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Monuments to the Dead in Ancient North India

Hans T. Bakker

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The funerary monument in Sanskrit literature

We possess a moving literary description of what the death of a king—great in the eyes of his contemporaries—brought about, how it was experienced by the court, and which ritual and ceremonies were performed to cope with the calamity. Bāṇa in *Harṣacarita* 5 tells us that, even before the actual demise of Harṣa's father, Prabhākaravardhana, the latter's first wife, queen Yaśovatī, was so overwhelmed by grief and the prospect of widowhood that she, against the express wish of her son, committed herself to the flames (i.e. became a *satī*), while her husband was still alive. After the death of his mother Harṣa goes to his dying father and clasps his feet in despair. The latter comforts him, recommends him to his royal duties, and utters his last words: 'enemies should be exterminated.'¹ The body is brought to the bank of the Sarasvatī on a bier, a funeral pyre is built and the cremation ritual is performed at dusk. It is suggested that the remaining ladies of the king's harem also commit *satī*. Harṣa keeps a vigil and next morning goes to the Sarasvatī to bathe, offers an oblation of water to his father and goes home in distress (p. 293). A brahmin eats the first

This article has benefited from the learned comments and suggestions of Phyllis Granoff, Yuko Yokochi, Alexis Sanderson, Arlo Griffiths and Oskar von Hinüber. The scope of this study is limited to funerary practices within the brahminical (Hindu) fold of the ancient period—i.e. the Vedic period to the middle of the 7th century (the reign of Harṣavardhana)—in northern India. Funerary practices in the South, i.e. Dravida country, and South-east Asia seem to have differed significantly from those in North India (see notes 21, 25, 79). This subject deserves a study of its own. In late-medieval North India too new forms of commemoration (*samādhis*, *chatarīs*) emerged, possibly under Islamic influences (note 79).

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¹ *Harṣacarita* (5 p. 288): *niravaśeṣatām śatravo neyāḥ*.

piṇḍas offered to the ghost (*preta*) and the period of impurity passes. The deceased king's paraphernalia are given to the brahmins; the collected bones are brought to holy places. Then it is said that a 'stab of pain' is set up in the form of a monument at (the place of) the funeral pyre made of a mass of bricks.² Finally the royal elephant is set loose and gradually the lamentations subside. The metaphor used by Bāṇa, 'a stab of pain' (*śokaśalya*)—the primary meaning of *śalya* being 'dart'—suggests that the monument had the form of a needle.³ Such a monument seems to be known from the Sanskrit literature, viz. the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*'s chapter on the so-called *aiḍūka*.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.84.1–15 describes the *aiḍūkarūpa* as follows.⁴ A structure is built of three (receding) square platforms (*bhadrapiṭha*), with steps on four sides. On the third platform a *liṅga* (*liṅgarūpa*) is erected, but one not decorated with lines (*rekhā*, i.e. without the *brahmasūtra* and the *pārśvasūtra*). In the middle of this *liṅga*

² *Harṣacarita* (6 p. 300): *kalpitaśokaśalye sudhānicayacite citācaityacihne*, which Śaṃkara Kavi glosses: *citāyām caityacihnas tadākāraṃ cihnam, śmaśānadevagrhaṃ vā* |.

³ Cf. *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* III, 62, *Sokasallaharaṇa*, name of the discourse (*dharmapariyāya*) that takes away the grief of bereavement, taught to king Muṇḍa.

⁴ *VDhP* 3.841–15 (emended): *aiḍūkarūpanirmāṇam* |
mārkaṇḍeya uvāca |
aiḍūkarūpanirmāṇam śṛṇuṣva gadato mama |
aiḍūkapūjanāt pūjā kṛtāṣya jagato bhavet || 1 ||
bhadrapiṭhaṃ budhaḥ kuryāt sopānaiḥ śobhanair yutam |
caturbhir yādavaśreṣṭha yathādiśam arindama || 2 ||
tasyopariṣṭād aparaṃ bhadrapiṭhaṃ tu kārayet |
tasyopariṣṭād aparaṃ tādr̥gvidham arindama || 3 ||
tasyopariṣṭāt kartavyaṃ liṅgarūpaṃ vijānatā |
na tu tatrāpi kartavyaṃ liṅgaṃ rekhāvirājitam || 4 ||
tasya madhye dhrūvāṃ yaṣṭim caturasrāṃ tu kārayet |
tasyopariṣṭāt kartavyā bhūmikāḥ tu trayodaśa || 5 ||
tasyopariṣṭāt kartavyaṃ tathāivāmalasāraṇam |
tasyopari punar yaṣṭiḥ kāryā rājan suvartulā || 6 ||
samārdhacandramadhyasthacandrakeṇa virājitā |
bhūmikā yā mayā proktā tathāivāmalasāraṇam || 7 ||
bhuvanāḥ te tvayā jñeyāḥ tathā rājaṃś caturdaśa |
liṅgaṃ maheśvaro devo vṛttā yaṣṭiḥ pitāmahaḥ || 8 ||
caturasrā tu yā yaṣṭiḥ sā ca devo janārdanaḥ |
guṇarūpeṇa vijñeyaṃ bhadrapiṭhatrayaṃ tathā || 9 ||
guṇādhānam iti proktaṃ trailokyam sacarācaram |
adhastād bhuvanaṇām tu liṅgopari tathā nṛpa || 10 ||
lokapālāś ca kartavyāḥ sūlahastāś caturdiśam |
virūḍho dhṛtarāṣṭraś ca virūpākṣaś ca yādava || 11 ||
kuberaś ca mahātejāḥ sūryaveśadharaḥ śubhaḥ |
sarve kavacinaḥ kāryāś śubhābharaṇabhūṣitāḥ || 12 ||
virūdhakaṃ vijānīhi śakraṃ devagaṇeśvaram |
dhṛtarāṣṭraṃ vijānīhi yamaṃ bhuvanaṇāyakaṃ || 13 ||
virūpākṣaṃ vijānīhi varuṇaṃ yādasāṃ patim |
rājaraḥṇaṃ vijānīhi kuberaṃ dhanadaṃ prabhum || 14 ||
aiḍūkarūpaṃ kathitaṃ mayaitat, prajāhitākhyam yaduvaṃśamukhya |
aiḍūkapūjānirātā labhante, sukhaṃ manuṣyā divi vāsam ante || 15 ||.

an immovable square column (*yaṣṭi*) is fixed. On that thirteen *bhūmikās* are made.⁵ On top of this is an *āmalasāraka* and on that again a round column *yaṣṭi* is fixed. This column is decorated with a medallion (*candra*ka).⁶ In between the *bhūmikās* and the *liṅga* (i.e. on the square column?) the four *lokapālas* are situated, Virūḍha, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūpākṣa, and Kubera, with lances (*śūla*) in their hands, wearing armour and ornaments.⁷ It is said that in this construction Virūḍha is Śakra, Dhṛtarāṣṭra is Yama, Virūpākṣa is Varuṇa, and Kubera is Rājarāja. This *aiḍūka* is named ‘Prajāhita’; men who worship it obtain happiness and heaven after death.

Shah in her commentary emphasizes that this *Aiḍūka* structure is not a particular deity but is designed to embody the whole universe. As to the names of the *Lokapālas* she remarks: ‘These are known to Buddhist mythology as the four Buddhist Yakṣas who do the work of the *Lokapālas*.’⁸ Shah assumes that the *aiḍūka* of the VDhP is without ashes or bones and is therefore acceptable to be worshipped, whereas originally such monuments would have contained bones or relics. This plausible assumption as well as the naming of the four Buddhist *Lokapālas* strongly suggest that Buddhist examples lie at the root of the Purāṇa’s description of the *aiḍūka*.⁹ We may add that the use of the word *aiḍūka*, instead of *eḍūka*, could also point to this, meaning ‘derived from/related to/of the nature of the *eḍūka*, not the original (Buddhist) ‘os-suary.’ The view that sees in the *aiḍūka* an appropriation by the author of the VDhP

⁵ It is unclear whereon exactly, the *liṅgarūpa* or the *yaṣṭi*; *liṅga* is neuter, *yaṣṭi* feminine. *tasyopariṣṭāt* (84.5c) refers to the *liṅga*, unless we assume double sandhi. A similar sloppy construction is seen in 6a. Shah cites Kramrish, who interprets the *bhūmikās* as ‘steps.’

⁶ I read *samārdhacandra*^o instead of *samārkacandra*^o, meaning that the medallion is situated in the middle of the horizontal (*sama*) crescent moon. The thirteen *bhūmikās* and the *āmalasāraka* are said to represent the 14 *bhuvanas*. The *liṅga* represents Maheśvara, the round column *Pitāmaha* and the square column *Janārdana*. The three platforms represent the three *guṇas*.

⁷ In accordance with the oldest MS C, I take ‘the apparel of the sun (Sūrya)’ in 12b singular, corresponding with Kubera.

⁸ See *Barhut Inscriptions* (CII II, pt. ii), p. 73: ‘As Kupira (*Kubera*) and Virūḍaka (*Virūḍhaka*) are the guardians of the Northern and Southern region respectively we can assume with certainty that on the lost corner pillars of both the quadrants Virūpakkha and Dhataratṭha, the guardians of the West and East, were represented, each one with two companions. Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore*, p. 212, is of the opinion that the names of the four world-guardians do not occur in the older Pāli texts, but they are given in the *Mahāsamayasutta* (D II, 257–258) and in the *Ājānāṭiyasutta* (D III, 197ff.) in accordance with their fixed distribution in the four directions.’

In the *Aiḍūka* construction it seems that Virūḍha represents the East (= Śakra) and Dhṛtarāṣṭra the South (= Yama). This would make a *pradakṣiṇā*: Virūḍha East, Dhṛtarāṣṭra South, Virūpākṣa West, Kubera North. This is a deviation from the standard Buddhist doctrine; cf. Banerjee 1956, 521f.: ‘In Buddhist mythology too we find a group of four divine beings associated with the four principal quarters, and the Sanskrit Buddhist texts give us a stereotyped list of four; they are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the Gandharva king (east), Virūḍhaka, the king of the Kumbhāṇḍas (south), Virūpākṣa, the Nāga monarch (west) and Vaiśravaṇa, the Yakṣa king (north). They are the Catur-mahārājas of some Buddhist texts, and Pāṇini seems to have had them in his mind when he referred to their bhaktas in one of his *sūtras* (P IV.3.99): *mahārājāṭṭhaṇ*.’

⁹ If we compare this description with that of the *Divyāvadāna* (see below n. 72 on p. 32) we observe another correspondence: the stairs at the four sides. The three *bhadrapīṭhas* may reflect the three *medhīs* or platforms (see Roth 1980, 200f.).

of a Buddhist architectural tradition finds support in the outcome of Gustav Roth's investigation into the *Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa*.¹⁰

We have some more literary evidence regarding the *eḍūka*. The *Mahāvastu* refers to an anticipated funerary monument of princess Sudarśanā, who tells her mother:

Mother, when the seven Kṣatriyas, after fighting one another, shall have caused my death, then, after having performed the cremation rite and collected the bones, you should next erect for me a monument (*elūkā*). And at the entrance of that monument you should plant a karṇikāra tree. Thereupon, when the first month of the rainy season has come after the hot season, that karṇikāra tree will be wrapped in a golden colour as it is covered abundantly by blossoms. Then you shall remember me, thinking to yourself: 'I had a daughter whose complexion was beautiful (*sudarśanā*) like this.'¹¹

Evidently the word used here for the monument, *elūkā*, refers to a funerary monument of laymen. Emeneau, discussing the word in a review of Mayrhofer's *KEWA*,¹² and referring to Edgerton's BHSD s.v. *eluka*, remarks:

The word in Buddhist texts seems clearly to be *eluka* or *elūka* and to mean 'monument containing the ashes or bones of a dead person.' [...] Considering the clear meaning in the Buddhist texts (bones are specifically mentioned in one passage) and the *l* of the word there, one must at least consider again Kittel's old suggestion... of connection with the Dr[avidian] words for 'bone'....

