in the very land where the Lord had preached his doctrines. He came the overland route, passing through deserts and mountains with extreme suffering. From about 630 A.D. to 643 A.D. he visited almost every place in India associated with Buddhism, going as far as Kanchi in 641 A.D. and presumably seeing the Ajanta caves. According to Cunningham, Hsan Tsang visited Kapilavastu on 25th. December, 636 and then proceeded towards Lumbini.

He reached his native country back in early 645A.D. after having completed a really wonderful journey. Like his predecessor Fa-hsien, he too took with him a large and valuable collection of manuscripts, images and relics. He spent the remained life translating more than 600 Buddhist books, he had taken from India. Altogether he translated 1300 volumes, which have since then become an

invaluable asset to researchers on Buddhism and history of that time in as much as many of the original copies in India itself were lost. His accounts of Lumbini and Kapilavastu are extremely helpful not only for knowing the condition of these places at that period but also for deciding their location at present. In fact our indebtedness to his great savant for identification of Lumbini and Kapilavastu cannot be too highly expressed. He too, wrote an account of his travel entitled Record of Western Travels (also called '*Travel or Records of Western Lands*'), comprising twelve parts, the last three being said to have been interpolated (Pradhan, 44:1995).

His travel accounts have been translated into various languages. The more commonly recognized are S.Julien's '*Histoire de la vie de Hiouentsang et de ses voyages dans l' Inde*', Paris 1853 (into French language), S.Beal's '*Si-yu-ki Buddhist Record of the Western World*', translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang A.D. 629, 2 vols. (into English, Reprinted), New Delhi, 1973.

8.3 Yuan Chwang's description of Kanakamuni's site:

Yuan Chwang mentions "From this", that is, the neighborhood of Sravasti, continued his journey. Going southwest for about 500 *li* he came to the Kapilavastu country (The capital of Kapilavastu was called by the same name). He describes a detail description of the capital of Kapilavastu. After visiting the surroundings of the city he mentions, "To the northeast of the town of Krakuchanda Buddha going 30 *li*, we came to an old capital (or, a great city) in which there is a stupa. This is to commemorate the spot where, in the Bhadrakalpa when men lived to the age of 40,000 years where Kanakamuni Buddha was born.

To the northwest of the city, not far, is a stupa, it was here, having arrived at complete enlightenment, he met his father.

Further north there is a stupa containing the relics of his bequeathed body; in front of it is a stone pillar with a lion on the top, and about 20 feet high; on this is inscribed a record of the events connected with his Nirvana; this was built by Asoka Raja (Beal; 19: 1983).

9. Kanakamuni's place after the Chinese Travellers:

There were many pilgrims and travelers after these two eminent Chinese pilgrims (Fa-hsien and Yuan Chwang) but their travel accounts are mostly lost.

10. King Ripu Malla's visit to Kanakamuni's place:

In the fourteenth century A.D., King Ripu Malla from western Nepal visited this important holy place and engraved his name on the pillar. This King, Ripu Malla, came to Lumbini and engraved the Mahayana Buddhist mantra along with his name at the east corner of the Asoka pillar at Lumbini. Then, he visited holy place at Niglihawa, the birthplace of Kanakamuni Buddha. Here too he engraved the same mantra and his name and the date of visit.

The engraving of Ripu Malla's name at Lumbini and Niglihawa indicate that to the time of Ripu Malla, Lumbini and Kapilavastu were widely known as the birthplace and homeland of Lord Buddha. D. Bajracharya infers from this that Lumbini and Kapilavastu must have been part of the Kamali Malla Kingdom up to the time of Ripu Malla (Pradhan, 51:1979).

11. Kanakamuni's Place after Ripu Malla:

After Ripu Malla's visit, Lumbini and Kapilavastu slowly converted into bush land and remained obscure for a long time, due as some scholars believe to Hinduism and the Muslim invasion of India. But there is a lack of historical and archaeological references of any damage caused by these religious groups.

B.L. Pradhan has given different views on this. He believes that the rulers of that time did not give proper attention to the development of these holy sites. He has given a long historical sketch of the region and forwarded the opinion that Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517A.D.) and Aurangzeb (1668-1707A.D.) were mainly responsible for the desolation of the Lumbini and Kapilavastu region and cultural heritage. Even Mukunda Sena 1 (1540-75A.D.), Mukunda Sena 11 (1750-82A.D.) and Mahadutta Sena (1782-93A.D.) who ruled the region from Palpa could not help to retain the religious ponderosity of the site and the result was that the site was lost in the dense forest (Pradhan, 30-32:1979).

12. Royal Asiatic Society and Archeology:

Sir William Jones formed the Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784A.D. with the ambition to promote the history and antiquities, arts, sciences and literature of Asia. One of the greatest achievements of this institution was the discovery of the key to Brahmi Script helped archaeology to free itself from its antiquarian and literary affiliations.

A. Cunningham, Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1871 and onwards (for 15 years) conducted the countrywide explorations of archaeological remains in India. He traced the routes taken by the Chinese pilgrims and rediscovered many important Buddhist sites in India, which had been forgotten many centuries ago.

In Nepal, the then rulers kept the country closed to foreigners and any archaeological investigations and activities were not allowed. The pioneer archaeologist of that time could not locate the birthplace of Lord Buddha as well as other important Buddhist sites like Kapilavastu (where Prince Siddhartha spent his early 29 years), the earlier Buddhas Krakuchanda and Kanakamuni's birth and nirvana places, the site where the Sakyas were massacred, the Koliya Kingdom Ramagrama, and many other sites visited by and described in the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims. As the archaeologists were not allowed to explore the Nepalese Tarai, they were bound to calculate the above-mentioned sites and concentrated in Basti District of U.P. India. One of the major problems was that there was no map of the Nepalese Tarai and it was not an easy task to examine the region. The locations of these sites were only a hypothetical calculation.

13. Nepalese Archaeology in Nineteenth Century:

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a very important era to archaeology, especially to Nepalese archaeology. The report, in newspapers, of the discovery of a pillar of Asoka at Bairat, a deserted site in Pergana Kolhuwas of Tehsil Nepalgunj, by major Jaskaran Singh of Balarampur (District Gonda U.P. India) in March 1893 attracted for the first time the attention of the archaeologists and orientalisks towards this part of the Nepalese Tarai, the potentiality of which had hitherto been unknown. This news created a curiosity among the scholars to know about more the said pillar.

14. Dr. Fuhrer in the Nepalese Tarai in 1895:

Dr. Fuhrer, Archaeological Surveyor, North-Western Provinces and Oudh Circle, was deputed to take the imprint of the inscription on the said pillar in March 1895. He found the pillar not at Bairat but on the bank of a large tank, called Nigalisagar (P.R., 1:1894-95). On this occasion Fuhrer received the news about a second pillar near Bhagawanpur (close to Rummin-dei). The purport of the inscription on the lower fragment of the pillar at Nigalisagar created a sensation among scholars. L.A. Waddell was the first to point out that the pillar, with the record of Asoka about the enlargement of the stupa of Kanakamuni (which lay within a kilometer of Kapilavastu according to Fa-hien and Hiun Tsang), would be a sure indicator towards the lost site of Kapilavastu, hitherto searched too far to the south in Gorakhpur and Basti districts of India. The Government of India. The Government of India moved the Nepal Government for permission to explore the area around Nigalisagar (Mitra, 5:1972).

14a. Dr. Fuhrer in the Nepalese Tarai in 1896:

Dr. Fuhrer applied on 12th May and 29th June 1896 through the Government of North-Western Provinces and Oudh to the Foreign Department, Government of India, for favor of obtaining the sanction of the Kathmandu Darbar to an exploration to be made of the ruins near Nigliva as far as Bhagawanpur, fifteen miles east-south-east of Tauliva, where he had learned of another pillar bearing a supposed Asoka inscription still standing. On 19th August, the Government of India, its letter No.1508 E.B. informed the Resident at Nepal; "It has been decided that, if the Nepal Darbar grant the necessary permission, Dr. A. Fuhrer, Archaeological Surveyor, North-Western Province and Oudh, will be deputed to conduct explorations". In this letter dated 7th September 1896, addressed to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Colonel H. Wylie, C.S.I., the Resident at Nepal, wrote in reply "His Excellency the Prime Minister has informed me that his brother General Khadga Shamsher, Governor of Palpa, would be read to receive suggestions from him regarding the contemplated excavation amongst the ruins of Buddha Konagamana's Nirvana Stupa" (Fuhrer, preface: 1972).

With the invaluable assistance and enthusiasm of General Khadga Shamsher, Fuhrer was successful in exploring many ruined sites in and around Kapilavastu and excavating the Lumbini Asoka pillar. During the course of exploration he visited Krakuchanda's birth and nirvana places. He mentions in his monograph that "The ruins of this large ancient city are still existing between the modern villages of Lori-ki-kudan and Gotiva, about 2 miles south-west of Tauliva, and about 8.5 miles south-west of the Srinagar or Sirinagar Sagar, near which stood the southern gate of Kapilavastu. The three stupas and monasteries mentioned by Fa-Hien and Hiuen tsiang is still visible and Krakuchanda's Nirvana Stupa, standing in the middle of the village of Gotiva, still rises to a height of about eighty feet (possibly eight feet). Asoka's Lion-pillar, with its edict, however, does not exist any longer above ground, and undoubtedly lies buried amongst the debris of Nirvana Stupa. The three boulders worshipped as mahadeos, and lying closed to the relic shrine of Kakusandha Buddha no fragments of this pillar (Fuhrer, 19:1972).

14b. Dr. Fuhrer in the Nepalese Tarai in 1897:

Dr. Fuhrer was once again commissioned on 17th Dec. 1897 in order to assist and advise the Government of Nepal in the supervision of excavation. Fuhrer published his report in 1895 and repeated his descriptions at greater length in 1897. In his report he mentions, "The canonical books of

the Southern and Northern Buddhists agreed that Konagamana Buddha or Kanakamuni was born in the Mahabhadralpa at Sobhavati or Subhavati in the house of the Brahmin Yajnadatta. He is called Kanakamuni, because the time of his birth a shower of gold (Kanaka) is said to have fallen". According to him "the brick circumvallation of the ancient city Sobhavati are still distinctly traceable near the hamlets of Tilaura and Gobari about 6 1/2 miles north-east of Lori-ki-Kudan and Gotiva, near which place stands Krakucchanda's Nirvana stupa. The two stupas, the one inside the city and the other not far to the north-east of it, now are low mounds of ruins, whilst the great Nirvana stupa of Konagamana or Konagamana is despite its great age, still fairly well preserved, and rears its imposing pile close to Asoka's Edict pillar, just one mile and a half due north-east of Tilaura-kot and about one mile south of the village of Niglihawa. The lower inscribed portion of this pillar which on excavation was found to measure 10 feet 6 inches in depth and its base 8 feet 2 inches in circumference, is still fixed in situ, resting on a square masonry foundation, 7 feet by 7 feet by 1 foot and being embedded in the western embankment of the lake. A short distance to the north-east, close to the brink of the water, lies the upper half of Asoka's Edict pillar, measuring 14 feet 9 inches in length and 2 feet in diameter at its uppermost and 2 feet 6 inches at its lower end. The lion capital in wanting, and lies unquestionably buried amongst the debris surrounding the lake, or possibly may rest at the bottom of the lake's water. From evidences still observable it seems almost certain that this handsome column of polished sand stone was destroyed through the excessive heat of a raging forest fire so common in the Tarai, between the seventh century, the date of Hiuen Tsiang's visit, and the tenth century, to which period belongs the oldest inscription incised in beautiful lapidary characters of that time on about the middle of the fallen half. Just below it is engraved a pilgrim's record, dating from the later half of the twelfth century A.D. which reads as follows:

"Sri- Tapumall [h] nityan jayatu 1234. " Hail! May Tapumall live long! Samvat 1234." Or A.D. 1127-78. These inscriptions, being thus found about 18 feet above a high place, had the column still stood intact in its original height, which was not about 20 feet, as stated by Hiuen Tsiang but about 28 feet.

The new edict of Asoka is incised in four beautifully engraved lines on the lower half of the mutilated lion - pillar, just 10 feet 6 inches above its base, and has suffered by its fracture a great deal on the left side in losing the first five letters of the third as well as the first seven of the fourth line; but as fortunately a part of the wording of the Rummindei Pillar agrees closely with that of the Niglivia Pillar, it makes the restoration of the lost portions easy and absolutely certain. The edict runs as follows: -

"King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods; having been anointed fourteen years, increased for the second time the stupa of Buddha Konakaman; and having been anointed [twenty years], he came himself and worshipped; [and] he caused stone pillar to be erected[.]"

The contents of this inscription do not agree with Hiuen Tsiang's statement "on this (pillar) is inscribed a record of the events connected with (Kanakamuni's) nirvana." As Hiuen Tsiang was no epigraphist, his notices about the contents of inscriptions mentioned by him are invariably incorrect. This edict is probably the earliest archaeological confirmation we have of the actual preservation, in early Buddhist times, of the memory of Konagamana. The value of this edict for the early history of Buddhism has been pointed out by Hofrat Dr. Buhler in preliminary notice of the document. The edict

also proves that Professor Kern was right when he declared, that the portion of the Buddhist doctrine in the *Deegha* and *Majjhima-Nikaya*, referring to previous Buddhas, was settled in the third century B.C. Perhaps it teaches us even a little more. First the statement of Asoka-Piyadasi that he increased or enlarged the stupa for the second time in the fifteenth year after his coronation as Emperor, or in the nineteenth of his reign, means that he twice restored it, adding to its size. Hence the monument must have been erected before the beginning of the King's reign, or B.C.259, and it must have enjoyed considerable fame and sanctity, as it also apparent from the fact that Asokan in his twenty-fifth years personally and worshipped it, The dogma of the Buddhas anterior to Gotama Buddha must not only have been developed, but must also have been fixed locally, before it could occur to 'faithful' to build or renew stupas in honor of these Buddhas. It seems difficult to believe that all these stages of development of the Buddhist doctrine could have been accomplished in a very short time. Secondly, according to the *Buddhavamsa* one of the latest books included in the canon of the *Pitakas*-Buddha Konagamana reached nirvana i.e. died in the Pabbata Arama, that is, in the "Mountain Plaisance or Monastery," which suggested to Hofrat Dr. Buhler the conjecture that we have to look near the site of his Nirvana-stupa for the place of his death. The Pabbata Arama lies just thirteen miles north-east of Nigali-Sagar on the lower slopes of the Tarai hills, overtopped by the snowballed peaks of Dhavalagiri and Muktinath, and its deserted site is now known as Saina-Maina vast ruins of fallen monasteries and the remains of three immense walls, built of huge ancient bricks, are hidden away in dense shrubby jungle.

Dr. Fuhrer mentions that the Nigali Sagar is an expansive sheet of water, being an oblong measuring about 940 feet by 440. A short distance from the western embankment of the lake, on which the mutilated portion of edict pillar stands, are vast brick ruins stretching far away in the Nirvana-stupa of Konagamana is clearly discernible, the base of its hemispherical dome being about 101 feet in diameter, and its present height still about thirty feet. The dome seems to have been constructed of solid brick to a depth of about 20 feet, whilst the interior is filled up with earth packing. This dome rests on a great circular mass, 109 feet in diameter, built in the shape of a huge brick drum, about 6 feet high, with a solid bricks, used being of a very great size, 16 inches by 11 by 3, thus beaving a procession path round the exterior of about eight feet in breadth. About ten feet beyond the great circular base all round was apparently a stone railing with gateways, the positions of which can still be teased. It is thus abundantly evident that the corporal relics of Konagamana, collected from his funeral pyre, were carefully and securely interred in this stupa, and that his Nirvana stupa is undoubtedly one of the oldest Buddhist monument still existing in India. On all sides around this interesting monument are ruined monasteries fallen column and broken sculptures" (Fuhrer, 26-29:1972).

Harry Falk mentions a long history of the discovery of the Niglihawa pillar in his article on *Discovery of Lumbini*. According to him in 1893 a Nepalese officer on a hunting expedition found an Asokan pillar near Niglihawa on the bank of Nigali Sagar. It was not only an accident that in 1893, Major Jaskaran Singh announced in newspaper to have seen Asokan pillar with inscription in Nepalese Tarai. In 1895 Dr. Fuhrer was deputed to take stumpages. Dr. Fuhrer could not discover the said Asokan pillar but found a new pillar at Niglihawa. Falk further reports that "Even before the inscription could be read and published, the military doctor Waddell, who was surveying in Calcutta and who had long been making efforts to find the Buddha's birth place, suspected that some reference

to the Buddhist holy site might be excepted in it". He wrote to the person in charge, Dr. Fuhrer, but received no reply.

Soon afterwards Buhler, in Vienna, acquired a report and rubbing from Fuhrer. From 1895 on, Buhler made the next and circumstances of the find known to other in his field. From the beginning Buhler accurately called Fuhrer not the discoverer of the pillar but merely someone who had managed "to look up the pillar," it also mentioned, however, the missing characters in the last line of the inscription. Buhler repeated Fuhrer's statements that these characters were hidden under ground level and that the Nepalese had kept him from excavating. Now, there is not the slightest trace of a stupa Nigali Sagar, nor were the final characters hidden underground, having long before been broken off with a piece of the pillar, and told this can only mean that Fuhrer himself never saw the pillar there before his reports on Nigalihawa to Buhler. Somebody else must have obtained the rubbing at his bidding (Falk, 9-10: 1998).

15. Babu P.C. Mukherji in Nigalihawa:

After Fuhrer, Babu Purna Chandra Mukherji examined this site in 1899. Mukherji measures the site from Sagrawa (Sagrahawa) and records "Nigali is a village about a mile and half east of Sagarwa and on the east of the local forest. About a mile south of the village is a large tank extending east to west, which is known as Nigali Sagar from the two portions of a Priyadarsi pillar, called Loriki Nigali or Smoking Pipe, which are in western embankment. They appear to have subsequently been restored at the time of the excavation of the tank. The other tanks in neighborhood show their banks almost flush with the surrounding ground level. The Nigali Sagar is now shallow".

Mukherji describes about the pillar and says that "The upper piece of the pillar, which lies fallen inside the embankment and just above the water in February is about 14'-9.5" long, the upper girth being 6'-6" and the middle is 6'-10.25" and the diameters at the top and bottom are, respectively, 2' & 2'.25". There are three birds of a very rude pattern done in some mediaeval times, where the pillar was fallen, between 8'-6" below the top are two short inscriptions in four lines, the upper two being the Tibetan creed "Om Mani Padme Hum," translated "O! The jewel is in the lotus", and in the second line, "Sri Tapu Malla Jayastu-Sambat -1234" ("May Tapu Malla be victorious, A.D.1177-78").

The top of the pillar has a diameter of 2', above which a smaller drum sizes 2.5". In the center of this is a hole, 4" in diameter, and 1'-4" in depth in which was fitted the copper mortise of the capital, that is now missing. The lower portion of the pillar is about 10', on the top of the western embankment. Its upper diameter is 2'-4", and the girth, at 2'-4" below top, is 7'-5.5". The inscription, in four lines, which occupies 1'-4" below the top, records in ancient Pali text which is following:

"King Priyadarsi, beloved of the gods, having been anointed 14 years increased for the second time the Stupa of Buddha Kanakamuni and having been anointed (20 years) he came himself and worshipped (and) he caused (this stone pillar to be erected)".

Some of the letters are gone with the lower faces, leaving only a length of 7'-7.5" to the bottom, now broken off.

Additionally, Mukherji observes that the pillar is not in situ. Fuhrer was mistaken in saying so. When major Waddell excavated below, the broken bottom was exposed, where no foundation or basement was discovered. Nor could I find the Stupa of Konagamana, which, according to the Doctor's statement, was at a short distance from the western embankment, where he located "vast brick ruins stretching far away in the direction of the southern gate of Kapilavastu." Standing on the summit of the western embankment, I could see for a mile or two western to and beyond Ramapur, Ahirauli and Srinagara; and I have walked over the tract in different direction; but nowhere could I see such as enormous pile nor was I informed of it. In fact, the alleged stupa is not in existence (Mukherji, 30 1969).

16. Vincent Smith's View on Niglihawa Site:

Smith has a different opinion of the situation of pillar and sputa at Nigali Sagar. He charged Dr. Fuhrer about the Stupa. He says 'this elaborate description was not supported by a single drawing, plan or photograph. Every word of it is false. The Government of India, 1897 with drew the report of Fuhrer's monograph on Buddha Sakyamuni's Birthplace in the Nepalese Tarai, from circulation.

"Equally imaginative are the details given by Dr. Fuhrer concerning his alleged excavation of the base of the broken Asoka pillar lying at the Nigali Sagar has been moved about eight or thirteen miles from its original position which was probably either at Sisania or at Palta Devi. It is impossible that Konagamana Stupa should have stood any where near Nigliwa. The belief that it ought to have been found near that village was so strongly held by Dr. Fuhrer that it induced him to invent the stupa which he could not discover; and to place at the basis of the pillar a foundation of imagination all compact" (Smith 4-5:1900).

17. Mrs. Devala Mitra in Niglihawa:

Devala Mitra, who came to Nepal Tarai in 1962 for a very short period to conduct the excavations at Kudan and Tilaurakot and explorations of Nepalese Tarai. She has given a short note on Niglihawa pillar and mentions 'In March 1895 A. Fuhrer, Archaeological Surveyor, North-western Province and Oudh Circle, was deputed to take stumpages of inscription on the pillar at Nigali Sagar. On this occasion Fuhrer received the news about a second pillar near Bhagawanpur (close to Rummin-dei). The purport of the inscription on the lower fragment of the pillar of Nigali-Sagar created great sensation among scholars. L.A. Waddell was the first to point out that the pillar with the secured of Asoka about the enlargement of the stupa of Kanakamuni (which lay within a few Kilometers of Kapilavastu according to Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang, would be a sure indicator towards the lost site of Kapilavastu, hitherto reached too far to the south in Gorakhpur and Basti District of India. The government of India moved the Nepal government for the permission to explore the area around Nigali-Sagar.

Fuhrer was again sent in 1896 to advise on the excavation of Kanakamuni's Stupa which, however, was not attempted, though he gave an calibrate description of the nirvana-stupa of this Manusi Buddha close to the inscribed pillar, the later claimed by Fuhrer to be in situ. (Neither was the pillar in situ, nor was the there any trace of stupa near by, as proved it's conclusively by the explorations of Waddell and Mukherji in 1899). Mitra further mentions that 'He vaguely traced the natal of Kanakamuni near the hamlets of Tilaura and Gobari and the site of Kapilavastu between lat. 27° 32'-38" N. and long. 38° 3'-10" E. in the middle of a dense Sall forest over a length of about seven miles from the village of Amauli, Baidauli, Hamampur and Bikuli (North-East to Sivagarh), Tilaurakot and Ramghat on the Banganga (South-West) and over a breadth of about three to miles from the villages of Ramapura, Ahirauli and Srinagar on the

south to the village of Jagadishpur and Nargavah on the north Government of India was apprised of the fact that Fuhrer's work was not only full of mistakes and fabrications but was also incomplete (Mitra,5-6:1972).

18. T.N. Mishra's View on Niglihawa:

Mishra has different opinion on the location of the pillar at Nigali-Sagar. He thinks that 'The Kanakamuni Buddha's pillar, a mile on the east of Tilaurakot also indicate the existence of the site in that very vicinity. The extensive site of Araurakot and the surrounding areas should be thoroughly checked to locate the original place of the pillar. It is to note that both the Chinese pilgrims clearly mention that the town of Kanakamuni was between six to eight miles on the north of Krakuchhanda's town. The old ruined city of Araurakot, close to the Nigalisagar on the east, most probably represent the old township belonging to Kanakamuni Buddha (Mishra, 31:1977).

19. B.L. Pradhan's Opinion on Niglihawa:

B.L. Pradhan mentions that 'the village of Niglihawa is situated 4 miles north east of present Taulihawa bazaar in Nepal. Near by is a large tank locally known as Niglisagar. Near this tank there must have stood an Asoka. Stone pillar for centuries, though it now lies broken. The tank is said to have derived its present name from the reed-like (Nigala means reed) slender structure of the pillar. Of the broken pieces the upper one about 15 ft. long lies on the ground near the edge of the tank. It bears an inscription of the years 1234 (Supposed to be Saka Era) this inscription belonged to King Ripu Mall of Naga dynasty who ruled over one of the two states which flourished from the 11th to 15th century in the Kamali region, with the present village of 'Dullu' as his capital. The shorter piece, apparently the lower portion of the pillar, can also be seen lying on the ground. It, too, an inscription of Emperor Asoka regarding his visit to Kapilavastu. Because of the recovery of this pillar near Niglisagar the village of Niglihawa came to be regarded as the birthplace of Kanakamuni and presumable for that reason the Emperor visited this spot and raised a pillar in his memory.

In connection with this pillar and an older stupa rebuilt by Emperor Asoka in memory of Kanakamuni. Unfortunately, the capital of the pillar and together with the lion atop of which Hiuen Tsang spoke have disappeared. Even about this pillar V. Smith has remarked that it was no more in its original position. The other inscription on the upper piece referred to above as belonging to King Ripu Malla, contains the words 'Om mani padme hum. Shree Ripu Mallas chiram jayatu 1234; The Year 1234 is the saka Era corresponding to 1312 A.D. Dhanabajra Bajracharya infers from this that Lumbini and Kapilavastu must have been part of Kamali Malla Kingdom and that up to the time of King Ripu Malla the region was widely known as the birth and home of Lord Buddha.