Shah quotes Helmer Smith who derives it from the canarese root *el-* 'to stand up, to rise.'¹³ This meaning of the word *eḍūka* is confirmed by the *Amarakośa*, in which it

¹⁰Roth 1980. In a *Postscriptum* Roth draws a comparison between the description in the VDhP and some Buddhist texts and refers, for instance, to a bronze *stūpa* (ca. 10th century) kept in the Patna Museum (Plate XIV/3; cf. *ibid.* p. 208). Roth concludes that the VDhP 'follows an older Buddhist tradition which is found in the above quoted chapters of *Caityavibhāṣavinayodbhāvasūtra*, *Stūpalakṣaṇakārikāvivecana*, and *Kriyāsaṃgraha*' (*ibid.* p. 200).

¹¹*Mahāvastu* II, p. 486 15: *ambe yadi me sapta kṣatriyā parasparam virudhitvā ghātayiṣyanti, tataḥ bhaṣmāyitvā asthīni saṃharyitvā tato me elūkāṃ kārāpayasi | tatra ca elūkadvāre karṇikāravṛkṣaṃ ropāpayasi | tato grīṣmāṇāṃ atyayena prathame prāvṛṣamāse vartamāne so karṇikāravṛkṣo sarvapari-phullo bhaveyā hemaprakāśavarṇaḥ | tato me smarasi | eḍṛśā me varṇena dhītā sudarśanā āsīti ||*. Cf. the *thūpa* (*stūpa*) erected for queen Bhaddā by her husband, king Muṇḍa of Pāṭaliputra, *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* III, 62 (I thank Oskar von Hinüber for referring me to this passage).

Kane IV, 255 n. 580 draws our attention to a passage in the Brahmanical literature where a tree and *eḍūka* are mentioned. It concerns a passage found in Aparārka's commentary on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛiti* (vol. II, pp. 885f.) ascribed to the *Brahmapurāṇa*: 'It is stated that the charred bones of a cremated person should be collected in an urn and deposited at the root of a tree or cast in the Ganges, that the place of cremation should be purified with cowdung and water, that a puṣkaraka tree should be planted there or an *eḍūka* (a structure) should be built over it': ... *bhūmer ācchādanārthaṃ tu vṛkṣaḥ puṣkarako 'tha vā | eḍūko vā prakartavyas tatra sarvaiḥ svabandhubhiḥ ||*.

¹²Emeneau 1988 (*Selected Papers*), 184f. See also Allchin 1957.

¹³Shah VDhP p. 173. She further speculates about the etymology and concludes: 'If this is correct, it would lead us to the conclusion that the Deśya word *eḍūka*, which later on became sanskritised and accepted in sanskrit lexicons, originally must have meant a structure containing bone relics.' (p. 172). Allchin 1957, 3 refers to Tamil *√iṭu*, meaning 'bury' since very early times and *iṭu-kātu*, 'burial ground.' The same author refers to the ubiquitous stone cists found in Dravida country: 'The stone cists have been found to contain almost every possible combination of relics including the collected bones of many persons.'...

occurs in connection with ‘wall’: ‘An *eḍūka* is (a wall) wherein bones are placed, i.e. an ossuary.’¹⁴

From the evidence surveyed above it seems to appear that the erection of funerary monuments was not strictly limited to the heterodox traditions. However, being from its inception connected with the remains of the dead, the *eḍūka* was, for obvious reasons, not much in vogue in orthodox circles, as the following passage demonstrates. *Mahābhārata* 3.188 pretends to describe the period of total disruption at the end of the Kali age, but, as is often the case with such passages, its hidden agenda seems to be to attack contemporaneous practices.¹⁵

And this perverted world shall be upside down: at the dissolution of the yuga (people) will venerate charnel-houses (*eḍūkas*) and abandon the gods, (whereas) śūdras will not serve the brahmins. When the yuga expires, the earth shall no longer be decorated by temples, but marked by charnel-houses (*eḍūkas*): in the hermitages of the great seers, in the settlements of brahmins, in the dwellings of the gods, in hallowed places (*caitya*), and in the abodes of the Nāgas. That is the sign that the yuga has come to an end. When men, fierce and devoid of dharma, will be constantly eating meat and drinking liquor, then the yuga will collapse.¹⁶

Although not popular with the orthodox, the custom of erecting a monument for the dead goes back to megalithic times and was partly sanctioned by Vedic literature.¹⁷ Kane, dealing with funerary rites, observes (IV, 255): ‘It will be seen that the disposal of the dead in ancient India was divided into four stages, viz. cremation, collecting the charred bones and depositing them underground in an urn, expiatory rites (called Śāntikarma) and erection of a monument over the bones. The last was not necessarily done in every case.’ Caland in his *Die altindischen Todten- und Bestattungs-*

‘The cist was sometimes built on the bare rock, or sometimes partly or entirely buried in a pit. Over and around it was placed a cairn of small stones, granite chips, etc. and around the cairn was frequently placed one or more circles of large boulders.’ (op. cit. 3); cf. Falk 2000, 73.

¹⁴Amarakośa 2.2.4: *bhittiḥ strī kuḍyam eḍūkam yadantarnyastakīkasam | grhaṃ gehodavasite veśma sadma niketanam || 4 ||*
Liṅgayasūrin glosses: *ilyate kṣipyate ‘sthi antar iti eḍūkam | ‘ila svapnakṣepaṇayoḥ’ | sāsthibhittināma ||*.
Mallinātha glosses: *eḍūkam-kīkasam | antargatāsthikuḍyanāma | ‘mettinakoḍa’ | eḍūkam ity apy asti | ‘eḍūkam antargatāsthikuḍyam syāt’ iti ratnakośaḥ ||*.

¹⁵Madeleine Biardeau (2002 I, 607) is the latest in a long tradition starting with Lassen that sees in this passage a reference to Buddhist practice.

¹⁶MBh 3.188.64–67:
viparītaś ca loko ‘yaṃ bhaviṣyaty adharottaraḥ |
eḍūkān pūjayiṣyanti varjayiṣyanti devatāḥ |
śūdrāḥ paricariṣyanti na dvijān yugasamkṣaye || 64 ||
āśrameṣu maharṣiṇām brāhmaṇāvasatheṣu ca |
devasthāneṣu caityeṣu nāgānām ālayeṣu ca || 65 ||
eḍūkacihnā prthivī na devagrhabhūṣitā |
bhaviṣyati yuge kṣīṇe tad yugāntasya lakṣaṇam || 66 ||
yadā raudrā dharmahīnā māmśādāḥ pānapās tathā |
bhaviṣyanti narā nityaṃ tadā samkṣepsyate yugam || 67 ||

¹⁷For a survey of megalithic and prehistoric burial practices in ancient India see Singh 1970; Gupta 1972; Falk 2000.

gebräuche describes this optional procedure. On the ground where the cremation had taken place (*śmaśāna*) a plot of land of the size of a man is demarcated, square or, according to others, round. The land is ritually ploughed.

Mitten in die gepflügte Stelle wird der Aschenkrug hingestellt ... (op. cit. §93) Darauf wird die Śmaśāna-stätte besprengt und besät (op. cit. §95). ... Ganz wie bei der gewöhnlichen ‘Feuerschichtung’ wird das Śmaśānafeld jetzt mit kleinen Steinen umschlossen (op. cit. §96). ... Jetzt, da das Terrain für die ‘Schichtung’ gehörig zubereitet ist, wird die Stelle des *śmaśāna*, wo die Gebeine niedergelegt werden sollen, zur Aufnahme derselben zurechtgemacht (op. cit. §98). ... Jetzt endlich das in allen Kalpas beschriebene Ausstreuen der Knochen. ... Der *Mādhyandina* verwendet folgenden: ‘Gott Savitar soll dein Gebein in den Schoß der Mutter austreuen, O Erde, sei du günstig ihm’ (op. cit. §102). ... Die Knochen sollen jetzt so auseinander gelegt werden, dass eine menschliche Gestalt hergestelllt wird (op. cit. §103). ... Der Aschenkrug wird darauf vernichtet (op. cit. §105). ... Die eigentliche Schichtung kann jetzt einen Anfang nehmen (op. cit. §107). ... Jetzt ist die *citi* mittelst der ‘raumfüllenden’ Ziegel zur erforderlichen Höhe aufzuschichten. Ihre Anzahl ist abhängig von der Größe, die man der *citi* geben will; meistens ist die Gesamtzahl der Ziegel tausend (op. cit. §112).¹⁸

Despite the attention paid to these barrows (*citi*) in the *Kalpaśāstra*, we, *pace* Giuseppe de Marco, find little hard evidence that this Vedic tradition was continued in historic times in classical North India. Disposal of the remains in holy water (*tīrtha*)—be it the ashes/bones, or the body as a whole (as in the case of ascetics)—seems to have replaced the older practices of inhumation and exposure.¹⁹ This tallies with the virtual absence in the *Mahābhārata* of any reference to the erection of monuments to the dead, apart from the quoted passage regarding the alleged worship of *eḍūkas*.²⁰

The Sanskrit literature knows, however, yet another type of monument to commemorate the deceased; it is said to appertain in particular to the kṣatriya class.²¹ The *Pratimānāṭaka*, traditionally ascribed to Bhāsa, describes how Bharata on his return to Ayodhyā pauses at a building, outside the city, tucked away amidst the trees,

¹⁸Caland 1896; cf. Falk 2000, 75ff. Saindon 2000.

¹⁹Cf. de Marco 1987, 219ff.

²⁰In an interesting study, *Disposal of the Dead in the Mahābhārata*, Tiwari 1979, 23f. observes the following: ‘It has already been remarked that the *Mahābhārata* seems to contain no clear reference to the rite of *asthi-saṅcayana*, which formed an essential element of *antyeṣṭi* as described in several ritual texts. This rite involved the collection of charred bones and ashes some days after the cremation and disposal of them in various ways—hanging in a bundle on the branch of a tree, or recremating in some special cases, or depositing at the foot of a tree, or, more generally, burying them in a hole dug in the ground and sometimes also building some kind of memorial mound (*śmaśāna*) over them. Apparently this practice gradually went out of vogue, and, already towards the close of the epic, the custom of depositing the bones in holy river had probably become more common.’

²¹A. Sanderson kindly drew my attention to the (unpublished) South-Indian *Dīptāgama* (Pondicherry IFI MS T.507), which gives a lengthy description of the installation of images of the king, his queen and the ministers. An article on this by Sanderson is in preparation. See also below n. 25 on p. 17.

on the walls of which sandal imprints of hands are found, of which the doors are decorated with floral wreaths, and where he finds offerings (*bali*), evident from flowers and parched rice grains that are well-arranged, and a floor strewn with sand.²² Little wonder that, when he also fails to see a *dhvaja* or other emblem of a god (*cihna*), Bharata is puzzled: could this be a ‘house of the gods’ (*devakula*)? Inside there are images, well made and true to life, which makes one believe that they are human beings. And this they prove to be. Bharata has come upon a statue gallery, *pratimāgrha*, in which images of the deceased kings of the Ikṣvāku race are set up; his uncertainty seems to indicate that it is an uncommon phenomenon.²³ The keeper tells him that a brahmin should not salute or worship them as they do not represent gods (*daivata*), but kings (*kṣatriya*) who have passed away. When Bharata discovers an image of Daśaratha among them, he understands that his father has died.²⁴

The problem with this testimony, however, is its date and place of origin. The issue has been discussed by many scholars, and Tieken 1993, summarizing much of this discussion, argues that the so-called ‘Trivandrum Plays,’ to which the *Pratimānāṭaka* belongs, may be late and of South-Indian origin.²⁵

The archaeology of the funerary monument

If we turn to archaeology, it becomes immediately clear that, despite the literary evidence, material testifying to the actual practice of erecting funerary monuments in the Brahminical tradition in ancient India is rare.²⁶ A. Ghosh observes the following: ‘As

²²*sādhumuktapuspālājāviṣkṛtā balayaḥ, dattacandanapañcāṅgulā bhittayaḥ, avasaktamālyadāmaśobhīni dvārāni, prakṛmā bālukāḥ* | (*Pratimānāṭaka* 3.5).

²³*Pratimānāṭaka* 3.6.

²⁴*Pratimānāṭaka* 3.7–9.