In spite the fact that pillar has been discovered on the bank of Nigalisagar some archaeologist point the Sishaniya Pandey Village as the birthplace of Kanakamuni while others Niglisagar itself. In fine, though the stupa is not yet traced or the pillar might have been shifted from its original spot, it cannot be denied that the two big pieces of the pillar, one lying on the ground and the other standing out from under the ground, are there. They are most reliably the genuine pointer of the stupa as well as of the town of Kanakamuni and they're by to the final location of Kapilavastu as well (Pradhan, 21:1975).

20. S.D. Tuladhar's Opinion on Niglihawa:

Swayambhu Dhar Tuladhar gives the detail measurement and typology of Niglihawa pillar. He mentions that two pieces of mutilated pillar, one with the edict have been found on the bank of Nigali Sagar. The one with the edict is standing slanted sideways which is believed to be about 10'-6" long and the second piece about 14'-9" long lies fallen inside the embankment. He further reports that after Dr.A.Fuhrer Mr. Purna Chandra Mukherji visited Niglihawa in 1899. In his report he mentions that major Waddell had excavated the pillar to the foundation where he found the broken bottom and absence of any kind of foundation and there has been no excavation carried out after. According to Mukherji and Devala Mitra the lower portion of the pillar is not in situ. They also saw the probability of the two pieces being a part of Gotihawa pillar which is very unlikely because diameters do not match. The diameter of the top of the Gotihawa pillar is 2'-6" (Debala Mitra and Mukherji measured 2'-7¹/₄" from 4'-8" from the top.) While the bottom of the pillar with edict in Niglihawa is 2'-7". (As per Dr. Fuhrer it is 2'x7. ¹/₄" and as per Mukherji it is 2' x 4. ¹/₂ " @ 2'-4" from the top which comes to 2'-6. ¹/₂" at the bottom the diameter of the bottom of the Niglihawa pillar is larger than the Gotihawa pillar. To fit on the bottom of the Niglihawa pillar is larger than the Gotihawa pillar. To fit on the top it should be smaller or equal (refer reconstruction). There is also an assumption that the two pieces belong to the same pillar. If that is so there should be a third piece of about 5'-0" long to go in between the two because there is a difference of 0.5" in the diameters. If we reconstruct the pillar its height comes about 30 feet (the polished part of the Lumbini pillar is about 22 feet high). Considering the height of the edict at 9 feet from the ground level, the total height of the edict at 9 feet from the ground level, the total height of the pillar will be about 45 feet along with the capital and the buried part.

Unlike Gotihawa pillar damage to these pieces is intentional and not from natural disaster, carefully looking at the pillar it is clear that at each end of the pillar it has been cut very systematically. Perhaps it was cut that way so as to use it somewhere else. But on the other hand there are some deep cracks and a being chunk chipped at the top and bottom of the edict.

The most puzzling thing is why having the pillar being lying there? Why and when was it brought there and where is its original position? According to the edict it was standing next to a stupa, not a pond. Carefully standing the photo plate V in Dr. Fuhrer's report it is clear that it has not been very long that the pillar has been transferred there. On the left side of the pillar there is tree, stagnated due to the pressure from the pillar. The tree is not that old; it may be about 25 years old, not more. We do not see any substantial deposit around the pillar. So the presence of the top pillar may not be more than 20 years from the time of its discovery the original position of the pillar is still unknown (Tuladhar, 60-61:1995).

21. New Explorations of the Site:

In 1996/97 winters Nepal-Italian joint archaeological team carried out the surface exploration in Kapilavastu District. The main objective of this team was to collect the surface findings, study them and identify the archaeological values. The team located at least sixty-six archaeological sites. The main area of explorations was east of Banaganga River, west of Kothi River, south of east-west high way and north of Indian border.

Most of the archaeological sites are concentrated near the habitational areas, especially in and around Niglihawa. There are four prominent mounds with full of ancient potteries and brickbats to the northeast of Taulihawa - Jitpur road. To the southwest of the road there are four archaeological sites, identified. All

together there are nine sites in and around Niglihawa. They are Thumwa, Semari, Thagi Baba Ki Dadi, Araurakot, Sadwa, Gobari, Sivpura, Banduli and Niglihawa. Out of these nine sites Thumwa, Thagi Baba Ki Dadi and Sivpura are prominent and less disturbed sites. These sites are full of ancient potteries, brickbats. According to the local people during to the raining season they have found the beads, terracotta figurines, coins etc. Tumwa site has two ancient wells, one is still visible and other is filled with soils. These sites are very close to Niglihawa Pillar and one of these mounds may represent the ancient stupa mentioned by Chinese travelers. (See sketch)

Most of the scholars believe that the pillar is not in situ (Law, 29: 1979). They argue that pillar was brought from other place but they are silent why it was shifted this present place. There is no reference on this reason. The Stupa mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims either represents one of the sites mentioned above or it was near by the pillar site and was destroyed for the agricultural land. Even to- day there are many brickbats and potsherds can be seen in the agricultural field. If the stupa was situated to the east of the pillar that was demolished during the operation of the pond.

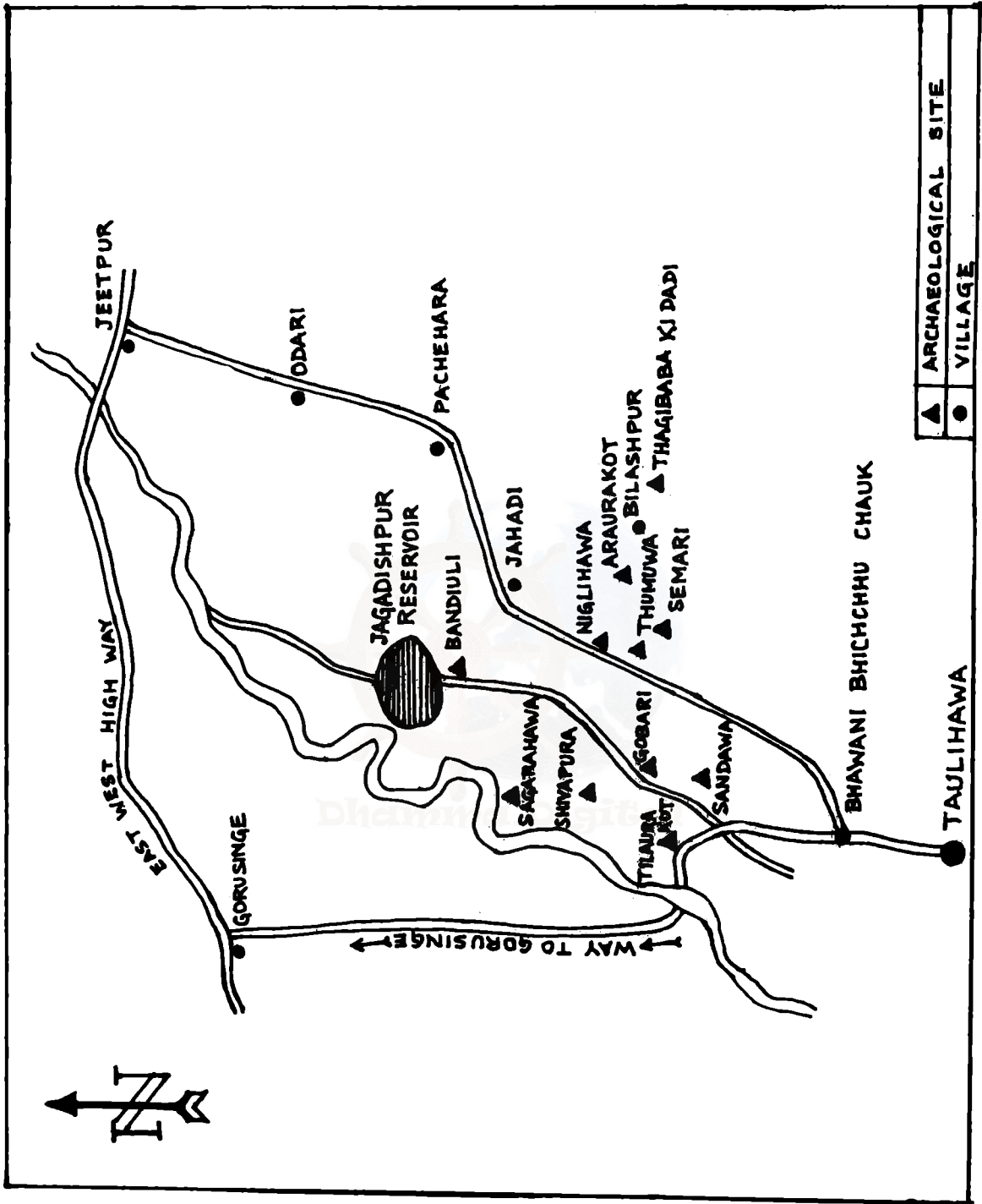
The pillar seems to be in its original place. It was laying on the Uttarapatha (northern trade route). Now we can trace that trade route or the road from Lumbini to Kapilavastu. There are series of archeological sites all along the route. If there was no route how it was possible to carry such a huge pillar in 3rd century B.C. If we take the reference of Lumbini pillar which is 37 tones and emperor Asoka brought three pillars in the twenty year after his coronation. Thus, observing this situation the present Niglihawa pillar seems to be its original place. Since Waddell in 1898 no-body has attempt to open and check its foundation. It is very high time to explore the near by mound scientifically and the foundation of the pillar before we come to any conclusion.

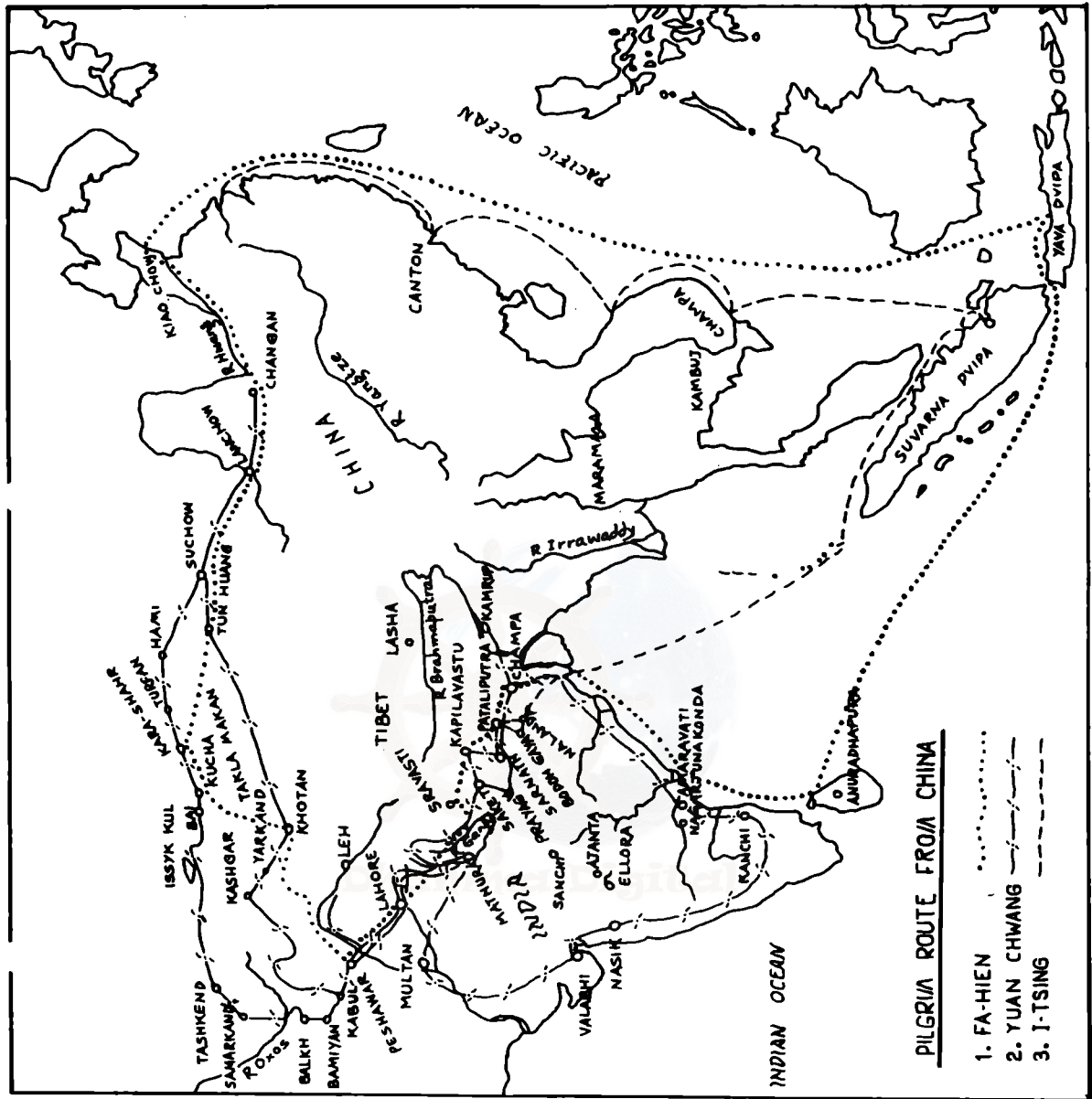
Conclusion:

Niglihawa is now a protected monument and is managed by the Lumbini Development Trust. The UNESCO mission led by Robin Cunningham and Armin Schmidt along with the Nepali team K.P.Acharya, C.P. Tripathi, S.S. Shrestha from DOA and B. Bidari from L.D.T. on three occasions and the EDM survey conducted of the remains. The larger fragment of pillar has been moved up to the top of the bund and is placed on a brick cradle next to the upright pillar section. The Lumbini Development trust has recently erected a barbed wire fence around these two fragments to lessen the chance of damage by animals, and have constructed a blue painted corrugated iron roof on brick pillars to protect the inscriptions from the elements. The floor of the shelter is also paved with brick. Although there is a local chowkidar, the site is very isolated, being some distance from the nearest dwellings. Whilst the shelter and fence protect the inscriptions from the weather and animals, they are easily accessible to people and could easily be damaged or defaced by vandals or children. It is recommended that floor-to-roof stretches of iron fencing are fixed between the brick roof supports in order to prevent access to pillar itself. This should be done as soon as possible. The site's environment is very undeveloped and is surrounded by paddy land. Every endeavor should be made to ensure that this continues so. The tank is choked by vegetation, its bunds covered in thick bush, and it is breached on the southwest and northwest comers, it should be repaired and cleared of vegetation. The unmetalled road between the Mahendra Highway and Tilaurakot, though new, is very poorly maintained and has numerous potholes and should be improved. There is no sign to the site on the road side and no site explanation board, these should be provided.