²⁵On account of a formal statistical analysis, van der Geer 1998 dates this particular play to the 4th or 5th century AD (op. cit. 177) and also thinks a South Indian author most likely (op. cit. 187). The *Pratimānāṭaka* may reflect a South-Indian custom. That South-Indian funerary practices differed from the ‘Aryan’ North may also be deduced from the description of a cemetery in the early Tamil epic *Maṇimekalai* (Daniélou 1989, 24ff.) I thank Oskar von Hinüber for this reference. The practice to install commemorative images of Śivabhaktas is prescribed in the relatively late South-Indian redaction of the *Ajitāgama*, not known to the 12th-century Aghoraśiva (Goodall 2004, cx), which text tells us that this sort of images may be installed at holy places or in a Śiva temple where they should be worshipped: *śivālaye viśeṣeṇa śivabhaktān kṛtāñjalīm* || 39 || *savālacāmarakarāṁl līṅga-hastān salakṣaṇān* | *bimbarūpān vidhāyātha mahāmañtapadeśataḥ* || 40 || *mañimañtapadeśe vā prakārābhyañtareṣu vā* | *tasmāt sarvaprayatnena pratiṣṭhāpya yathāvidhi* || 41 || *śivāgamavidhānena nityapūjām samācāret* | *pratiṣṭhānām bhaktānām ālaye bimbarūpīṇām* || 42 || *nityaṇ naimittikaṁ kāmyaṁ utsavaṁ ca samācāret* | (*Ajitāgama* 63.39–42; I thank Alexis Sanderson, who drew my attention to this passage). The editor of the *Ajitāgama*, N.R. Bhatt, quotes the *Acintya*- and refers to the *Uttarakāmika*- Āgamas *ad loc.* The underlying idea seems to be that these bhaktas have reached *sārūpya* with Śiva and can therefore be depicted with four arms, though they keep the distinct (iconographic) characteristics of the devotee: two hands forming an *añjali*, as a true devotee should, two others holding līṅga and chowry.

Along with this South Indian custom one may consider funerary practices in Indianized South-east Asia. Thus there is substantial evidence that in Cambodia as well as on Java and Bali temples and statues were erected for deceased kings and their families; see i.a. Coedès 1940, 320ff. (I thank Arlo Griffiths for this reference).

²⁶Cf. Malamoud 1982, 442: ‘Or, la suppression physique du cadavre s’accompagne de procédures qui aboutissent à l’abolition du souvenir de la personne du mort. Notons d’abord qu’après la dispersion des

by the time cremation had virtually replaced inhumation there is hardly any archaeological evidence of the practices concerning the disposal of the dead. [The Buddhist (and Jaina) *stūpas* form an entirely different category.]’²⁷ From the following it will emerge that this sweeping statement should be qualified on two points: the Buddhist and Jain customs are not so categorically different from the Hindu ones (see p. 30), and there is more archaeological evidence of Hindu funerary practice than supposed by Ghosh (see p. 34).

In discussions regarding this apparent absence reference is often made to excavations at Lauriya–Nandangarh (W. Champaran District, Bihar),²⁸ which, since T. Bloch’s excavations in 1905,²⁹ are supposed to show ‘Vedic burial mounds.’ Ghosh assesses the evidence unearthed by T. Bloch (1905), refers to the re-examination by N.G. Majumdar,³⁰ whose excavation he himself continued after the demise of Majumdar, and concludes:

He (i.e. Majumdar) found that all of them were earthen burial memorials with burnt-brick revetment, two being faced with a brick lining in a double tier, so that there was no justification for regarding them as more earthen barrows. He also pointed out that the gold leaves found by Bloch [containing a female figure in frontal pose] had their exact replica in the *stūpa* at Piprawa, which is definitely a Buddhist *stūpa* of 300 BC or earlier. The respective Lauriya *stūpas* might be of a comparable date and there is nothing to connect them with Vedic burial rites.³¹

Nevertheless, the question is justified whether cremation completely replaced inhumation. It certainly did not for certain categories of persons such as children, yogins or ascetics (*yati*), and pregnant women.³² The evidence of eighteen Gandhāra reliefs containing depictions of cemeteries and burial monuments discussed by de Marco 1987 seems to indicate that burial was still customary long after the Vedic period at least in certain parts of India and for certain categories of persons. We shall come back to this below (p. 29ff.).

In order to improve our understanding of the phenomenon of memorials to the dead it might be useful to distinguish between categories of monuments.

restes du défunt nul tombeau, bien sûr, mais aussi nul cénotaphe n’est mis en place qui pourrait prolonger son existence terrestre en lui réservant un morceau d’espace.’

²⁷ *Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology* I, p. 267.

²⁸ E.g. Kane IV, 254; Das 1968, 59–63; Singh 1970, 133.

²⁹ *ASI Annual Report* 1906–07, 119–126. See below p. 31.

³⁰ *ASI Annual Report* 1935–36, 55–66; 1936–37, 47–50.

³¹ Ghosh in *Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology* II, 254f., s.v. Lauriya–Nandangarh. In 1912 Caland had already raised serious doubts about Bloch’s identification.

³² De Marco 1987, 221–226 discusses various categories of people liable to be buried and evidence of the burialgrounds. As to the burial of pregnant women he concludes (op. cit. 222, n. 59): ‘Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the practice of burial for deceased pregnant women, even if not explicitly traceable in the texts, has always been considered, from an unspecifiable epoch, as both necessary and legitimate.’ Cf. Kane IV, 227–233.

- 1 Temples dedicated to a particular god, erected in order to transfer the merit thereof to the deceased, often recorded in epigraphs. Many temples may actually fall into this category, for which there is, to the best of my knowledge, no specific Sanskrit word, but which in the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple Inscription is referred to with the generic term *prāsāda*.³³ A special relation between the god and the deceased indicates that this type of buildings has a commemorative function, at least for contemporaries, and I therefore propose to refer to this type of monuments as ‘memorials.’
- 2 Sanctuaries/buildings that contain an image/images of the deceased. They are known in Sanskrit as *pratimāgrha*, or ‘statue galleries.’
- 3 Hero-stones, including satī-stones, which are found in particular in the Deccan in great number, and which commemorate the place where a heroic death took place. They could be classified as ‘memorial stones.’
- 4 Structures that have some formal correspondences with the funerary monuments of the following category (5), but which do not contain the actual mortuary remains; these seem to have been described in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* under the name of *aīḍūka*.
- 5 Burial mounds or sepulchral monuments that actually contain the ashes and/or bones, or the bodies of the deceased, in Sanskrit literature referred to as *eḍūka*.

Memorials

This category may be illustrated by two examples, the first one being the Vākāṭaka temples on the top of the Rāmagiri, the other a temple built by Skandagupta for his father Kumāragupta in Bhitari.

As I have argued elsewhere (Bakker 1992 and 1997, 30f.), the 5th-century Vākāṭaka temples on the Rāmagiri were erected to transfer merit to the dead. The choice of the temple-deity was not arbitrary; it was made on the basis of an envisaged similarity or affinity of the god and the deceased queen and kings (Bakker 1992). This theory builds on the evidence of the inscription found in the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple on the Rāmagiri, in which Prabhāvatī’s daughter, the princess Atibhāvatī, widow of Ghaṭotkacagupta, records the good works she has done.³⁴ The text is very fragmentary and problematic. A translation of the relevant passage may run as follows.

And for the sake of imperishable merit she had in (that) house/temple made the Lord of the World, Master of Prabhāvatī, for (her) mother’s... [text lost]. And after (that princess) Atibhāvatī had made a water reservoir (*sudarśana*) in the village of Kadalīvāṭaka and had (installed) the *sudarśana* (god), ... for the

³³Bakker 1997, 167. See below n. 35 on p. 20 vs. 30. Granoff 1992, 187 refers to a temple built after the cremation of the Jain minister Vastupāla on Mt Śatruñjaya called ‘Svargārohanaprāsāda.’ Granoff 1992 (passim) proves that the building of memorial temples was just as popular in Jainism as it was in Hinduism. This type of memorial temple seems to be referred to under the Cōlas as *paḷḷi-paṭai* in Tamil: ‘temple erected in memory of kings.’ Huntington 1985, 310 conjectures that the famous Dharmarāja shrine in Māmallapuram may have been such a *paḷḷi-paṭai*, since it contains a portrait image of the Pallava king Nṛsiṃhavarman I himself on its southern face.

³⁴For text, translation and analysis see Bakker and Isaacson 1993. A revised edition was presented in Bakker 1997, 163–67.

sake of merit... [text lost]. Half of the merit that accrued from the ritual activity ... (she) ... assigned to the gods, the other half to her father and mother. Of/for Him of infinite might, who is the cause of sustenance and destruction of the world ... [text lost]. Reflecting that that temple (*prāsāda*) of her beloved mother is not eternal, she, free of sins, ... for the sake of a mass of merit for her mother alone ... [text lost].³⁵

On account of this evidence we assume that the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple had been erected around the middle of the 5th century to transfer merit to the Vākātaka queen Prabhāvatīguptā, who may have died a little earlier. This queen took great pride in her descent from two famous families, her father being the Gupta emperor Candragupta II, her mother Kuberaṅgā born in the Nāga House and belonging to the Dhāraṇa *gotra* (Bakker 1997, 12). It may therefore not be coincidence that in front of the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple entrance an image of a serpent, Nāga, is found. We will come back to this below (p. 38).

A reference to another specimen of a memorial temple erected to transfer merit to a deceased king can be found in the *Bhitārī Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta* as edited by Fleet in CII III (1888), 52–56, and by Sircar in *Sel. Ins.* I, 321–324. The inscription of Prabhāvatī's nephew, Skandagupta, is not without difficulties; I have discussed them in Bakker 2005. The temple and image to which it refers are also no longer extant. All the same, though somewhat elliptical, verse 12 may be read as follows.

Therefore, the image of God (Bhagavat), this one (here), as well as what is standing/situated here, that one (i.e. Skandagupta) assigned both to the merit of (his) father, for he is intent on merit.³⁶

³⁵Kevala Narasiṃha Temple inscription lines 11–14 (Bakker 1997, 166f.). For a detailed philological treatment of this text see Bakker and Isaacson 1993, 61–64. For an analysis and discussion of its contents see *ibid.* 64–72 and Bakker 1997, 28–31. Symbols used: () reading uncertain; < > editorial addition; < vowel part of syllable; < consonant part of syllable; ~, - and = metrical quantity of illegible syllables.

11 PRABHĀVATISVĀMINAṀ ca, lokanā<(tha)m a<(th)ā<(la)<(ye) |
puṇyam akṣayam uddiśya, (mā)<(tuḥ)>= <a>k<ā>raya<t> ||21||
[text lost]

12 sudarśanaṃ taḍāgaṃ ca, deva<(ñ) caiva sudar<(śana)m |
kadalīvāṭakagrāme, kārayit<(v)>ĀTI<(BHĀ)VAT || 24 ||
[text lost]

13 arddhaṃ brahmārppa<(ṇa)m puṇyam, <ṛ>~ <~>~ <~>~ <śāli>nī |
mātāpitṛbhy (ām arddhaṃ ca), ~ <~>~ <~>~ <kr<(i)yodbhavam || 27 ||
jagatas <(sth)>i<(t)>isāṇhārākāraṇasyā<(m)>itauja<(saḥ) |
(ā)rṣ<(a)>(d)<~>~ <~>~ <~>~ <~>~ <~>~ <~>~ ||28||
[text lost]

14 prāsādaṃ dayi <(t)>(ā)<(m)>ā tur, vvicintya tam aśāśvatam |
mātur eva samuddi<(śya)>, <(pu)>nyaugham aghavarjita ||30||

³⁶Sircar *Sel. Ins.* I, 324. For a detailed discussion of this and the preceding verses I refer to Bakker 2005.
ato bhagavato mūrtir iyaṃ yaś cātra <saṃsthitah> |
ubhayaṃ nirdideśāsau pituḥ puṇyāya puṇyadhīḥ || 12 ||.