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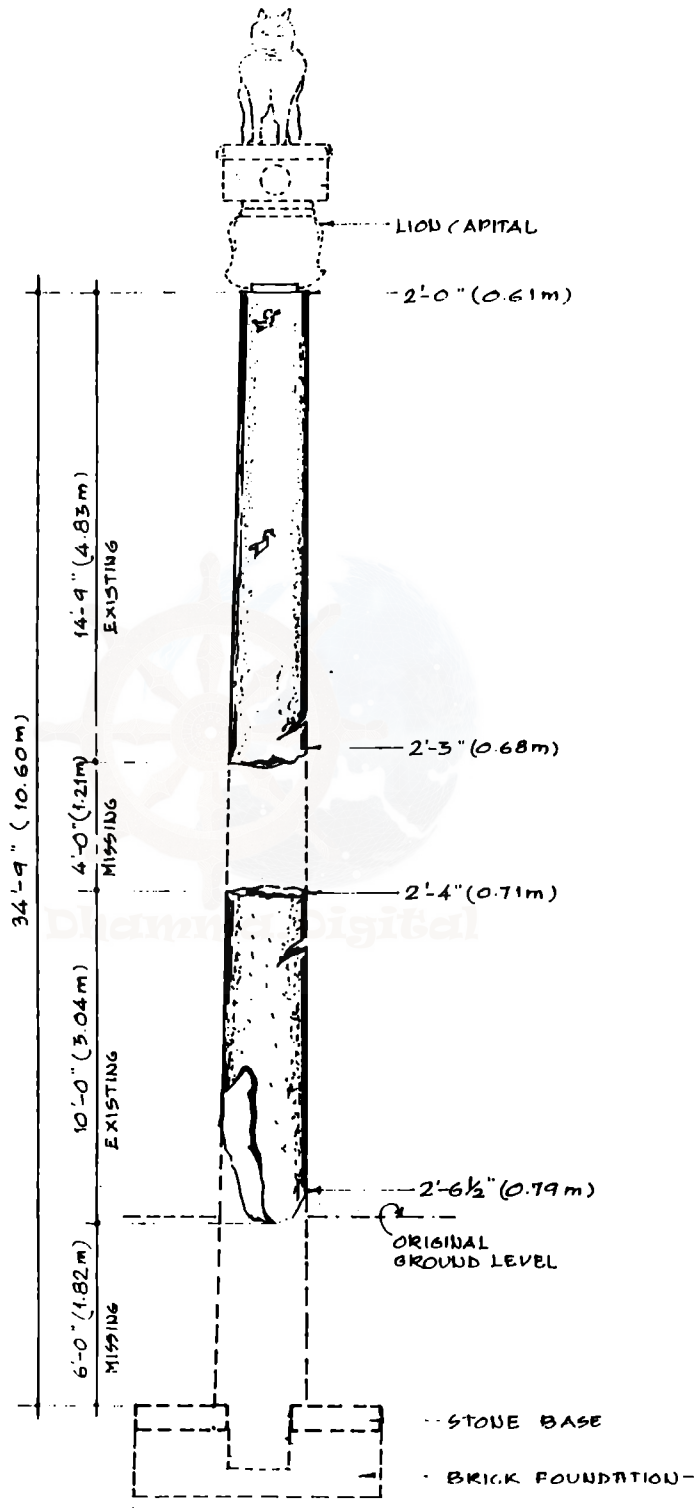




PILGRIM ROUTE FROM CHINA

1. FA-HIEN
2. YUAN CHWANG
3. I-TSING

NIGLIHAWA PILLAR



COURTESY:
SVOYAMBHU ASSOCIATION
25 APRIL 1975

Kapilavastu, Lumbini and Ramagram Records of Chinese Travellers

- Bhikkhu Ding Hui,
Sri Lanka.

Records of the Buddhism Kingdom

The Famous Chinese Pilgrim Fa Xian (Fa-Hsien) visited India. During his visit, he came to Kapilavastu, Lumbini and Ramagram in 403 A.D. He described these places in his book records of the Buddhist Kingdoms; he mentioned as follows:

The Kapilavastu City was one yojana far away to the east of the sacred place of Kanaka muni Buddha's birth. The city was bleak and desolate. There were white elephants and lions walking on the road. It was very difficult for the people to travel.

The City was also like a barren hill, and there were neither king nor the residents stayed in it, except about 10 monks. A Mahamaya statue was in the palace of Suddhodana, which depicts the prince riding a white elephant to enter his mother's womb.

The people constructed the pagodas at the following places.

Prince Sakyamuni became very sad by the sight of the suffering of the people when he went out of the Kapilavastu City.

The place where Asita with his super normal vision predicted the prince that he would become a Buddha. The place where Devadatta wanted to destroy the Buddha, and he killed an elephant and put it in the gate of the city to stop Buddha. But Ananda with his power took it away.

The place where the prince Sakyamuni showed his many skills, one of them was that he shot an arrow as far as 30li and the arrow entered the earth at the southeast direction. A fountain sprouted out from the earth. Later the people dug a well there and the travelers could drink water from it.

At the place where the Buddha met King Suddhodana after he achieved enlightenment. It is the place where Upali converted five hundred Sakya youths. Meanwhile the earth shook six times.

At the place where King Virudhaka killed the sakyas and the sakyas attained the Srotapanna phala immediately. The people built a pagoda, which is still there.

Several li away from the northeast of the Kapilavastu City, the prince caught a glimpse of the ploughing ceremony sitting under a tree at the royal field.

There was a royal garden at the northeast of the Kapilavastu City. It was named Lumbini.

Mahamaya had a bath in the pond in Lumbini. She walked twenty steps to the north and raised her hand and leaned by a branch of a tree. The prince was born while she was facing the east. The prince walked seven

steps in all directions after he was born. Two Dragon Kings bathed the prince's body immediately. Later the people dug a well there.

The Ramagram Kingdom was five yojanas to the east of the holy place of the Buddha's birth. The King of the Ramagram Kingdom was one of the eight kings who obtained the Buddha's relics and he also built a pagoda, which is named Ramagram Pagoda. And the relics were in it for offering. A dragon King was in the pond near this pagoda and the dragon King often kept guard to the pagoda and paid worship to it all day and night.

King Ashoka wanted to open the eight Pagodas to make eighty-four thousand pagodas except the Ramagram. The dragon King appeared when Ashoka wanted to damage the Ramagram pagoda. After Ashoka saw that the dragon King was paying worship and was offering to the pagoda. The Dragon King said, "if you could do better offering than this, you could damage this pagoda and nobody would stop you." Ashoka knew that no offering in the world would be like this and he couldn't do better than the Dragon King, so he went back to his country without damaging the Pagoda.

The elephants fetched water with their trunks and they took flower and incense for offering.

Once a religious person came from another country, and wanted to pay worship to the pagoda. He was very frightened by the elephants were paying very respectfully worship to the pagoda. He was very frightened by the elephants, so he hid in a tree to safeguard himself. But he saw the elephants were paying very respectfully worship to the pagoda. He was very mournful and said, "Here was no nobody offering the pagoda, except the elephants." therefore, he gave up his own religion and became a Sramanera. He was putting the place in order and cleaned it. He also persuaded the King to make a monastery, and he became the chief monk. Up to now, the chief monk of this monastery is a Sramanera. At the present time some monks are staying in the monastery.

The Biography of Zhi Meng:

Chinese Bhikkhu Zhi Meng and his friends travelled in India from 404 A.D. to 424 A.D. The book **The Biography of Zhi Meng** described that Zhi Meng had arrived in Kapilavastu. And he has seen the relics of Buddha's hair, Buddha's tooth and the Buddha's Usnisa. Kapilavastu was 1300 li west of the Kashgar Kingdom.

Records of the Western Countries of the Tang Dynasty:

Chinese Bhikkhu Xuan Zang (HsuanTsang) was a well-known pilgrim to India. He arrived in Kapilavastu, Lumbini and Ramagram in 636 A.D. He also gave a detailed description of these places in his book **Records of the western countries of the Tang Dynasty**.

He describes that:

The Kapilavastu Kingdom was two thousand Km in circumference. There were ten empty cities in the Kingdom. The city was nearly 15 li in circumference. Only a sparse population was in the city. There was no complete building and most of area was either deserted or forest. But the foundation was very solidly built with bricks. There were more than 1000 old foundations of the monastery in the Kapilavastu Kingdom.

There was a monastery beside the place, where 30 monks were staying. They were all practicing the Sammatiya School of the Theravada Buddhism. Two Brahminical Temples were near there and the practitioners came from different heterodox schools.

The old foundation of the great place of Suddhodana was in the Kapilavastu city. A monastery was built on the old foundation and statue of Suddhodana was placed on it. On the top of the old foundation of the Mahamaya's Residence Palace was near it and a monastery was built on it. A monastery was constructed near the Mahamaya's Statue. It was the place where the Bodhisattva was descended from Trayastrimsat Heaven to Mahamaya's womb. A statue of Sakyamuni Bodhisattva was there.

There was a stupa to the northeast of the place to mark the spot where Bodhisattva entered into his mother's womb. Another stupa marked the place where Asita predicted the prince Siddhartha would become a Buddha in future.

There was a stupa at the southern gate of Kapilavastu City, where the prince Siddhartha showed his skills to the Sakya clansmen. A monastery, stupa & a statue of prince Siddhartha were in it. The foundation of the Yasodhara residence place was near it. A monastery was built on the old foundation, and a statue of Yasodhara and Rahula were in this monastery. The foundation of the prince Siddhartha's school was near it. A monastery on the old foundation and a statue of prince Siddhartha was in it. This statue symbolized that the prince was studying in this school.

A monastery was near the southeast of the Kapilavastu city. It was the place where the prince Siddhartha left the Kapilavastu City to become a monk. There is a statue of Siddhartha with a white horse. There were four monasteries outside the Kapilavastu City, with a statue of the old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a Sramana.

The old sacred city of Krakucchanda Buddha's birth was 50 li away from the south of the Kapilavastu City, and there was a stupa. Near this Krakucchanda's birthplace, where the enlightened one met his father, another stupa was at the southeast of the city, and the Tathagata's relics were in it for offering. A pillar was in front of this stupa, which was 30 chi high and a statue of a lion was on the top of the pillar. The King Ashoka had erected the pillar. A script engraved on the pillar refers the story about this Buddha's nirvana.

The old sacred city of Kanakamuni Buddha's birth was 30 li away from the northeast of the Krakucchanda's birthplace, where the Enlightened One gave a dharma talk to his father to free him from the suffering. Another stupa was at the north of the city, and Tathagata's relics were in it for offering. A pillar was 20 chi high and a statue of a lion was on the top of the pillar. King Ashoka had erected this pillar. A script engraved on the pillar mentions the story about this Buddha's nirvana.

A stupa was 40-50 li at the northeast of the Kapilavastu City. It was the place where the prince Siddhartha sat in the shade under the tree to contemplate the cultivation of the royal field.

There were several thousand stupas at the northwest of the Kapilavastu City. It was the place where King Virudhaka killed 99900000 Sakyas.

There were four small stupas at the southwest of the place where the sons of the Sakya were killed. The four stupas symbolized four sons of the sakya clan who resisted the Virudhaka army to damage the Kapilavastu city. So king Virudhaka drove them away to the show Mountain at the north of the Kapilavastu city. The four persons soon become four kings named the Udayana king, the Himatala king and the Sambhi king and their children also lived there four generation to generation. King Asoka made a stupa at the Nyagrodha forest, as lies 4 li away from the Kapilavastu city. It was the place where the Buddha expounded the dharma to Suddhodana. Suddhodana and his attendants were waiting in this Nyagrodhasangharama (the name of the monastery). A stupa was near the Nyagrodhasangharama, where the Buddha sat, facing north under the tree to accept the Kasaya dress offered by Mahaprajapati. Near this stupa the Buddha gave a dharma talk to save eight princes and 500 sons of the Sakya clan.

Inside the east gate of the Kapilavastu city, a stupa was near the road. It was the place where the prince Sarvarthasiddha (Siddhartha) was learning different sorts of skills. Paranimitta Vasavartin monastery was outside this gate. A stone statue of the Deva was in this monastery. Suddhodana brought prince back to the place from Lumbini after his birth. They went into the monastery to pray for blessings for the prince because the Deva had great power and it would be very efficacious in response to the prayers. The interesting thing was that the stone statue of Deva stood up by itself when Mahamaya took the prince into the monastery. It sat down by itself when they went out of the monastery.

A stupa was at the roadway outside the southern gate of the Kapilavastu city. It was the place where prince Siddhartha had shooting iron drum contest and other competition with the sons of the sakya clan.

A small stupa was 30 li southeast away from this stupa with an Arrow fountain.

Lumbini was 80 li away to the northeast from the Arrow fountain. There was pond in Lumbini. The water of this pond was green and clear with flowers. The Asoka tree was 25 steps to the north from the pond, and the prince Siddhartha was born under this tree. A stupa was at the east of the tree and it was the place where two Dragons bathed the prince after his birth. King Asoka built a stupa. The newly born prince walked seven steps into four directions. At that time the two Dragons appeared from the earth and they stayed in the sky. Warm and cool water spurted out from the mouth of the Dragons to bathe the prince. Meanwhile from the north of this stupa two springs spurted with warm and cool water to bathe Mahamaya. There are two stupas beside these springs.

Another stupa was in front of these two stupas where Mahamaya had bathed it was the place where Sakra held the Bodhisattva after his birth; four stupas were next to this stupa. It was the place where Sakra held the Bodhisattva after this birth. Four stupas were next to this stupa. It was the place where the four Heavenly Kings held the Bodhisattva.

A pillar was near the four stupas, and a horse statue was on the top of the pillar. King Asoka built it. Later the Evil Dragon damaged it with the thunderbolt and it was broken and was lying down on the earth. There was a river near the pillar and it flowed from east to south. The local name was the Oil River. First the Deva made the wonderful oil to bathe Mahamaya to cure the disease after prince was born. After that it become water and flowered south.

The Ramagram Kingdom was more than 100 km east of Lumbini.

Xuan Zhang described Ramagrama mostly the same way like Fa Xian.

The Records of Sojourn in Five regions of India

Xin Luo Bhikkhu Hui Chao travelled in India about 720 A.D. Chao was born in Xin Luo in 704 A.D. He went to China at the age of 20. He had studied the Mahayana Buddhism in China for some time and then he went on pilgrimage to India. He returned to China for some time then he went on pilgrimage to India. He returned to China in 727 A.D. After his wrote whole story of his travel. The book title was **The Records of Traveling in Five regions of India**. The book was lost for a long time. It was only mentioned in the Buddhist Booklists. Fortunately, French scholar P. Pelliot Discovered it in the Tun Huang Cave in 1907 A.D. the incomplete book of Traveling in Five regions of India. Some years later a Japanese scholar collected it in the **Triptaka** in Chinese.

Hui Chao had described the Kapilavastu City in his book. It is said as follow:

The Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism are both widely known in central India. There are four pagodas in the area of central India. Three of them are at the north bank of the Ganges River.

One of them is in the Anathapindada Garden of Sravasti where one can see the Temples and the Monks.

One of them is in the Amrapali Garden of the Vaisali City. The pagoda is still preserved, but the temple is desolated and without monks.

One of them is in Kapilavastu. Kapilavastu was the city where Buddha was born. The Asoka Tree is still there. There are neither monks nor peasants and the city is deserted, but the pagoda is preserved. Most of the place is deserted and full of jungle at the Kapilavastu City. It is hardly possible for the pilgrims to discern the direction or the right way. Robbers were often around the roadway.

The forth pagoda is named " Three- paths of the invaluable- steps" pagoda. It is about seven days walk from the Heavenly City in Central India, and it is located between the two Ganges Rivers. It was constructed there because it is the place where Buddha returned from the Trayastrimsa to Jambudvipa. There became three paths of the invaluable steps. The left path is golden, the right path is silver and the middle path is lapis lazuli. The Brahma is at the left path. The Sovereign Sakra is at right path. Buddha is at the middle path. The Brahma and Sovereign Sakra are as attendants of Buddha, and they came back from Trayastrimsa all together. The temples and monks are around the pagoda now.

The Records of Wu Kong's Travel in India

Chinese Bhikkhu Wu Kong Visited India from 751 A.D. In his book **Record of wu Kong Traveled in India** he only mentioned that he had seen the stupa in Kapilavastu and the pagoda at the sacred place of Buddha's birth in 764 A.D.

NOTES:

1. li and chi were use to measure to measure the distance.

2. Xin Lou is one state in Korea. The ancient Korea consists of three States; it is Xin Lou, Gau Li and Bai Qi. The territory of the three states is the present North Korea and South Korea all together.
3. The **Tripitaka in Chinese** is also named **The Taisho shinshu Daizokyo** that was published by the Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo Knoka kai (Society for the publication of the Taisho Tripitaka). Mejirodai, Bunkyo. The Chinese spelling is Da zheng zang.
4. Buddha was born under the Asoka Tree.
5. Trayastrimsa is the second of the desire heavens. It is also named the heavens of the thirty-three devas.
6. Jambudvipa is one of the continents that are situated south of Mt Meru.
7. The Brahma who rules over the Brahma Heaven.
8. The Sovereign Sakra who rules over the Trayastrimsa-Heaven.
9. The above is a story about Buddha and Buddha' mother Mahamaya. Mahamaya passed away after seven days of the birth of Buddha and she was reborn in the Trayastrimsa Heaven .So seven years after the Buddha achieved Enlightenment.

Buddha went to the Trayastrimsa Heaven and preached the Dharma to Mahamaya. After that Buddha came down from Trayastrimsa Heaven and descended to Jambudvipa at a city called Samkassa.

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Ramagrama Excavation II

- Sukra Sagar Shrestha

Actually the initiation of Ramagrama Excavation started when LDT/DOA filed an application to the UNESCO for the nomination of Lumbini, Tilaurakot and Ramagrama Stupa in the World Heritage List. UNESCO enlisted Lumbini immediately in World Heritage List but sent a team of archaeologist, geophysical surveyors to investigate further on the subject for the qualification of Tilaurakot and Ramagrama Stupa to be enlisted in the World Heritage list.

The team arrived in Nepal in 1997 and investigated the candidate sites of Tilaurakot and Ramagrama Stupa area and conducted the geophysical surveys. On the following year the team even conducted an archaeological excavation in Tilaurakot. The report of excavation is still awaited.

While conducting the geophysical investigation with Resistivity survey (Earth Resistance) and Magnetometer survey (Fluxgate Gradiometre), Magnetometer survey showed some very distinctive anomalic picture of a monastic complex on the North West of the main stupa. Then DOA planned for an excavation in order to check the result of geophysical survey. The first excavation in 1997 was conducted merely as a trial trenching.

The first season's result brought out some very interesting result but very short period of forty five days and five trenches of four by four meters digging brought more questions than the straight answer. Therefore the excavation was lengthened year after year. The first year's excavation brought out the result of the site to be occupied from very early historical period but the monastery could not be opened fully. Therefore second year's fieldwork is planned and excavation this time was conducted for seventy five days. It could open the monastery in maximum exposure but it also brought further question about the new structures seen in the south of the monastic complex. Therefore third season's field work was planned for three months long period. This is in total, the result of three season's field work which is presented here with.

Site Description

The site of Ramagrama is stretched North South after the river Jharahi was diverted from east of the stupa in 1986/87. Before that the stupa was surrounded by that river from three sides e.g. North, West and South. Once the river was diverted, the stupa complex then changed into an island topography. The running river Jharahi flows in the east and dried old course of the same river on all three remaining sides. But still a small strip of land is left on North as a land bridge. (Pl. I)

The whole area inside the island is cultivated except the area occupied by the stupa and south of it which is fenced with barbed wire. The area south of the stupa is planted with different trees and further beyond after the fence is left fallow which extends down to the old river course. The new trees were transplanted by Lumbini Development Trust in collaboration with Bussi-No-Kai Japan who also donated to erect a temple site in 1998/1999 to the south west of the stupa complex at a distance of nearly hundred fifty meters away.

Relief Of The Stupa

Ramagrama stupa is located almost at the middle of the island area. The relief of the stupa is not

evenly raised now. The south and eastern sides of the stupa is raised evenly to the centre forming the top where as north and west have more falls. The contour of the west side falls are more steeper than north side. They were sculpted out by the trees grown on those sides. Once the trees fell down the roots of them made holes and cracks.

The position of the stupa does not seem centrally located inside present barbed fence. It rather goes north from the fence in north and north west corner. The fence is considered as the boundary of the stupa complex and area beyond that is private land. Therefore the northern plinth of the stupa may go out of the fence and fall in the private land. Contrary to the north, the southern fence rather goes away from the plinth. The geophysical survey conducted in 1997 did not record any archaeological remains upto ten meters inside the fence in south.

The total height of the stupa at present from surrounding cultivated surface is 6.85 mtr. (Fig. 3)

The destruction features are noted in north and western side of the stupa. The cutting of the trenches in unlucky field to the north west of the stupa showed big concentration of brickbats with some distinctive bricks which were definitely used in the stupa plinths.

There were many trees grown on the stupa till few years back (Pl. II). The last and tallest tree still survives on south western side of the stupa. The tree is known in Nepali as Karna (botanical name: Albizia odoratissima) This tree also needs to be cut down at an earliest so that there will not be further destruction of the stupa by its roots (Pl. IIIc, d)

In my previous report of Ramagrama excavation, the historical account of the site has been already presented with finds encountered during first trial trench excavation. In second year the excavation was conducted in full scale and the area was extended further south. Similarly in third year the excavation was extended towards the stupa also.

For the scientific record and to correlate different structures and findings, the whole site is divided into different squares. Keeping in view the size of the main stupa, the first square is made accordingly and the stupa is encased into a fifty meters square (50x50m.). Then same size of the squares are extended in all four cardinal directions. In relation to the shape and size of the land and distribution of the subsurface archaeological remains, the area is planned to be covered by 88 squares of fifty meters by fifty meters. They are eight in west east and eleven in north south directions. The squares are numbered from top left to down right. The main square encasing the stupa falls on the square number 44. Other archaeological remains fall on the squares 27, 35, 36, 39, 43, 44 and 67. The present excavation site with the monastic complex, praying platform and the stupa falls on the square number 35, 43, and 44 respectively. Only known sites are noted in the particular squares. There could be other monuments unnoticed underground. They could be marked easily once they are traced.

Each squares of fifty meters are divided again into four quadrants of 25x25m. and marked alphabetically into ABCD in clockwise direction from top left. These quadrants are further divided into twenty five trenches of four meters by four meters leaving one meter baulk in between. Thus each square of fifty meters block has hundred trenches. This makes the digging manageable and scientific. (Fig. 1)

Twenty-five trenches of ABCD quadrants are marked alphabetically from top left in small letters a, b, c,

d, to z except one letter 'O'. The letter 'O' is thought to be misleading with zero. Therefore it is taken out. (Fig. 1)

All the findings and correlations are recorded in relation to bigger grids, quadrants, trenches and layer numbers.

Thus first number represents the big square (50x50m.) followed by a capital letter ABC or D for quadrants. Then comes the small alphabet which gives the particular trench and lastly the layer number in roman numeral. Therefore (for example) 35 Bd II means second layer of the trench d from quadrant B of the square number 35.

The trench plan printed in my previous report in Ancient Nepal-142 Pl. 7 therefore is slightly changed. The writer regrets the inconvenience caused to the readers.

Main Monastic Complex

After the excavation work of two years, it is now clear that the big complex coming out with huge walls turned out to be a modest monastic complex.

The monastic complex measures 13.5x13.5m. having 2.4m. wide rooms and courtyard of 4.8m. square. The size of the wall varies from 1.15 to 1.25m. thick and the bricks have only 6x19x30cms. and 6x23x36cms. in size. Surprisingly no evidence of roof tiles are recovered showing the roofs to be covered by organic materials most probably the thatch².

All the outer walls of the monastery remain intact at least in foundation level with some bits of bricks robbing mostly in probable door locations. In southern facade of the monastery, there are as many as 32 courses of brick left and in eastern part there are 23-28 layers still remained in situ. But tops of them are uneven and also no door frames are encountered. They might have been robbed away or destroyed in course of time due to being organic material.