The inscription tells us that Skandagupta installed an image, probably of Vāsudeva and possibly named Kumārasvāmin,³⁷ a deity who is said in verse 10 to be a great archer, Śārṅgin,³⁸ and as such reflects the qualities of the emperor and his father, well known to us from their archer-type coins. In verse 8, in which his fight with the Hūṇas is reported, the twanging sound of a bow (*śārṅgadhvaniḥ*) is referred to in a simile that seems to express Skandagupta's prowess as emerging from his victory over these enemies. For the maintenance of the image/temple Skandagupta assigns the community to the deity, that is to say, he exempts this community from taxes, so that its surplus production from now on may be used for worship and maintenance. Both beneficial acts are performed to increase the merit of the deceased father, Kumāragupta.

Pratimāgrhas

When searching for galleries where effigies of kings were installed, the *pratimāgrha*, our second category, two sites spring to mind: Māt near Mathurā, and a cave at Nāneghāt, a pass leading from the Konkan to Junnar (Pune Dist.). The latter site has been discussed by Ajay Mitra Shastri. In this cave two sets of inscriptions are found:³⁹

One of them, a large but fragmentary one is inscribed partly on the left and partly on the right walls. On its [i.e., the cave's] back wall were put up statues of eight personages which have all disappeared almost completely and over their heads there were inscribed what may be called labels of which also only six are now extant enabling us to identify the figures originally carved below them. Going by the preserved labels there were installed statues of Simuka Sātavāhana, the founder of the dynasty, queen Nāyanikā and her spouse king Sātakani (Sātakarṇi), *Kumāra* (prince) Bhāya, Mahārāṭhi Tranakayira, *Kumāra* Hakusiri and *kumāra* Sātavāhana.⁴⁰

According to Shastri the gallery was initiated by king Kṛṣṇa, who set up the image of his elder brother Simuka, and continued by Veditīrī, who set up the images of his father and mother Sātakarṇi and Nāganikā. Shastri argues, on the basis of the *Pratimānātaka*, that all images were erected after the death of the person involved. If his identifications of these early Sātavāhana kings is correct, it would mean that this *pratimāgrha* predates the one at Māt and therefore cannot have been inspired by the Kuṣāṇa example. The epigraphs found in Nāneghāt do not give any reason to

³⁷A parallel that suggests this name is the Prabhāvatīsvāmin of the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple inscription, above.

³⁸In the *Mahābhārata* Vāsudeva's and/or Kṛṣṇa's bow is called Śārṅga. It is the divine *vaiṣṇava* bow (MBh 5.155.6, 9; cf. MBh 2.2.12, 3.21.18). Curiously enough, the term or name Śārṅgin does not occur in the critical text of either the *Mahābhārata* or the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It does occur, however in the *-passages in the critical apparatus and appendices of the MBh edition as a name of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa (MBh 1 App. I No. 114 l. 339, 7.59 *440, 12 App. I No. 6 l. 29, 17.1 *3, 18.5 *30), as well as in Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* 1.46 and *Amarakośa* 1.1.19.

³⁹For these inscriptions see also Sircar *Sel. Ins.* I, 190–197.

⁴⁰Shastri 1998, 102.

believe that these images were worshipped. The long inscription enumerates many Vedic sacrifices and their *dakṣiṇās*, but is silent as to the images.

The situation seems different at Māt. The archaeological remains of a building and the inscribed images of the Kuṣāṇa kings Vima/Vema (Kadphises), Kaniška, Huviška (?) and others, belong to the most well-known India has produced. The epigraphs have been competently dealt with by Lüders (posthumously published by Janert 1961). The building that housed these images is referred to as *devakula* in the inscriptions themselves. About this Lüders remarks:

There can be little doubt that the *devakula* at the Māt site, similarly to ‘Bhāsa’s’ *devakula*, served chiefly as a hall for the statues of members of the royal Kuṣāṇ family, although, as proved by the life-size image found together with the Kaniška statue, images of gods were mixed up with them.⁴¹

The latter concessive clause may mark a significant difference with the situation in Nāṇeghāt and the depiction in the *Pratimānāṭaka*. It may account for the term *devakula* used in the Māt inscriptions. ‘Bhāsa’ speaks also about a *devakula*, but that word is used when Bharata does not yet know whether he has to do with a ‘house of the gods’ or not. When he discovers the true nature of the monument the text uses the word *pratimāgṛha*.⁴² Another important difference may be related to this. Lüders remarks,

In one respect, however, the collection of the Kuṣāṇ statues seems to have differed from the gallery described in the *Pratimānāṭaka*. Bhāsa tells us that only deceased kings were honoured by setting up their images. This restriction does not seem to have prevailed in the case of the Kuṣāṇ *devakula*. The present inscription was engraved on the pedestal of a statue, and we may reasonably assume that, in addition to the repair of the *devakula*, the gift of the statue was recorded in the inscription. The statue cannot have represented the grandfather of Huviška, nor is it likely that it was the second image of Kaniška. As the donation was made for the increase of the life and strength of Huviška, it becomes very probable that it represented that king, but that benedictory phrase shows at the same time that the statue was set up during the lifetime of Huviška.⁴³

From this combined evidence it may appear that the images of the Kuṣāṇa kings were worshipped like those of gods, even when still alive. The true nature of the *devakula* was the subject of an interesting essay by Gérard Fussman, who compared the Māt sanctuary with a similar one in Surkh-Kotal, also containing images of Kuṣāṇa kings.⁴⁴ He argues that we should conceive of these temples as ‘shrines where the king, his family and high officials worshipped the deity who protects the king and his

⁴¹Lüders 1961, 144.

⁴²*Pratimānāṭaka* 3. 5, 6. Cf. ibid. 3.1 *paḍimāgeha*, 3.13 *idaṃ gṛhaṃ tat pratimānṛpasya*. It has to be admitted, though, that the keeper is called *devakulika*.

⁴³Lüders 1961, 144f.

⁴⁴Fussman 1989; cf. Rosenfield 1993, 154–172. Shastri 1998, 109 refers to similar ‘small sanctuaries in the Swāt region of Afghanistan.’

family, not the temple of the godlike king.⁴⁵ A *devakula* is, according to the French scholar, ‘a royal family shrine.’⁴⁶ This connotation accords well with the use of the term in the Vākāṭaka inscriptions, in which the state sanctuaries are referred to as ‘places’ (*sthāna*) of the *devakula*. However, the idea of installing in these sanctuaries life-size images of the royal family itself is clearly imported into North India. Fussman’s contention that these royal images were not meant for worship in their own right remains open to doubt; the word *devakula* may have been used precisely because the Kuṣāṇa kings thought of themselves, or wanted their subjects to believe that they were members of the divine family (*kula*).⁴⁷ Their title, *devaputra*, also seems to endorse this.⁴⁸ Apparently the Brahmanical tradition represented by ‘Bhāsa’ found this too much to swallow, in view of the shift from *devakula* to *pratimāgrha*, and, to judge by our archaeological evidence, the idea of a statue gallery as a whole became obsolete, at least in North India during the period under review.⁴⁹

Memorial Stones

The third category, ‘hero-stones,’ has been the subject of a seminar at Dharwad, the papers of which have been edited by S. Settar, Günther D. Sontheimer (1982). In this volume D.R. Patil studies *The Origin of Memorial Stones*. Patil (op. cit. p. 48) observes that ‘...a memorial stone, in its basic conception, is commemorative in character, raised in memory or honour of the dead, and did not form part of the actual practice of the disposal of the dead.’ Nevertheless Patil traces its origin back to this very practice by referring to early Buddhist monuments containing mortuary deposits, because in some of them wooden post were found (Lauriya-Nandangarh), whereas an inscription in another Buddhist monument (Sui Vihar) seems to refer to such a post as a *yaṣṭi* raised in honour of the deceased (see below p. 30). Typical of this type of stones seems to be that they contain a visual representation or symbol referring to the fate of those commemorated, in addition to, occasionally, a brief text.

Early specimens of ‘memorial stones’ as defined above seem to have been the so-called *chāyāstambha* or *chāyaskambha* (‘shade-pillar’) from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa discussed by H. Sarkar in the same volume.⁵⁰ These pillars were raised during the rule of the Ikṣvākus in the third century AD. They commemorate the death of members of the ruling class, religious personages and soldiers. One may serve as an

⁴⁵Fussman 1989, 199.

⁴⁶Fussman 1989, 198.

⁴⁷Von Hinüber 2004, 172 n. 234. Rosenfield 1993, 202 thinks that Iran is the most likely source of the tendency to deify the Kuṣāṇa kings. The term *devakula* literary means the ‘family seat of the god(s).’ When one installs a life-size image of oneself in this ‘seat,’ does that not suggest that one wants to be regarded as part of that family?

⁴⁸Cf. Rosenfield 1993, 202ff.

⁴⁹Cf. above n. 25 on p. 17. Granoff 1992, 190 reports that ‘...images of tīrthaṅkaras were often made for the welfare of the dead. Bharata’s funerary monument to his father also bears striking resemblances to actual funerary monuments for Jain monks in having a portrait image of the deceased...’ See also below n. 67 on p. 30. Von Hinüber 2004, 172 refers to the inscribed portrait images of Pallava kings and queens (7th century AD) in South India (see above n. 33 on p. 19; Huntington 1985, 310).

⁵⁰Sarkar 1982, 199–207.

example. King Rudrapuruṣadatta erected in the 11th year of his reign a memorial stone (*chāyakaṃbha*) for his mother, Mahādevī Varmabhaṭā (Vaṃmabhaṭā) belonging to the Bahaphala (i.e. Bṛhatphalāyana) *gotra*, who was the daughter of the Mahākṣatrapa, probably a Śaka king from Ujjain.⁵¹ The pillar on which the inscription is found is decorated by one panel depicting the queen. The queen ‘is seated on a stool [and] holding a mirror in her hand. She is dressed like a foreign lady, accompanied by two female attendants.’⁵² Sircar (op. cit. 20) argues that the word *chāyā* in this context means ‘image,’ and thus refers to the portrait of the deceased queen above the inscription.⁵³ Most *chāyāstambhas* belong to a Buddhist milieu, but this pillar seems to be the only one that ‘was found in the precincts of a Buddhist monastery’ (Sarkar op. cit. p. 202).⁵⁴

The Śaka connection is reinforced by a find in Pauni, a Sātavāhana site in the Bhandhara District of Maharashtra. The inscription on a memorial pillar (*chāyā-khaṃbha*) mentions a prince (*kumāra*) Rupiaṃma of the Mahākṣatrapa.⁵⁵ Shastri (1998, 66) does not believe that Rupiaṃma actually ruled over Vīdarbha, as does Mirashi, but surmises that ‘he might have come over there as a pilgrim as Paunī was an important religious centre, especially for the Buddhists. . . .’ In view of this evidence, Sarkar (1982, 205) tentatively suggests that the memorial in this form, i.e. our third category, may have originated in and spread from the area under Śaka rule in the first centuries of the Christian era.

It is indeed in the Śaka territories that we find corroborative evidence for this hypothesis. It has the form of six ‘long narrow slabs of stone’ that were discovered ‘standing as monuments on a hillock’ at the village Andhau on the Rann of Cutch (Gujarat).⁵⁶ These stones had been erected in the (Śaka) year 52, i.e. AD 130, under the rule of Rāja Rudradāman, who is none other than the Mahākṣatrapa Rudradāman I.⁵⁷ Four stones still carry inscriptions, one of which records that the inscribed slab of stone, referred to as *laṣṭi* (= *yaṣṭi*) in the inscription itself, had been erected (*uthāpita*), by Madana for his sister Jeṣṭhavīrā belonging to the Opaśati (Aupaśatika)

⁵¹Sircar in EI XXXIV, 21.

⁵²Sarkar 1982, 202. Cf. Sircar in EI XXXIV, 21: ‘She has a head-dress; but her locks are not tied in a knot. She wears an upper garment covering her bust and a long scarf covers her right shoulder and upper right arm and also her left forearm. The queen appeared to be dressed like a foreign lady which she really was. . . .’

⁵³For an illustration see Fig. 1 of Sarkar’s contribution to Settar and Sontheimer 1982. The usage of the word *chāyā* in this funerary context has a close parallel in the related Greek σκιά ‘shade.’ For *chāyā* meaning ‘portrait’ see Granoff 2001, 68 n. 10.