The depth of the foundation trench while laying first bricks are also not in even level. In trench 35 Cp in east the lowest layer of the bricks is 220cm. in north (tr. no. 35 Ch) 195cm. and in west and south are 215 (tr. 35 Cm) and 220cm. (tr. 35 Ct) respectively.

The inner room size of the compartment ranges from 205cms. to 240cms., without any dividing walls. Probably the rooms were also divided by wooden materials.

The location of the doors are not found with any tangible objects like door jambs and doorframes. But a door hook is found from the trench. (pl IX d)

One door is surely in SW. corner (tr. 35Cs) and another probably two in the east (tr. 35 Cu and 35 Cp) where same type of wall destruction above the foundation level is noticed. In north may be two in trenches (tr. 35C an and 35 Ci) and in western part, since the wall is not exposed fully can not be said and could not be detected.

Unlike in outer walls, the inner walls of the monastic complex is nearly all robbed away leaving only seven courses of bricks in western side (Pl. VI c) where as in north three layers of the bricks are left in

sporadic condition (tr. 35 Cg) and in south also same condition prevails. The eastern side is left with only ghost walls filled in with brickbats after the bricks from the wall were robbed away. The remains of the ghost wall could easily be detected in sections. The exit to the courtyard is in southeast corner of the complex.

Discard Of The Monastic Complex

The monastic complex seems collapsed and discarded well before the last flood occurred. This is shown by the brickbats concentration in almost all the trenches laid over the monastic complex. The brickbats concentration goes below and is well overlaid by yellow floody deposit. When did the flood occurred is unknown because of the lack of C14 dating facility.

There is a votive stupa erected at the centre of the courtyard. The placement of this stupa is little deviated towards southwest by 20cms. The size of the courtyard is 4.80m square, exactly double the breadth of the monastic room-size. The stupa does not seem contemporary to monastic complex because the last flood occurred after the abandonment of the monastery and this votive stupa is found constructed on top of that last flood layer. The placement of the stupa seems chance placement at the center of the monastic courtyard. The stupa has six courses of bricks and seems erected from the salvaged bricks from surrounding. (See Pl XI and Fig. 5)

Trenching In Riverbed On South

A long trench of one meter by twenty meters was laid down a meter away from the alignment exposed in the riverbed to the south of the main stupa. The trench runs from west to east starting from the exposed brick alignment. The trenches are cut in the size of one meter by four meters at the interval of one meter to the north where either bricks are exposed or alignments could be traced. (Fig. 10)

The trenches are cut in order to see if the structure seen in the riverbed extends towards north under the dry river. The structure was believed by the archaeologist to be the monastic complex described by the Chinese pilgrims Fahien and Hieun Tsang in fourth and seventh century respectively.

The geophysical survey conducted by Bradford University Group on the south of the brick alignment also guessed the brick structures deep below the cultivated surface⁴. The local people also talks about a big foundation wall and wide brick pavements few feet below the cultivated surface. They saw them while digging a grave for a Sadhu in 1985/86⁵.

After going down for one and half meters, it was found only fallen bricks in two of the eastern trenches while in western trench a clear alignment of brick wall is traced. Therefore this trench is extended towards north again with the size of one and half by two meters. It falls due north of exposed wall in the river bed. The wall is found one meter sixty centimeters extended further north from the alignments which is below eighty centimeters from the present river surface. At the depth of two meters and ten centimeters the water table came up and further digging is stopped. (Pl VII C)

From this cutting it is found that this part of the structure is found to be cut and buried by the river at least 2.5 meters. Since the river is already diverted now, there is no threat of being further destruction any more.

Wall Exposed On The Left Bank Of River Jharahi

A small piece of the wall is found exposed in the left bank of river Jharahi to the east of the stupa. The alignment of it runs nearly for two meters in north south direction. The structure was unnoticed or neglected during the diversion act of the river in 1986/87. Archaeological value was underestimated, then.

The site was thoroughly checked this year and found that the alignment has six courses of the bricks left. To the right angle of it in south, a wall of 50cm. thickness runs towards west. This portion of the wall is found cut and thrown away during the diversion act of the river.

From the northern end of the alignment a single course of the brick further runs for more than 35 meters showing as if the road pavement or a courtyard complex.

The brick size in this site is 5x19x28cms. which shows the site to be younger in age than Sunga Kushan period.

A further dig to the east of the same spot would be fruitful to reveal the full structure in order to understand about the site. (Pl. IV d)

Trial Trenches In Garden Area

UNESCO team who conducted the geophysical survey strongly recommended the trees on the south of the stupa to be cut down and clear the land in order to save the probable archaeological remains underneath. Those trees are already five years old and grown fully and has been the part of the landscape now. The trees were transplanted by LDT in collaboration with Bussi-no-Kai a Buddhist Organisation of Japan who also made a garden and a monument across the river in three Kattha Land.

When talked about the octogenarians, there is a rare chance of finding any archeological remains underneath because the river has travelled many times to and forth in North South direction during their life time. The remains, if any, should have been washed away by the river and if left in pieces they will be well below the ground where a root action of a general tree can not reach there. Therefore it was decided to check the area anyway and cut some trenches in garden area in order to see the remains. The area was thoroughly checked and the trenches laid in different parts of the garden. Two trenches of one and half meter by ten meters in west, two one by ten meters and one two by five meters at the center was laid down. On the east of the garden again, one two by five meters and one by thirty meters trenches were cut down. The depth in all the trenches were achieved to two meters down. Nothing except the reverse side silt is encountered. This part of the land is found to be sterile of the monuments underneath. (Pl. VII d)

Therefore it is strongly recommended now not to clear away the trees from the area. There is very little chance of archaeological remains in this part of Ramagrama complex the transplantation is well done and luckily well placed.

Opening Of The Central Stupa Structure

The central square structure seen, in the magnetometer survey, measures 115cms. by 115cms. with six layer of the bricks. The structure extends up from 40cms. below the present surface of the land with two one and three courses of the bricks.

The aim of opening this structure is to understand about the purpose of this monument. Since it looks like a stupa and foreign deposit seen below it in western section of it has been decided to cut down in order to check that deposit and fully understand about the structure. The structure is removed layer by layer with photographing and drawing each layer before it is removed. The drawing is done with superimposed central point fixed each time vertically in the same spot with the help of a thread marked red in central point.

Surprisingly the deposit thought to be the foreign materials turned out to be the rain penetration which carried down the surface composition, and it was seen only in western section. The whole structure is cut down to the bottom and found the surface below the structure merely a flood deposit. Half of the bricks at last layer are left in situ after seeing all the structure. The result is late erection of the structure which was raised only after the last flood occurred in the area. The flood deposition itself is after the abandonment of the monastic complex.

All the bricks used in this structure is found to be the size of 5x19x29cms. The bricks are laid one upon the other in the pattern as shown in the drawing (Fig. 5). The structure was laid collecting the full size bricks around the stupa well after the abandonment of the monastic complex. (see also p 4)

Copper Coin

A copper coin is found from Northwest Corner of the monastery from the depth of 15cms. from top (trench 35 Ch). The coin is fairly preserved.

The size of the coin is 2.4 to 2.5cms. in diameter showing not in perfect circular shape. Similarly the thickness also varies from 2.4mm. to 4.2mm. The weight is 13.010 grams.

The coin is of Kushana period. There is a figure of a king wearing long coat down to the knee. The posture seems in walking with the feet apart. The right hand holds a lantern (?) in bent posture as if raising little up and left hand is raised up to elbow holding arrow or some type of club. The head seems wearing a pointed cap.

There are four letters embossed to the right of the figure. The legend reads ब ध ण य. The letters are of Brahmi from the periodic phase of Sunga Kushana.

On the reverse of the coin, there is a figure standing at the center and few letters in unintelligible condition. This side is much rusted therefore could not be deciphered properly. Such coin type was also reported from Tilaurakot coin hoards excavated by Rissso University. Babukrishna Rijal has classified that under Buddha type copper coin of Kaniska⁷.

Grey ware

The greyware potsherds are found from the level below the long occupation layer of the monastic complex from inside the room part. The potsherds are collected from the depth of 275cms. down to the natural layer. The greywares are coming along with the black and red wares.

The greyware potsherds are seen mostly from utensils than from other big pots. The edges of the greyware are found bevelled either from inside or from outside. Knife edge bowls also are noticed. (Fig. 8)

Unlike the other greywares, the specimen from Ramagrama greywares are found dotted with some red

spots showing some preserve of brick grits. Therefore it could be surmised that the Ramagrama greywares may be of latter date (5-3rd century B.C.)

This year's excavation (2001 AD) brought to light the Mouryan structure of the stupa. The structure was touched at the end of the excavation season. Therefore could not be gone down to foundation level. However the plinth could be exposed in west and East showing the Mouryan structure to be little more than thirty three meters in diameters.

From the exposed structures in trench no 44 Ak and 44 Bm we can locate different phases of the stupa. The Mouryan structure is found to be tilted outwards and the second phases the supporting wall in west of which a piece is also found exposed in the trench 44 Aa. This phase could be from Sunga Kushan or even Gupta period⁶. (Pl. V ab) The size of the Mouryan bricks are found to be 7x27x38cms. quite identical to the same phase of construction in Mayadevi temple of Lumbini. The size of the wall is still unidentified within stupa because it goes towards the centre. Only next seasons digging will give this picture.

The size of the bricks in second phase are 5x19x29cms. Since no datable objects are unearthed, we are not in a position to give definite date for the structures until the further evidence is at hand. Further on we also have to see the relation between the structures in the west with the main stupa complex. This will have to be checked in the next excavation.

There is an entrance like structure exposed partially in south of main stupa in the trench 44 Dp. Once went down to average 45cms. from the surface, a skeleton is exposed which attracted hundreds and thousands of visitors to the site making it impossible to dig further on. Therefore the digging was stopped and the skeleton is reburied in situ for future digging.

From the study of skeleton, we can somehow make a presumption that the dead is not a ritual burial because it is not followed with any burial objects like any coins, pots and rings. The skeleton is also not adorned with any necklace, rings and so on. A ritual burial is always followed by dead objects. The dead is simply laid down with face upside and mouth wide open. Even there are brickbats inserted forcibly inside the mouth and the bone just below the knee is broken. It shows rather forceful murder. The dead is placed almost at the entrance from south and buried less than half a meter below the surface and further covered by rolled down brickbats from the stupa. (PL VII, Fig. 3)

Covering of the trenches and conservation notes for future renovation and conservation works.

Since the monastic complex in unlucky field is adequately excavated and well understood, only renovation and conservation works remain now to be undertaken in order to put the monument in exhibition. When this conservation work starts is unknown. Therefore the trenches have been refilled.

While refilling work was done, the excavated surface of the trenches were covered with the plastic sheets and put the earth on top. The walls of the monastic complex were also covered accordingly with turpoline sheets but only on tops. The tops of the walls varies from the surface which falls from fifty to hundred twenty centimeters below present surface. Once the digging work for conservation and renovation starts one has to wait for blue tarpoline to be seen then follow that to expose the monastic walls but he/she should not leave to consult the map of the excavation report.

The baulk lines are left unexcavated. Therefore there is still a chance to understand more about the stratigraphic situation if one intends to.

For more details of the composition-the eastern facade of the inner wall in the monastery is refilled with brickbats again because not a single brick was left in this part of the wall. All the bricks were taken out and filled with brickbats when the wall was robbed. The northern and southern part of the inner wall has partly original bricks up to five courses but that is also in western half only. Eastern halves of the walls were totally robbed away and remains in the form of ghostwall only. The western wing has complete wall still with seven courses of bricks left. This is the original part of the wall and bricks used on that part has more of the complete bricks. No brickbats are found used on that part of monastic wall. (Pl. VIc)

The outer walls of the monastic complex is found complete surrounding on all four sides. There is no difficulty to recognize. They are all in alignment. The top of the walls are, as mentioned above, only half a meter to hundred twenty centimeters below the present surface of the land. The thickness of the monastic wall is nearly similar to Mayadevi temple. The thickness varies from a meter to hundred and fifteen centimeters. The southwest corner of the wall is slightly tilted outwards.

The east and south foreground of the complex is found paved with brickbats up to three meters wide. The pavement may be in west and north as well, but since they are not opened can not be said precisely. The level of the pavement is hundred and thirty centimeters below present surface.

The central structure (stupa) has been found latter addition. Although late in origin, it also should be incorporated in the renovation. Therefore should not be discarded. The details of the cutting is described in this report itself. (p. 4 and 5)

A further study before renovation work if wanted would be more rewarding. The study could be made again after opening all the filled-in trenches by rechecking the stratigraphy from the baulk left.

At last I should thank my colleagues Pravin Shrestha -Photographer, Purna Bahadur Shrestha -Draftsman and Mahesh Sharma office assistant who worked very hard and sincerely to accomplish the result of this important excavation. Despite their office duty I found them ever untiring to accomplish additional duties conferred on them during whole excavation season.