⁵⁴Another, somewhat later (5th century?), specimen of a memorial stone with portrait has been found in Sangsi (Kolhapur District). It depicts a funeral scene showing the figure of the queen and attendants. The inscription on it reports the erection of a stone funerary monument (*śailaṃ caityakam*) (i.e., the slab of stone itself, referred to by *idam*) by her loving husband, king Pu. . . , in order to protect/preserve (her) merits/virtues. The Śārdūlavikrīḍita verse runs (emended): *śrīpu . . . lāñchanasya nṛpater yā hālidevīyā abhūt, bhāryā saccaritena bhartṛ . . . | puṇyānāṃ parirakṣaṇārtham ajaraṃ tasyā gatāyā divam, prītyā śailam idam svayaṃ nṛpatinā samsthāpitaṃ caityakam ||* (EI XXVIII (1949–50), 132f.).

⁵⁵EI XXXVII (1967), 201–03; Mirashi 1966, 111: *sidhaṃ mahakhattavakumārāsa rupiaṃmasa chāyākkambo*.

⁵⁶EI XVI (1921–22), 19ff.

⁵⁷Shastri 1998, 156f.

gotra. This Madana erected in the same year similar monuments for his brother Rṣabhadeva and his wife Yaśodattā, who is called a novice nun (*śrāmaṇerī*). Patil and Sarkar (op. cit. 54f., 204ff.) discuss a number of similar pillars, all of them from areas ‘where the Śakas were ruling,’ and Patil concludes that they are ‘funerary monuments... presumably intended to commemorate the dead.’⁵⁸ We have no indications that the memorial stones (*yaṣṭis*), such as found in Andhau, marked the spot where mortuary remains were deposited, although this may be deceptive, since the sites have not been subject to archaeological scrutiny.⁵⁹ If this is correct, however, and there are no deposits, we are here concerned with funerary monuments that may be thought of as forerunners of the ‘hero-stones’ (category 3), not yet carrying a picture; strictly speaking, they should be classified in our fourth category: funerary monuments without mortuary deposits. On the other hand, although the term *yaṣṭi* is used to refer to these steles, these monuments differ widely from the constructions composed of square and circular *yaṣṭis* as described under the heading *aiḍūka* in the VDhP.

Aiḍūkas

There exists a brick monument that has been thought to conform to and has been identified as an *aiḍūka* in the sense of the VDhP. This is the ‘Śiva temple’ at Ahicchatra (ACI), which is, in the words of Agrawala:

A massive brick structure unique of its kind in North India. On plan it is similar to the quadrangular Buddhist *stūpas* raised in several tiers, diminishing upwards like a gigantic staircase. The structure answers closely to what the *Viṣṇu-dharmottarapurāṇa* describes as an *eḍūka* (sic) built in three terraces (*bhadrapīṭhas*), one above the other, with four stepped approaches and surmounted on the top by a Śiva-liṅga. The monument, still having a colossal Śiva-liṅga on its top, must therefore be identified as an *eḍūka* dedicated to Śiva.⁶⁰

The identification of this structure as an ‘*eḍūka*,’ i.e. *aiḍūka*, is open to doubt. Within the structure in ACI a few terracotta sculptured panels were found with depictions of Śaiva mythology, such as Gaṇas destroying Dakṣa’s sacrifice (No. 298), a ‘Bhairava’ figure (No. 300), and the so-called ‘Dakṣiṇāmūrti’ of Śiva (No. 302b), which are supposed to have decorated ‘a frieze running round its upper terrace.’⁶¹ The *aiḍūka* of the VDhP, on the other hand, is explicitly not a temple and not dedicated to one god in particular. Moreover, there seem to be more terraces than the three *bhadrapīṭhas* of the VDhP, whereas there is apparently not a trace of the four Lokapālas, the thirteen

⁵⁸Perhaps the stone slab with inscription, in which a Kosala king called Dhana(deva) is said to have erected a *ketana* for his father Phalgudeva, falls within the same category, as suggested by Shastri 1998, 108 (see Bakker 1986 I, 21 n. 5).

⁵⁹The Central-Asian tribes of the Altai Mountains, variously known as Scyths or Śakas and related to the Indian Śakas, are known for their extraordinary burial practices. Reference may be made to the burial mounds, or ‘kurgan,’ found in Pazyryk (*Het Rijk der Scythen*, 74ff.).

⁶⁰V.S. Agrawala in *Ancient India* 4 1947–48, 167. This identification has been taken over by several authors, among whom Shah in the ‘critical notes’ to her edition of the Third Khaṇḍa of the VDhP (1994), I p. 405.

⁶¹Agrawala 1947–48, 167.

Plate 1 Ahicchatra (AC I)

bhūmikās, the *āmalasāraka*, and, worst, the square and circular *yaṣṭis* seem to be missing. A note of caution is in place here. I have not visited the site myself and base my assessment on the excavation reports and a photograph that was published at the cover of IAR 1964–65 (Plate 1). The ‘colossal Śiva-liṅga’ may actually not be that, but a fragment of the *yaṣṭi*. Moreover, it seems but natural that the fragile upper structure of the two *yaṣṭis* has disappeared in the course of time. In view of these incongruities and uncertainties the structure crowning mound AC I and a similar one at mound AC II may therefore have been more adequately characterized by A. Ghosh who describes them as:

Terraced temples of brick, each terrace made on foundation cells round a square frame, filled with earth. Both of them underwent many restorations and extensions resulting in the increase of their dimension. The larger of them [i.e. AC I] was founded on a layer with typical Stratum IV (Kushan) pottery and could not therefore have been founded before the early Gupta age.⁶²

On the other hand, the mass of bricks ordered in a pyramidal, i.e. tapering framework, ending in a column or *liṅga* has an outward similarity with the structure described in the VDhP. It could be that Bāṇa (above n. 2 on p. 12), describing the ‘funerary mon-

⁶²Ghosh in EIA II, 7.

Plate 2 Mansar (MNS 3)

ument' (*citācaitya*) of king Prabhākaravardhana in Thanesar as a 'mass of bricks' (*sudhānicaya*) resembling the form of a dart or needle (*śalya*), was thinking of a monument similar to the one uncovered in Ahicchatra, 300 km to the southeast of Thanesar, 150 km north of Kanauj. According to Bāṇa the ashes and bones (*kāśa*) had been sent off for dispersal in holy places (*tīrthasthāna*), and this too would conform to the description of the *aiḍūka* in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, which does not mention nor refers to mortuary deposits. As far as one can tell—the description of this monument in the excavation report being very brief indeed—this would agree with the archaeological state of affairs in AC I, where no mortuary deposits have been reported.

'Unique' as the structure may have appeared to the excavators at the time, I would like to draw attention to a recent excavation that has surprisingly much in common with the Ahicchatra one (Plate 2). These are the excavations at Mansar (MNS 3). The brick structure uncovered at a mound there, the so-called Hiḍimbā Ṭekḍī, has been interpreted by the excavators, who failed to refer to Ahicchatra, as a mixture of Hindu temples and Buddhist *stūpas*.

Elsewhere I have shown the untenability of this conflation (Bakker 2004). As in Ahicchatra, the Mansar mound shows a series of terraces built of brick, constructed over and against a natural hillock, which makes the whole thing look like a pyramid of brick. As in Ahicchatra, the various platforms are constructed over brick boxes filled with rubble, earth and stones, a construction device also known from *stūpa* domes. The mistake the Mansar excavators have made is that they have confounded similarity with identity. Mansar, like Ahicchatra, is definitively a Śaiva sanctuary, identities corroborated at both sites by beautiful 5th-century Śaiva sculptures, of terracotta in Ahicchatra, of red sandstone in Mansar. Are we to classify the Mansar structure as

Plate 3 Man of Mansar (MNS 3)

an *aiḍūka*? The same reasons that speak against such an identification in Ahicchatra also apply to Mansar, but the Mansar site is characterized by some intriguing features of its own. One of these is ‘the figure of a Puruṣa made of lime’ (Plate 3).⁶³ This figure is truly out of the ordinary and various interpretations are possible. In Bakker (2007) I have made a case for seeing this Man of Mansar as part of a construction sacrifice, in which the clay man replaced a human victim. The excavators report that ‘a *vedi* in the chest portion with a hole for fixing a *yaṣṭi* over it was made and an earthen lamp was found nearby.’⁶⁴ Two pots have also been found near the knee of the Puruṣa, but we do not know what they may have contained. Could they have been filled with ashes? Near the figure’s left foot a small iron image of a snake was found. In addition, though not mentioned in the excavation report, during my stay at the site some bones were said to have been recovered from one of the two natural caves in the rock at the northern side of the hill. In the excavation report these caves are identified as a ‘shrine’ and ‘meditation chamber’ (ibid. 129); due to lack of any further information, it is impossible to say with what sort of bones we are concerned and to which period they may have belonged. Anyway, there seems to be no intrinsic connection with the brick monument on top of the mound. Despite the Puruṣa, the urns, the hole to fix a *yaṣṭi* (here meaning ‘sacrificial post’ or *yāpa*), the alleged

⁶³Joshi and Sharma 1999–2000, 128. Cf. Bakker 2004, 81.

⁶⁴Joshi and Sharma 1999–2000, 128. Cf. Bakker 2004, 81. The Puruṣa lies with his head towards the west or south-west; his trunk is partly twisted and his knees are bent (see Bakker 2004, Plate 6.23). This posture seems to resemble that of some of the skeletons found in Ujjain, especially ‘skeletons Nos. 14 and 38’ depicted in Plates VIIIc and IXa (AAR p. 16); see below n. 77 on p. 34.

bones, and the terraced, pyramidal structure, I would be very reluctant to speak of this temple complex, referred to in inscriptions and seals as ‘Pravareśvara’ and called a *devakulasthāna*, in terms of an *aiḍūka*, or *eḍūka* for that matter.

For the time being our conclusion should be that so-far there have not been discovered in the Hindu sphere structures that conform, more than superficially, to the description of the *aiḍūka* in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*.

Funerary Monuments with Mortuary Deposits

It remains to discuss the funerary monuments in which actual mortuary deposits have been found, the *eḍūka*, our fifth category.

As has been briefly noted above, Giuseppe de Marco brings together in an interesting article eighteen Gandhāra reliefs in which we find depictions of funerary monuments. Fifteen of them relate to the Buddhist legend of Sudāya, known from the Chinese canon.⁶⁵

The story is briefly given by Zwalf in his catalogue of *Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum* (ad 225): ‘A king of Candravatī (?), his mind poisoned by the jealousy of his other wives, caused his pregnant youngest wife to be killed and buried. A posthumous son [name restored as Sudāya], however, nourished himself from one breast on a half of his mother’s corpse not decomposed; when he was three the collapse of part of the tomb released him, and when he was six he met the Buddha and became an *arhat*.’ (op. cit. I, p. 202). The reliefs depict Sudāya in the tomb at his mother’s side and his meeting of the Buddha. The representations of the tombs themselves, though preserved in a Buddhist context, have nothing intrinsically Buddhist about them; they may be based on contemporaneous examples of funerary monuments in Gandhāra belonging to no religious persuasion in particular, but which served the artist to illustrate a Buddhist legend. The reliefs testify to the fact that, at least in Gandhāra and at least in the first centuries of the Christian era, a pregnant woman, and one who had met a violent death to boot, was not always cremated.

The funerary monuments shown on the reliefs are divided by de Marco into four types. The most common one (de Marco: type 1) is described as a (closed) ‘tumulus’ made of bricks. De Marco does not explicitly link this type with the (*loṣṭa*)*citi*, but it would seem to me that the burial mound made of bricks, known from the *Kalpaśāstra*, may be considered as its prototype. The other common type (de Marco: type 3) is described as a ‘hut,’ ‘*vihāra*,’ or ‘*caityagrha*.’ De Marco (op. cit. 232) observes: ‘It is difficult to determine why the funerary monuments displayed on these reliefs are this shape.’ It appears to me that some influence from outside the Indian world could be considered as a possible explanation: the sarcophagus or stone coffin, moulded according to the simplest form of a ‘dwelling’ in the Indian artistic idiom, the *kuṭi* or ‘hut’—the heavy, arched cover of the sarcophagus being interpreted as the ‘attic story’ or vault above a cubical chamber.⁶⁶ However, apart from these reliefs, no archaeological attestation of either of these two types is known to me. The question

⁶⁵For a discussion of this source see de Marco 1987, 191f. n. 2.

⁶⁶See Foekema 2003, 11. Zwalf (op. cit. I, 202) describes the tomb on the relief kept in the British Museum (No. 225 = de Marco’s B-2) as: ‘The hut is a cubic structure with a high arched roof covered with a leaf pattern and surmounted horizontally along its ridge by a hemi-cylindrical element supporting a large bird;

seems justified whether we are here concerned with a real historic phenomenon or an artistic convention.

The above two types of tombs are particularly appropriate to burial of the body. This is less obviously the case in the two remaining types (de Marco's types 2 and 4), which consist each of one specimen only (A-2 and B-10). In one of these instances (B-10), the subject of the Sudāya legend requires the depiction of a corpse, but the monument seems incongruous. The other specimen (A-2), illustrating the *śmaśāna*, does not show a corpse at all. We shall treat these two in more detail below, when we deal with what still remains to be discussed: funerary monuments connected with the remains of cremation, i.e. ashes. It will appear that, if conceived in this way, a link of these two types with other archaeological evidence can be made.

Since we are particularly concerned with monuments in the Hindu sphere, we will not dwell upon the Buddhist *stūpas* at great length.⁶⁷ But, since the Buddhist cult of the *stūpa* developed out of more general South-Asian practices of mortuary ritual and disposal of the dead, and the Brahmanical or Hindu tradition evolved from the same breeding ground, it may be informative to begin with an example from the Buddhist fold, the interesting case of the Sui Vihar *stūpa* in Bahawalpur (Pakistan).

In the remains of this *stūpa* a copper plate inscription has been found, dated in the 11th year of the reign of Kaṇiṣka, i.e. AD 138. The inscription attests the word *yaṣṭi* in a funerary context and this time there is an actual connection with mortuary deposits. The inscription tells us that the wife of Balanandin, an *upasika* who was mistress of the *vihara*, raised in Damana a *yaṭhi* for the *bhikṣu* Nāgadatta and that the mother of Balajaya, after having established the 'foundation' (*pratiṭhana*) of the *yaṭhi*, donated the 'enclosure' (*anuparivara*).⁶⁸

it seems double-roofed like the structures underlying the false gable panel but with the upper part unusually small.'

⁶⁷Jaina *stūpas* are left out of account altogether. Jaina texts refer to *stūpas* and 'stūpa worship has been depicted in a number of sculptures... Actual Jaina stūpas were very few, but the most important of them was that of Mathurā at Kaṇkālī Tīlā' (Joshi 1989, 333). For this *stūpa* and its interpretation see also Folkert 1989. Phyllis Granoff, asked about this subject, kindly wrote to me the following (email 22-5-05): 'In the Jain stories there is no relic worship. The gods take the relics to heaven and worship them there [cf. Granoff 1992, 189; *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra* I, 364]. In the medieval period stūpas are regularly built for monks and images of the monks are made. They are both worshipped. The story about the first Jain images is that they are funerary images, but the accounts are pretty late [e.g., *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra* I, 365–370]. It is a very interesting topic. There are also the memorials constructed where Jain monks fasted to death.' It seems that in later Jainism the cult of image worship is explained and justified by the doctrine that the images of the *tīrthaṅkaras* are actually memorial statues: 'The fact that temples are memorial monuments and images of the *tīrthaṅkaras* are funerary statues has a certain appropriateness in the Jain tradition. The *tīrthaṅkaras* are above all martyrs, who have suffered what others might have found unendurable in their quest for religious salvation: they have also died a special death, in meditation and voluntary renunciation of all food and water' (Granoff 1992, p. 191; 2001, 68 n. 11). This ideology did not remain uncontested (Granoff 1992, pp. 194f.; 2001, 64f.).

⁶⁸This interpretation follows mainly Sircar's rendering in *Select Inscriptions* I, 139f.

*maharajasya rajatirajasya devaputrasya ka[niṣkasya] saṃva[tsa]re ekadaśe saṃ 10 (+ *) 1 ... bhikṣusya nagadattasya ... yaṭhiṃ aropayata iha da[ma]ne viharasvamiṇiṃ upasika [ba]lanamdi[-ku]ṭiṃbini bala-jayamata ca imaṃ yaṭhipratiṭhanam ṭhapa[i]caṃ anu parivaram dadarim (|*) ...* Rendered in Sanskrit by Sircar as: *mahārājasya rājātīrājasya devaputrasya kaniṣkasya saṃvatsare ekadaśe saṃ 11 ... bhikṣoḥ nāgadattasya ... yaṣṭim āropayati iha damane vihārasvāminī upāsikā balanandikuṭumbinī, balajayamātā*

Plate 4 Sui Vihar Stūpa

a. POSITION OF COPPER-PLATE
From *Journal A. S. Beng. Vol. XXXIX.*

From the not all too clear description by Major Stubbs quoted by Konow and a drawing in *Indian Antiquary* (Plate 4),⁶⁹ it appears that out of an earthen mound rises a brick tower of 15 m high. About half way up the tower is a room of 8 ft. square, i.e. measuring c. 85 by 85 cm; its height seems to have been 2ft., i.e. 60 cm. The inscription was found at the bottom of this chamber, apparently covering a *square brick shaft* of 16 inch, i.e. 40 by 40 cm, going down to the mound, i.e. having a length of at least 6 m. In the chamber were found ‘coins, mixed with some pieces of iron, a few beads, fragments of ornaments, *all mixed up with ashes and earth.*’⁷⁰ It is unknown whether the shaft ends precisely at the mound or continues into it. The chamber may have been the relic chamber, as Konow surmises, but, in view of the other occurrences of the word *yaṣṭi*, we cannot follow him when he takes over Hoernle’s suggestion (Hoernle 1881, 327) and proposes that the word here refers to the monk’s staff of Nāgadatta ‘set up’ or ‘assumed’ (like a bishop’s staff) at the occasion when he assumed ‘a high clerical office.’ Rather it would seem, as has been proposed by Schopen,⁷¹ that the *yaṣṭi* mentioned refers somehow to the brick shaft on top of which the chamber is found and which forms the central axis or *yūpa* of the monument. If this is the case, the structure of the Sui Vihar monument resembles closely the two mounds M and N of Lauriya-Nandangarh, in which was found,

ca idaṃ yaṣṭipratīṣṭhānaṃ sthāpayitvā anu parivāraṃ dadāti | ...

Konow CII II.1, 141 and Schopen 1997, 157 suggest that *parivāra* here might mean the room or chamber, i.e. the chamber in which the mortuary deposits and the inscription have been found. I diverge from Sir-car *et alii* by taking *anu* in composito with *parivāra*, a noun related to *anuparivārayati*: ‘to encircle’ (see Edgerton’s BHSD s.v.).

⁶⁹ Konow in CII II A 138; drawing in *Indian Antiquary* X (1881) facing p. 324, copied from the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* XXXIX.

⁷⁰ CII II A, 138; italics mine.

⁷¹ Schopen 1997, 50 n. 61, where also textual sources and the secondary literature regarding *yaṣṭi/yūpa* are given and briefly discussed.

Plate 5 Wooden pillar at
Lauriya-Nandangarh

A hollow shaft, about 10 in. (25.4 cm) in diameter, running right through the centre from the bottom up to a little below the deposits of burnt human bones and a gold leaf. The shaft most probably indicates the position of the wooden post which had perished. At the bottom of the mound N, which was dug down to the natural soil, was actually found the stump of a wooden pillar *in situ* [Plate 5]. Significantly enough, the *Divyāvadāna* mentions the setting up of a pillar, called *yūpa*[*yaṣṭi*], in the interior of the dome.⁷² King Devānaṃpiyatissa, Ceylonese contemporary of Aśoka, is stated in the *Mahāvamsa*, a Ceylonese text, to have erected a stone column to mark the site of the Mahāthūpa to be constructed in future by king Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.⁷³

It remains uncertain whether the brick shaft in the Sui Vihar monument originally enclosed a wooden column, though the use of the word *yaṣṭi* in the inscription strongly suggests that. If this is the case, it may be conjectured that the *yaṣṭipratīṣṭhāna* that was built refers to the still present brick ‘casement of the column’.⁷⁴ The building

⁷²*Divyāvadāna* XVIII (p. 244): *yatas tena mahāśreṣṭhiṇā saṃcintya yathaitat suvarṇaṃ tatraiva garbha-saṃsthaṃ syāt tathā kartavyam iti tatas tasya stūpasya sarvair eva caturbhiḥ pārśvaiḥ pratikaṇṭhukayā catvāri sopānāny ārabdhāni kārayitum | yāvad anupūrveṇa prathamā medhī tato ‘nupūrveṇa dvitīyā tatas tṛtīyā medhī yāvad anupūrvenāṇḍam | tathāvidhaṃ ca bhūpasyāṇḍam kṛtaṃ yatra sā yūpayayaṣṭir abhyantare pratipādītā | paścāt tasyātinavāṇḍasyopari harmikā kṛtānupūrveṇa yaṣṭyāropaṇaṃ kṛtaṃ varṣasthāle mahāmaṇiratnāni tāny āropitāni |*. The second *yaṣṭi* is clearly the post on top of the dome (*aṇḍa*). The *yūpayayaṣṭi* is the pole within the *aṇḍa*.

⁷³Mitra 1971, 24 n. 12. Cf. Bloch 1906–07, 123, plate xl (= Plate 5). A difference between the shaft in Lauriya and Sui Vihar is that the one in the latter site is square and made of bricks, whereas the one in Lauriya is circular, apparently informed by the wooden column itself.

⁷⁴If *pratīṣṭhāna* would have its common meaning and refers to the ‘pedestal’ or ‘foundation’ of the *yaṣṭi*, the sequence of building activities as recorded in the inscription becomes unintelligible.

activity described in the inscription may thus be conceived as follows: On an earthen mound a wooden pole or column (*yaṣṭi*) of a diameter of c. 40 cm and a height of 6 m was erected (*āropayati*) by Balanandin's wife; then the brick casement (*yaṣṭipratishṭhāna*) around the column was built (*sthāpayivā*) by the mother of Balajaya; subsequently the same mother donated (*dadāti*), on top of the casement or shaft, a chamber or safe (*anuparivāra*), containing the coins, ornaments, etc., and the remains of Nāgadatta, after which she had it all dedicated, as recorded in the inscription per se. This must have been the cardinal phase of the construction. The enveloping brick construction, which remains today in the form of a 'tower,' and which always may have had a more tower- than dome-like appearance,⁷⁵ was built after the donation recorded in the inscription.

It is evident that in the case of Sui Vihar we are concerned with a monument belonging to our fifth category: funerary monuments containing ashes of the deceased. Is anything similar to be found in the non-heterodox traditions? Or, we may ask, what had become of the Vedic option to build a *citi*, a pile of bricks over the bones and ashes? The *citi* may have occasionally lived on in burial mounds as these are attested in the Gandhāra reliefs, but when the *Mahābhārata* (above n. 16 on p. 15) describes the situation at the end of the Kali age by saying that *edūkas* have replaced temples, this expresses the concern of the author that too many people are being converted to heterodox religions,⁷⁶ not the fear that *edūkas* would eventually be worshipped all-out by those who were supposed to belong to the Brahmanical tradition. The few Gandhāra reliefs aside, evidence of monuments containing mortuary deposits belonging unambiguously to the Hinduized tradition in the period under investigation is very rare indeed.

We shall leave the monuments aside for the moment and will focus on archaeological sites that attest the practice of cremation and inhumation. In his *Burial Practices in Ancient India*, Singh (1970, 131) sums up the situation of iron-age burials in North India as follows:

Evidence regarding the disposal of the dead during this period has been obtained from Sonapur, Rajgir and Lauria Nandangarh—all in Bihar; Rajghat (district Varanasi, U.P.) and Amreli in Gujarat. Besides, a large number of megalithic graves, tentatively datable to this period and later, have been located in the Vindhyan ranges, Chotanagpur plateau, the Aravalli ranges and north-western India. The predominant mode of the disposal of the dead seems to be cremation and a limited quantity of charred human bones have been found buried either in urns or pits in the habitation-area itself.