I should not miss to thank and mention the names of Mr. Krishna Bahadur K.C archaeologist deputed from LDT, and Narad Yadav, who cooperated very much during the entire period of excavation. Mr. Yadav remained all time cooperative even before and after the excavation by keeping an eye on excavated sites.

Reference:

1. Shrestha Sukra Sagar, Ramagrama Excavation Ancient Nepal Nr. 146, March 1999, P-4
2. ibid, P-5
3. ibid Pl. III pic. 4
4. Coningham Robin and Armin Schmidt, Nomination of Tilaurakot and RAMAGRAM (as part of a serial nomination of world Heritage sites associated with the life of the Lord Buddha), Report and Recommendations of a UNESCO Mission-1997, P-57

5. On personal consultation with Dayaram Dhobi and Babaji from the Village Deorea and Ujjani respectively.
6. The inscription on the coin is deciphered by the Chief Epigraphist of Dept. of Archaeology Mr. Shyam Sundar Rajvamshi.
7. Ancient Nepal. Nr 26, Pl. VII.

*Wish you all the best
on the occasion of
2546th Buddha Jayanti
&
Happy New Year 2059*

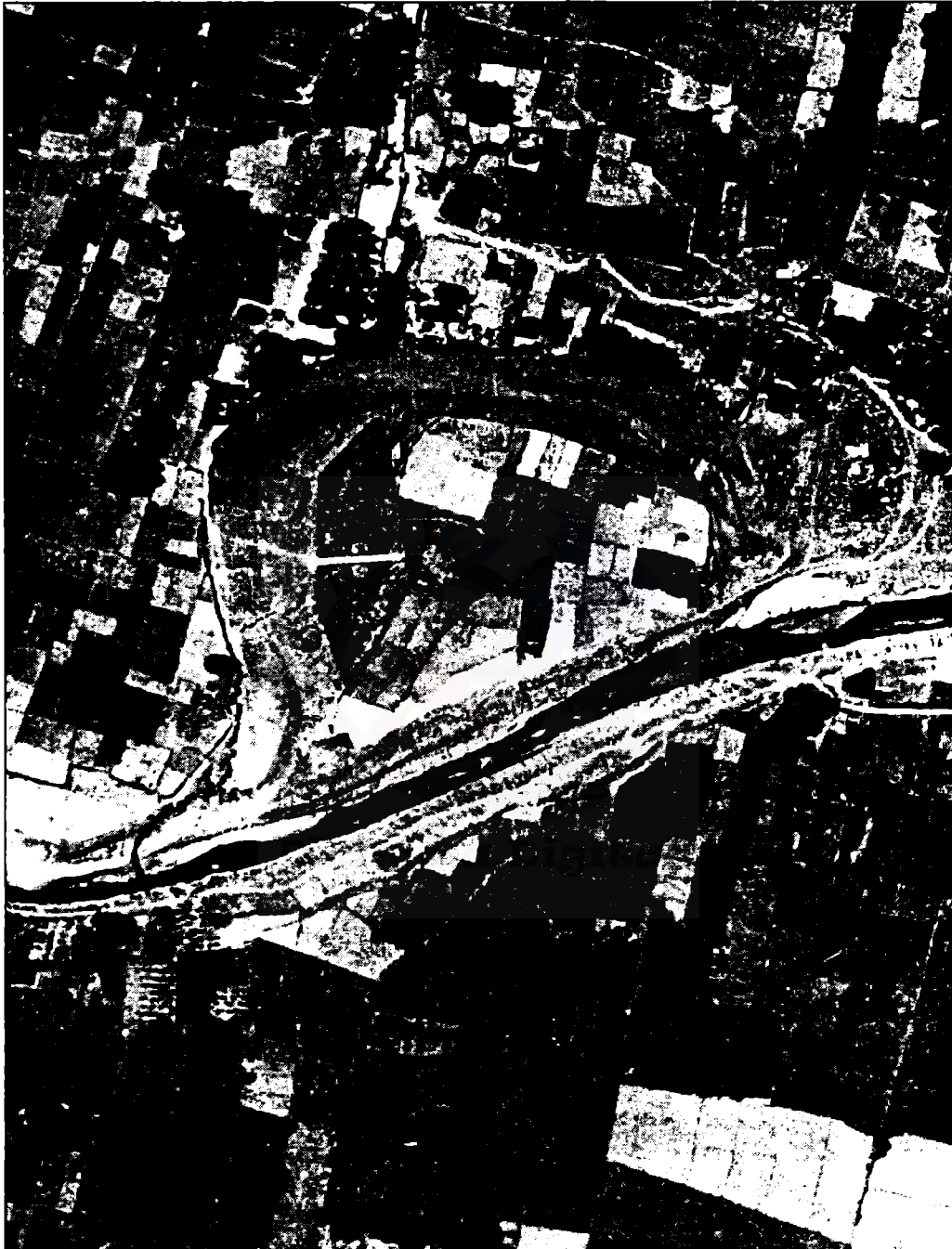
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I. AERIAL VIEW OF RAMAGRAMA STUPA AND RIVER JHARAHI



b. View from West



c. View from East



a. View from North



d. Detail Bricks of Stupa dome

II. ARCHIVAL PICTURES OF RAMAGRAMA STUPA (around the decade of nineteen seventies)



b. Excavated trench from top of the Stupa towards west.



a. Ujjaini Village



d. Foreign Pilgrims at Ramagrama.



c. Excavated trenches and the stupa from west

III RAMAGRAMA STUPA AND SURROUNDINGS



a. South West wall of the praying platform



b. Brick concentration on top of the foundation



c. Extended Western entrance and a wall of praying platform.



d. Wall structure exposed in river section to the east of the stupa

IV. EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS



a, b. Mouryan wall and supportive structure in west of stupa



c. Wall structure of later phase than Mouryan.



d. Mouryan structure in east of the stupa



V. DIFFERENT STRUCTURES



a. A rimsherd below the monastic foundation



b. Occupational layer below the monastic foundation



c. Inner wall foundation of the monastic complex in west



d. Northeast corner of the praying platform where the plinth of the stupa comes to join

VI. DIFFERENT FOUNDATIONS



a. A skull of the dead burial



b. The knee portions of the dead burial



c. A trench in south of the stupa in old river course



d. A trial trench in garden area.

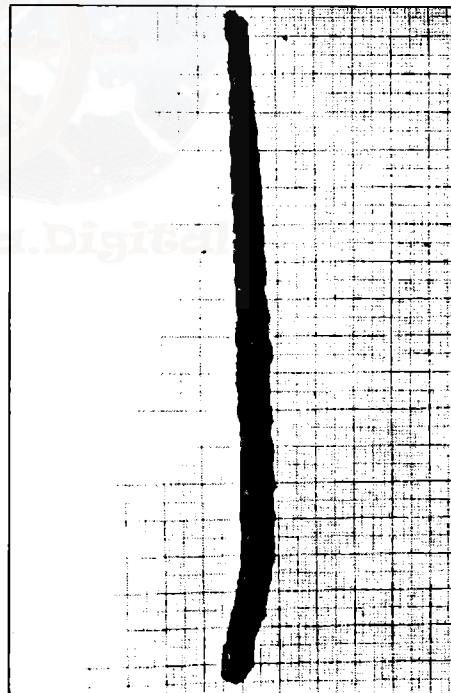
VII. DIFFERENT SITUATIONS



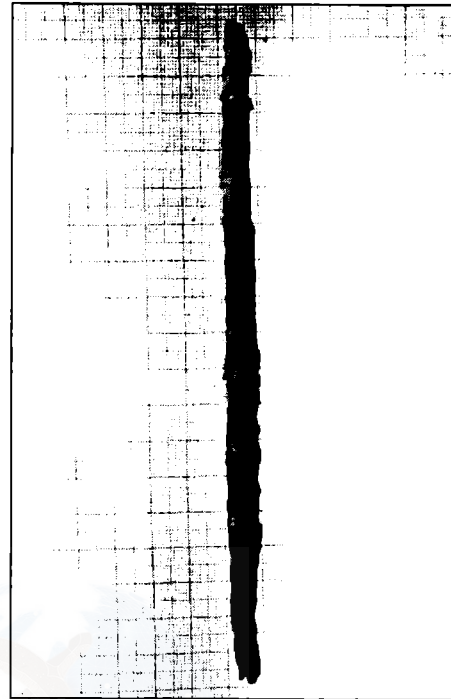
a. Bangle pieces found from IIInd layer



b. An animal figurine of terracota

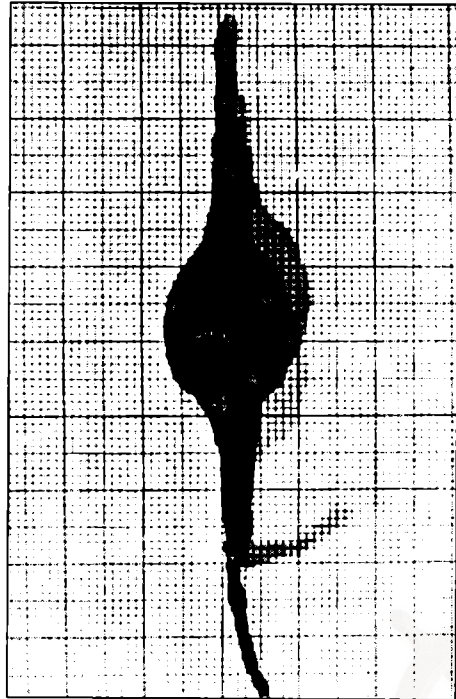


c. An iron rod

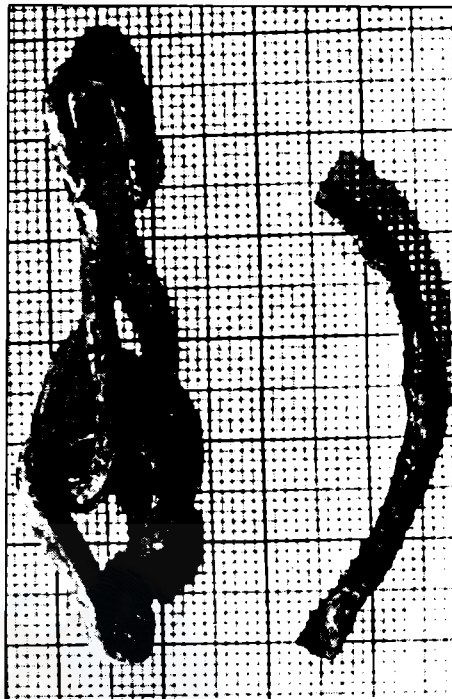


d. An iron rod

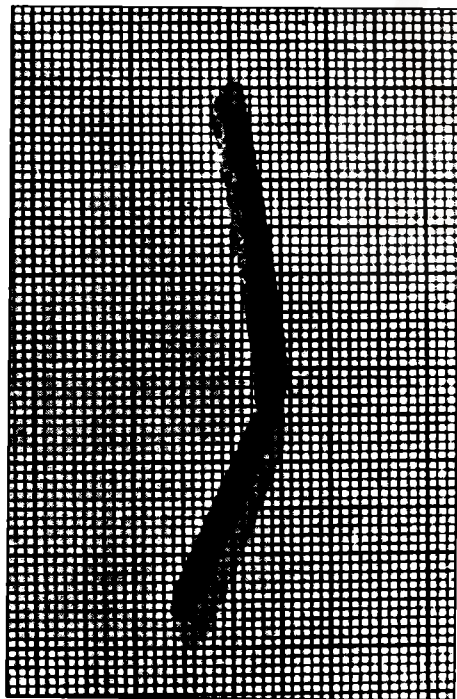
VIII. FINDINGS I (The square on the surface are centimeter square)



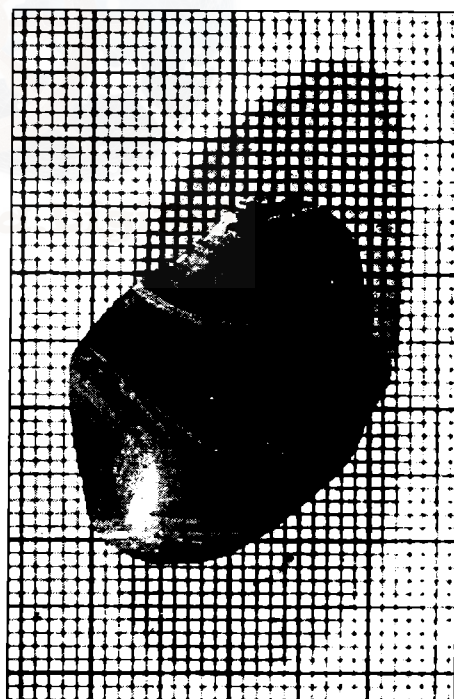
b. A chhedami of iron



d. A door hook (?)