⁷⁵See Franz 1978, 1–18, Figs. 1–17 illustrating the 'Turmstupa.'

⁷⁶Allchin 1957, 1: 'Since Lassen it has been generally accepted that this description of the *Kali-yuga* refers to the spread of Buddhist practices and the popular desertion of Brahmanical temples.' This is not to say, however, that the composer of this passage was exclusively thinking of Buddhism. He might have lashed out at all pan-Indian practices frowned upon by the orthodox that involved the erection of monuments over mortuary remains. *Edūka* thus seems to be a wider term than, for instance, *stūpa*, and it clearly has here, if not in all cases where it occurs, a pejorative connotation (cf. discussions in Goswamy 1980, 5ff.; de Marco 1987, 228f.).

One of the major sites seems to have been missed by Singh, who does not refer to the excavations at Ujjain. The archaeological findings at the Kumhāra Ṭekḍī near Ujjain are interesting enough, though, to deserve our attention. This mound has been the subject of a preliminary exploration by M.B. Garde in the season of 1938–39. It is a longish mound of about 67 m long, 33 m wide and 3 m high. Trial excavations exposed about forty-two skeletons, some of them lying on their bellies others on their backs, most of them north-south with the head towards the north, but two of them with heads pointing to the south-west.⁷⁷ Garde reports the following:

One large urn with the neck broken off, another small urn complete, and pieces of two or three large urns were found buried in the midst of skeletons. The large urn contained a few bones, ashes and smaller pottery mostly cups and dishes. The contents of the small urn consisted of ashes and bones. A large stone mortar and quite a number of stone pedestals were found in association with the burials. [...] Innumerable fragments of large and small jars, cups and dishes with which the mound is literally made up can be easily explained by this custom of burying a large number of earthen vessels and cups along with the dead body.

Signs of cremation were also unearthed along the lower stratum reaching down to four or five feet below the surface of the mound. Thus the customs of cremation, post cremation partial burial, and simple and complete burial appear to have been in vogue almost simultaneously during the period to which this cemetery belongs (AAR p. 16).

On account of the coins found—‘cast coins notably with the elephant or tree in railing on the obverse and the *chaitya* or mountain with a crescent above on the reverse’—Garde dates this *śmaśāna* to the 3rd or 2nd century BC (ibid. p. 16), but the actual time it may have been in use could be many centuries longer. In addition to the skeletons and earthenware, ornaments were found, such as earrings and beads, and one wonders which purpose the ‘pedestals’ may have served. However tentative Garde’s excavation may have been, there can be little doubt that the mound revealed a prominent *śmaśāna* in the sense of ‘burial-cum-cremation ground.’ We know of one prominent *śmaśāna* at Ujjain from the Sanskrit literature: it was the birthplace of the Pāśupata movement, the site where Kuśika/Kauśika was thought to have been initiated by the Lord (*bhagavat*) Himself.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Annual Administration Report of the Archaeological Department Gwalior State 1938–39* (AAR) p. 16: ‘The faces of many were turned to the West, of some to the East, and of others upwards to the sky. The poses of a few were quite unusual for ordinary burial. Thus two skeletons had the knees bent and raised up. One of them was in a seated posture with the trunk folded and the head bent forward. Another again had the trunk twisted to right, the knees bent, and legs folded to the left. Still another was seated in a meditating attitude almost like a Buddhist monk or a jain *Sadhu*. A few of the skeletons, judging from their short stature and the development of pelvic cavity appeared to be females, while a few others distinctly represented youngsters.[...]’

⁷⁸ Kauṇḍinya *ad Pāśupatasūtra* (PS) 1.1 (pp. 3f.); SP 167.126–128ab: *anugṛhya tadā vyāsa sakulaṃ dvijasattamam | jagāmojjayinīm devaḥ śmaśānaṃ ca viveśa ha || 126 || sa tatra bhasmanātmānam avagunṭhya vṛśadhvajah | ulmukaṃ vāmahastena gṛhṭvā samupāviśat || 127 || tatra prathamam ādāya śiṣyaṃ kauśikam īśvaraḥ |* (for the edition of this chapter of the original *Skandapurāṇa* (SP) see Bisschop 2006, 104, 211).

Although this accumulation of evidence may seem substantial, if we take stock of the extent of the subcontinent and the many centuries involved, it indicates that burial, of the complete body or partial after cremation, was a marginal rather than a central phenomenon in classical India. And, unfortunately, it does not furnish us with factual information on the monuments to the dead (outside the Buddhist sphere).⁷⁹ We don't know how the Ujjain *śmaśāna* looked aboveground when it was still in use. The following find in Mansar may not solve this question definitively, but it has enough fascinating characteristics to warrant a separate treatment, which, in combination with the material collected by de Marco, may give us some idea as to what a funerary monument of a person of consequence may have been.

The Eḍūka at Mansar

I have dealt with the Vākāṭaka site of Mansar in several earlier publications. In Bakker 2004 I have drawn attention to the important publication of T.A. Wellsted in the JASB XXIX, in which he reports that,

In 1928 a certain amount of interesting material came to light and led to the examination of the whole area surrounding Mansar tank, with the result that the traces of an extensive townsite were discovered.⁸⁰

Wellsted carried out a careful archaeological survey and some of the finds described in his report were donated to the British Museum. In the present context Wellsted's site 'T' (Plate 6) deserves special attention.

This site (encircled on the map) is situated on a direct line between the Pravareśvara Temple on the Hiḍimbā Ṭekḍī (MNS 3), about 2 km to the west, and the Vaiṣṇava monuments of the Rāmagiri, 3.5 km to the east, that is to say, virtually in the middle of these two great Vākāṭaka state sanctuaries, the former built by king

⁷⁹I find it difficult to be so sure about the scene on the eastern gateway of Stūpa 1 at Sanchi, which, according to de Marco (1987, 226, Fig. 22), 'is *certainly* the tomb of a *yogin* belonging to the same community represented in the relief.' How to explain that we have no archaeological evidence of this sort of ancient monuments of yogins, whereas we have innumerable ones of Buddhist saints? And even if it were a tomb of a yogin, I find it hazardous to conclude from this piece of 'evidence' (and this tentative piece alone), that the *samādhis* of yogins found in South Asia to date existed all throughout Indian history (de Marco 1987, 228 n. 76).

The situation appears significantly altered in the later (post AD 1200) period, in which we find *samādhis*, chiefly of yogins and saints—e.g. the '*śmaśāna* of Pāśupatanāth' illustrated in de Marco 1987, Figs. 18f., or the *samādhis* of Gorakhnāth yogis, *ibid.* Figs. 20f.—and mausoleums or *chataris* of princes (Mishra 2003). This change may be partly due to Islamic influence; it falls outside the scope of the present investigation. For the burial practice of the Gorakhnāth yogis see Briggs 1938, 39–43. For the development of the (esoteric) Śaiva Tantric concept of the 'eight (nine) great cremation grounds' (Sanderson 2005, n. 208) in the later syncretistic religion of Nepal see Bühnemann (2007).

For South India this practice is attested in the *Ajitāgama* (see above n. 25 on p. 17), which reports that a *liṅga* may be erected for Śivabhaktas: *samādhībhūmau liṅgaṃ ca manoṇāṃ ca sulakṣaṇam* || 44 || *pratiṣṭhāpya yathānyāyaṃ nityapūjādikaṃ caret* | (op. cit. 63.44f.), though the Pāraśaivas and Āntarālīkas are excluded from this practice: *śaivānāṃ pārapūrvāṇām āntarālīkasamjñinām* || 45 || *pūrvoktavādhinā teṣāṃ pratiṣṭhādīn na kārayet* | (op. cit. 63.45f.). This practice is confirmed by other (late) sources (e.g. *Varṇaśramacandrikā*) given in Bhatt *ad Ajitāgama* 63.44ff.

⁸⁰Wellsted 1934, 161.

Plate 6 Wellsted's survey map of Mansar

Pravarasena II, the latter by his mother, Prabhavatīguptā, both in the first half of the fifth century AD. The site as described by Wellsted concerns a brick shaft, uncovered and destroyed during mining work, which,

reached to within 2 feet [60 cm] of the surface and extended downwards to the junction of the surface soil with bedrock 14 feet [4.2 m] from the surface, its total height therefore was 12 feet [3.6 m]. Of square plan, with walls of single brick construction, the space enclosed was about 4.5 sq ft [$\approx 65 \times 65$ cm]. The bricks were of large size, $18'' \times 9.5'' \times 3.5''$ [$\approx 45 \times 24 \times 9$ cm]. Near the bottom, making a lower chamber 15" [38 cm] deep, was a false floor of brick. The bottom of the lower chamber was paved with brick and rested directly on bedrock. In the upper part of the shaft was filled earth from which was recovered a small snake image of greenish soapstone and some pottery. Beneath the false floor was a large spherical pot, 1 ft [30 cm] in diameter containing ashes; with it also were several small pots. (Wellsted 1934, 164)

On the face of it, the brick construction described resembles a mirror image of the Sui Vihar monument, but there are fundamental differences. There is no subterranean tower- or dome-like construction, something hardly to be expected, whereas another, possibly more significant difference is, that the burial gifts that accompany the urn with ashes are not so much beads and ornaments as in Sui Vihar, but ritual implements such as vessels, pots, bowls, a lamp, two tubular, subconical pieces of red-polished ware,⁸¹ and the Nāga image (Plate 7). It is important to note that partly the same items

⁸¹BM 1930.10.7.2, 3. The measurements of these two objects are 3.6" (= 9.14 cm) and 3.8" (= 9.65 cm) in height respectively (the tops of both are damaged).

Plate 7 Nāga (front and back) found at site T in Mansar

Plate 8 Pottery found at site T in Mansar

have been found at the adjacent site of MNS 3, in the hypogeum which contains the so-called Man of Mansar, viz. two pots, an oil lamp and an image of a snake (Bakker 2004, 81f.). And, finally, in contrast to Sui Vihar, no dedicatory inscription has been discovered in the burial chamber. There might have been nothing to dedicate. The shaft is likely to have ended in a monument above the ground, not an object of worship.

The pottery (Plate 8) and the Nāga image were stored in the British Museum in 1930,⁸² but not the urn with ashes, which has disappeared. The coarse red ware, the

⁸²The pottery: BM 1930.10.7.2–25; the Nāga image: BM 1930.10.7.1.

Plate 9 Nāga Rāmagiri (left), Nāga Mansar (right)

size of the bricks and the smooth, perfectly sculptured soapstone image of a rising cobra (Nāga), its central hood crowned by the typical Vākāṭaka flower cap, leave little doubt that the finds are Vākāṭaka.⁸³ As to the form of the Nāga sculpture, this differs completely from the iron snake found near the Man of Mansar, but it conforms to an image found in front of the entrance of the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple on the Rāmagiri, a temple that, as we have seen, could be classified as a memorial temple of Prabhāvātīguptā erected by her daughter (above p. 20).⁸⁴ The size of the two Nāga images is different, but the similarity of concept is rather striking (Plate 9).

The function of the Nāga may have been a protective and supportive one, representing the Vāstunāga, a concept somewhat parallel to that of the Vāstupuruṣa: a local snake-deity of the site, ritually converted to the guardian of the *vāstu*, homologized with the cosmic Ananta, who carries the building/earth on his hoods. The major difference between both images is the number of the hoods (heads)—three in the case of the burial shaft Nāga, five in the case of the temple one—which may be explained by the difference in status of the two: one protecting a funerary monument, the other the house of a god, i.e. temple.

The idea that a site belongs to and is protected by a Nāga, who underlies it, is common to the Hindu as well as the Buddhist traditions.⁸⁵ However, I conjecture that

⁸³The height of this Nāga image including pedestal is 7.6" (= 18 cm).

⁸⁴For the iron snake found in MNS 3 see Bakker 2004, Plate 6.24: it is a crawling snake. The Nāgas found in front of the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple and at site T, on the other hand, are frozen in a position in which the hood is raised and expanded to ward off danger; the snake hood in this position may be imagined to support what is placed on top of it (*ādhāraśakti*).