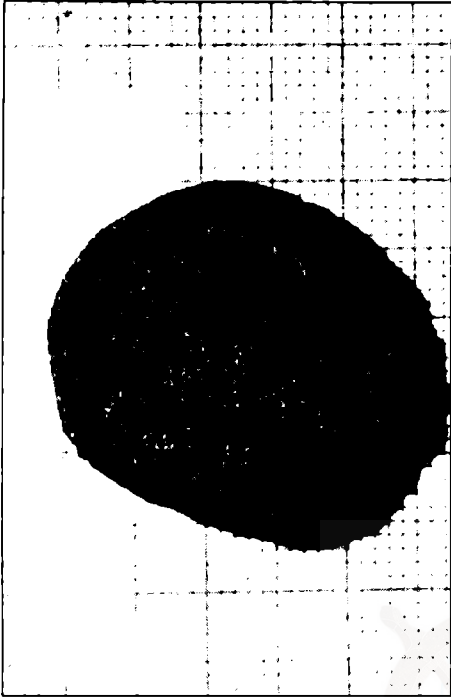


a. A silver rod.

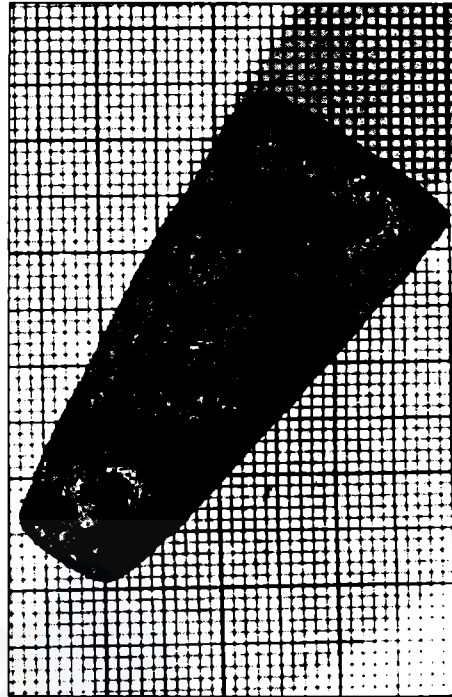


c. A semiprecious stone

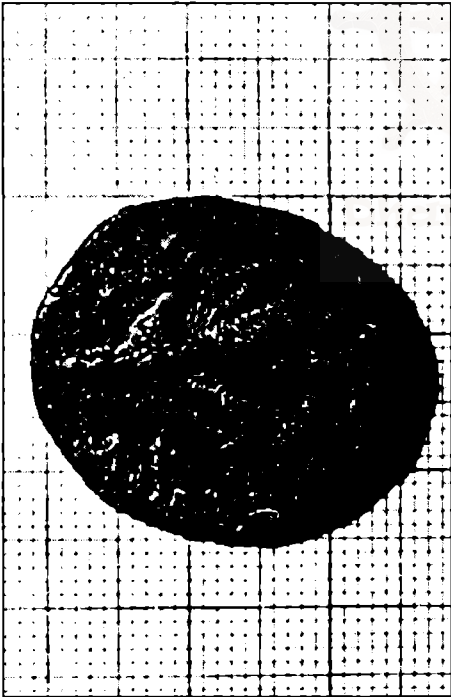
IX. FINDINGS II (The square on the surface are centimeter squares)



b. Reverse



d. A pendant made of terracota.



a. Obverse

A copper coin of Kushan period



c. Molar of wild boar (?)

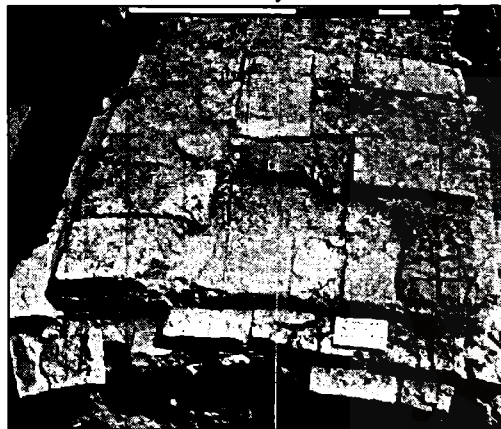
X. FINDINGS III (The squares on the surface are centimeter square)



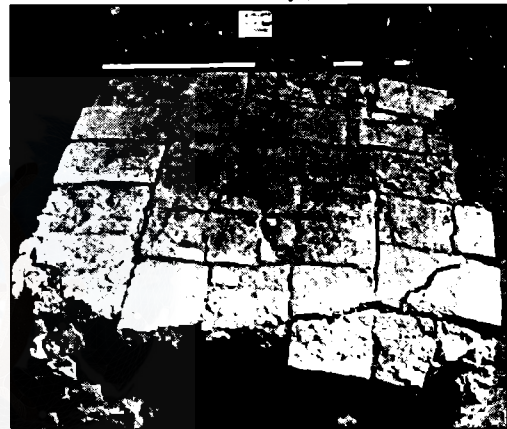
a. I Layer



d. IV Layer



b. II Layer



e. V Layer



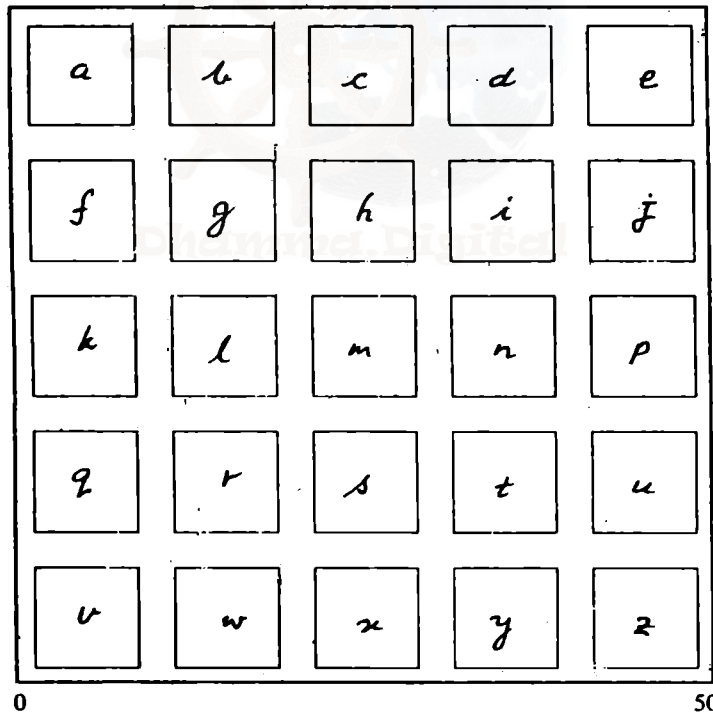
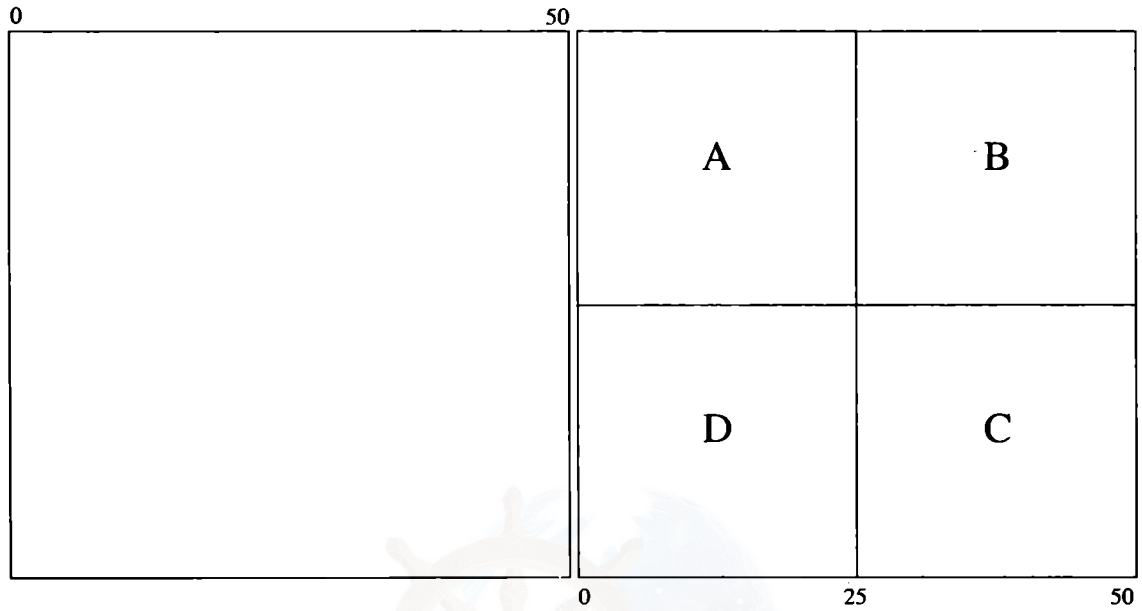
c. III Layer



f. VI Layer

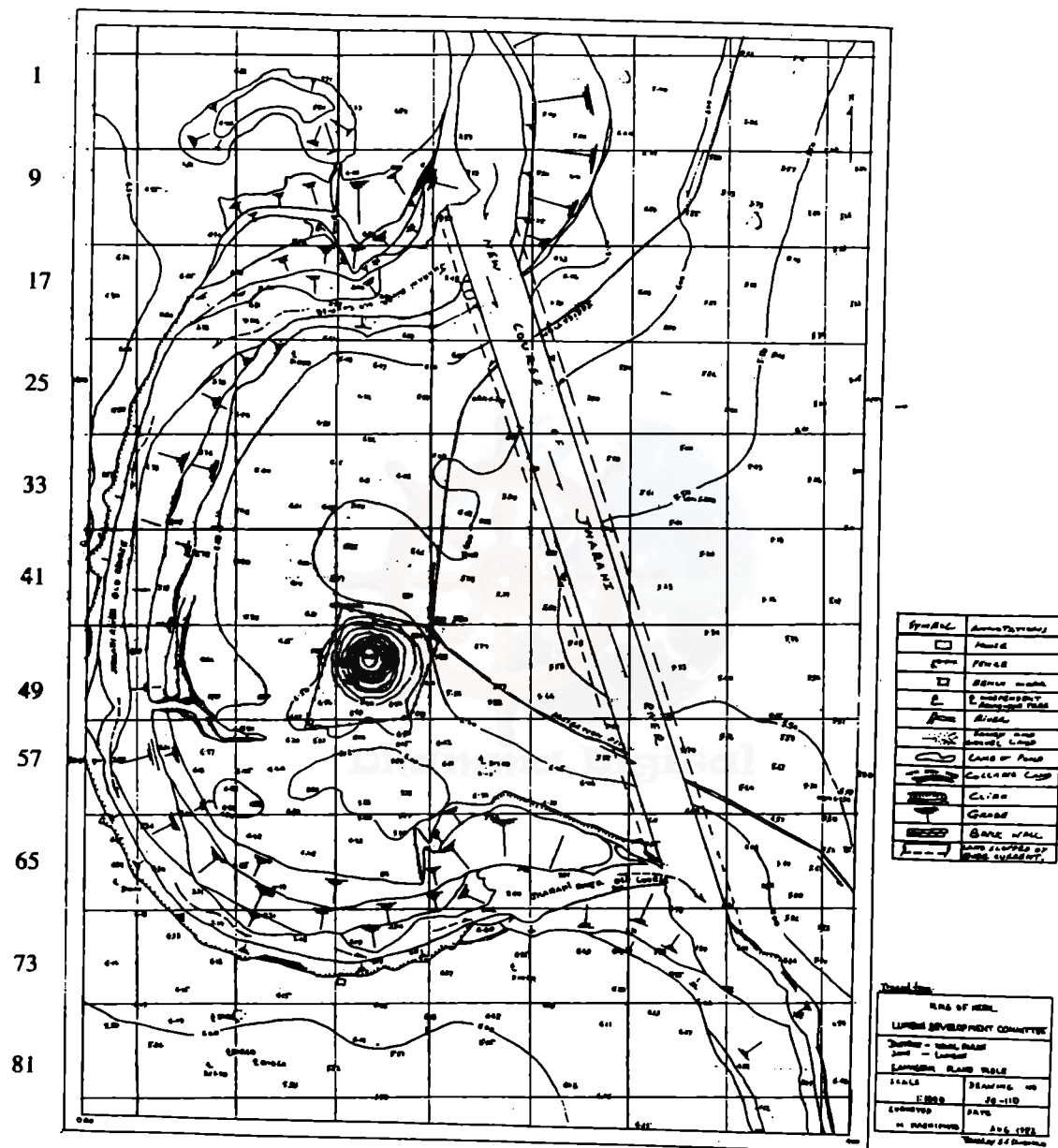
XI. CUTTING OF CENTRAL STRUCTURE INSIDE COURTYARD

I. REVISED TRENCH PLAN



Ramagrama.....

2. LAND- MAP AROUND RAMGRAMA STUPA



3. EXCAVATION OUTLOOK IN RAMAGRAMA