⁸⁵E.g. Bose 1932, 29: 'According to the Śilpaśāstras, it is imagined that a great serpent (nāga) lies encircling every building-site.' Rāmacandra Kaulācāra's *Śilpaprakāśa* 1.55–60 (Boner and Śarmā 1966, 4f. (14f.)). Cf. the Buddhist *Kriyāsamgrahaṇajikā*, discussed in Tanemura 2004, 24ff; Cohen 1998.

at site T we are not concerned with a Buddhist or Jain monument, but with a funerary monument belonging to the mainstream tradition, to which the Vākāṭaka royal family belonged, and this on the following grounds: 1) the significant differences with the Sui Vihar monument; 2) the burial gifts, which at site T show correspondences with those found next to the Man of Mansar in MNS 3—viz. the pottery and the serpent—and the finds at the *śmaśāna* in Ujjain—the urn with ashes and the pottery; 3) the striking similarity of the Nāga of the burial shaft and the one found at the entrance of the Kevala Narasiṃha Temple; 4) the situation of the site in between two Hindu state sanctuaries (*devakulasthāna*).

The aboveground monumental part of this grave is irretrievably lost and thoughts as to what it may have looked like are necessarily of a speculative nature. The plausibility of such speculation would be increased, though, if we could connect what still remains with other instances of funerary monuments. As such I would like to adduce the two Gandhāra reliefs left out of account so far, in particular the monument shown in de Marco's relief B-10, a specimen that by itself makes up this author's type 4 (Plate 10).⁸⁶ This is the only specimen that shows a subterranean and an aboveground part, and the subterranean part consists of a brick shaft. At the lower end of this shaft is an arched opening out of which sticks the body of Sudāya's mother, but, as de Marco justly remarks, as in the case of the tumuli (type 1), this 'is clearly a representational device' (de Marco 1987, 234). The brick shaft seems badly fitted to contain a body anyway, and the thought thrusts itself upon us that we are here concerned with what is actually a burial shaft meant to contain an urn with ashes and/or bones appropriated by the artist to illustrate the legend of Sudāya. The aboveground structure is described by de Marco as follows:

A high podium (*adhovedikā*) quadrangular in form (*cāturāṣṭra* sic), framed at the extremities by a moulded plinth and cyma, a basement with two tambours moulded at the summit, and a cupola (*aṇḍa* or *kumbha*) from the centre of which rises a short pole (*yaṣṭi*) supporting a single umbrella 'disc' in the form of a spheroidal vault, similar to the topmost element (*uṣṇīṣa*) of the *stūpa* itself.⁸⁷

De Marco argues laboriously that we are here concerned with a sort of *Buddhist* memorial, but his argument is not fully convincing. It seems to me that the structure is non-denominational. Aside from a general resemblance with a *stūpa*, there are conspicuous resemblances with the *aīḍūka* structure of the VDhP: three receding platforms (*bhadrapiṭhas*), admittedly the upper two circular (the 'tambours') and not square, on which stands what could be interpreted as a liṅga-like (*liṅgarūpa*) column just as well as an *aṇḍa* (the 'cupola'), from which rises again a column or *yaṣṭi* that is crowned by a spherical element, interpreted by de Marco as a (single) 'umbrella' (*chattri*); note, not the triple umbrella usual for a Buddhist *stūpa*.⁸⁸ Since Gustav

⁸⁶This relief had been photographed when it was in the Karachi antique market; its present location is unknown (de Marco 1987, 210).

⁸⁷De Marco 1987, 212.

⁸⁸Similar structures are depicted in the petroglyphs found in Oshibat on the upper Indus River in northern Pakistan. Bemmman and König (1994) classify these pictures, given in Tafel 24–27, as '*stūpas*,' but they may rather be funerary monuments of a more general nature, as the crowning with a trident (18:227), the

Plate 10 Tomb of Sudāya's mother

Roth's *Symbolism of the Stūpa* (Roth 1980), we may take it for certain that the author of the VDhP calqued his Hindu *aiḍūka* on a Buddhist example, but by doing this he elaborated on what must have been a monumental tradition that was common to all Indian religions, most pronounced within Buddhism, less in Jainism and inconspicuous in the Hindu mainstream.

It might be useful to draw a comparison here with the monument depicted in de Marco's relief A-1, classified by him again as a type by itself (type 2: 'square plan monuments'), which lacks the subterranean part of B-10, since the myth represented did not require its depiction (Plate 11). The *śmaśāna* scene of this relief makes it clear that it represents a funerary monument.⁸⁹ It consists of,

a high quadrangular stone podium, decorated, on the visible side, with a sort of disc or circular emblem. From the platform rises a cylindrical structure terminating in a cupola, slightly compressed at the sides and flattened at the top, with a similar element of smaller dimensions rising from the summit.⁹⁰

crecent and sun (18:127, 18:199, 18:156), or a pennant (18:269, 20:2) seems to indicate. Also the pictures in Tafel 32, classified as 'Scene,' are monuments rather than Buddhist *stūpas*.

⁸⁹This regards a relief that is kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inv. no. I.S. 1-1945) and has been described by Ackermann 1975, 107–109. The scene is found in the lowest of three registers that make up this relief; it depicts the episode of a boy bound in the cemetery (i.e., *śmaśāna*) who takes refuge with the Buddha. For the identification of this scene see Santoro 1980, 106f., who bases herself on the Chinese Tripiṭaka (*Tsa p'i-yü ching* II, 20 = *Taishō Issaikyō* IV, nr. 205, pp. 507, c, 7-508, a, 1), translated by P. Daffinà. Ackermann 1975, 107 had described this funerary monument as a 'miniature *vihāra*.'

⁹⁰De Marco 1987, 196. Cf. the description given by Ackermann 1975, 107f.: 'The *vihāra* between the Buddha and the boy stands on a cubic block of stone, its visible side is decorated by a round, shield-like

Plate 11 Eḍukas in Gandhāra reliefs (de Marco: B-10 (left), A-1 (right))

This structure too, with its alternation of square and round vertical elements—there seems to be one more quadrangular podium below the one that is decorated by the ‘protuberance’—echoes the VDhP description, or rather the other way round. Although certainly different in many details, I think that the structures of A-1 and B-10 are basically the same, and that they are variants of the modest beginning that in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, under Buddhist influence, has evolved into the phantastic *aiḍūka*. Another variant of such a structure, a true *eḍūka*, might have once crowned the burial shaft of site T in Mansar and, possibly, some of the graves in the *śmaśāna* at Ujjain.

The prominent situation of site T, in between the two Vākāṭaka (Hindu) state sanctuaries, suggests the prestigious character this funerary monument must have had in the eyes of contemporaries; it may have called to mind an important public figure. In an earlier publication I have conjectured, on account of the Nāga guarding the burial chamber, that this public figure may have been Prabhāvatīguptā herself, ‘Pravarasena’s remarkable Bhāgavata mother, the queen who styled herself as belonging to the Dhāraṇa-gotra, a princess who was, on her own account, an ornament of both dynasties, the Gupta and the Nāga.’⁹¹ I would like to be more cautious here. If the ashes were those of Prabhāvatī she would have had two monuments, a memorial temple on the Rāmagiri and the *eḍūka* at issue. The latter may have marked the spot where she was cremated, the former was the place where merit was transferred to her

protuberance. The *vihāra* itself consists of a cylindrical body and the double, vaulted roof, decorated with a rhomboid pattern. The opening of the *vihāra* is assumed to be on the side turned towards the child.’

⁹¹Bakker 2004, 84. Poona Plates of Prabhāvatīguptā (CII V, 7 ll. 7–8, 36 ll. 8–9): [...] *mahārājādhirāja-śrīcandraguptas tasya duhitā dhāraṇasagotrā nāgakulasambhūtāyāṃ śrīmahādevyāṃ kuberanāgāyām utpannobhayakulāṅkārabhūtāyāntabhagavadbhaktā* [...].

in the next world. The two similar Nāgas found at both monuments seem to underpin this hypothesis. However, a serpent underneath a structure is a common rather than a specific feature, and, apart from that, there is little that points to any person in particular. It is therefore possible altogether that the burial shaft belonged to someone else, another king, another important person of the fifth century. The anonymity of this grave illustrates again what Malamoud sees as the ‘l'idéologie funéraire dans le brâhmanisme’: ‘La durée de vie des mânes est brève. Le culte qui leur est rendu n'est pas fait pour leur donner ou leur permettre de garder un visage’ (Malamoud 1982, 449).

Conclusion

The natural human inclination to erect monuments to the dead has been recognized within the Brahmanical tradition since Vedic times. However, it did not really take root within Hinduism. Abhorrence of everything connected with death owing to its pollutive potential may be one of the explanatory factors.⁹² Worship was reserved for those powers which could enhance the human condition and mortuary remains were not counted among them. In this respect the Buddhist tradition with its human founder distinguished itself fundamentally from the Hindu mainstream. The funerary structures pertaining to the Brahmanical sphere that we have surveyed were all, with the exception of the last one at site T in Mansar, ‘cenotaphs’ in essence. In order to reconcile the inclination to commemorate the dead with the religious propensity to increase merit through worship, the memorial temple, our category one, came into being. This became a resounding success. Literary and archaeological evidence for the other four categories, however, remains meagre within the period under review, the ancient and classical age.

To erect stone steles (*yaṣṭis*) in memory of a dear one who had passed away may have been a wide-spread custom in South Asia from neolithic times or earlier. It was apparently unknown to Vedic religion, but was accommodated to Hindu and Buddhist practices; within both religions, however, it developed in quite divergent ways. The *yaṣṭis* of Andhau and the one of Sui Vihar have in common that both commemorate the death of a venerated person; one of the Andhau steles was erected for a novice nun (*śrāmaṇerī*). A significant difference, however, is that in Sui Vihar the deceased was an initiated Buddhist monk (*bhikṣu*), whose ashes were deposited on top of the *yaṣṭi*, thus turning the monument into an object of (relic) worship, comparable to the cult of saints in Christianity; accordingly the monument was expanded into a *stūpa*.⁹³ The *yaṣṭi*, combined with bones or ashes and appropriating, as it would seem, the Vedic idea of the burial mound (*citi*), thus became the *stūpa* of the heterodox traditions; without mortuary deposits it evolved into the memorial stones of Indian

⁹²Malamoud 1982, 451 n. 3 ‘Le cadavre est une source majeure d’impureté, pour les objets et les lieux, mais aussi pour les hommes. Les survivants sont atteints d’une souillure d’autant plus grave et durable qu’ils sont plus étroitement apparentés au mort.’

⁹³The difference between monks and laymen should not be taken to be absolute. ‘Burial *ad sanctos*’ was, as Schopen 1997, 114–147, has shown, a common phenomenon in Indian Buddhism.

folk religion.⁹⁴ The former development is earlier than the latter. The Śaka tribes, who came from a background with a rich funerary tradition, may have acted as a catalyst of the second development, which did not meet with great acclaim from the side of the orthodox.

Foreign influence may also account for another exceptional phenomenon in ancient and classical North India: the installation of human effigies within holy space, i.e., a temple. Although one indigenous example of a statue gallery has been found, this cave at Nāṇeghāt differs substantially, as we have seen, from what the Kuṣāṇa kings had made for themselves. The *devakula* at Māt is *sui generis*.

Finally the *aiḍūka* and *eḍūka*. The latter, if not a pejorative for a Buddhist *stūpa*, is nearly as elusive as the former. In both cases we should think of vertical, elongated or needle-like constructions, mostly of brick (in which one could see an echo of the Vedic *citi*), combined with one or more *yaṣṭis*, round or square pillars or poles, raised by way of a commemorative column. The general Hindu reluctance to connect it with actual remains of the dead rendered it futile: being neither temple nor relic sanctuary there were not enough incentives to construct, worship and maintain it; the Hindu funerary monument or *aiḍūka* never really came off the ground. The only specimen recognized as such by some scholars is the one preserved in Ahichchatra, where no mortuary deposits seem to have been found (for this we reserved the word ‘*aiḍūka*’), but this identification is spurious. The *aiḍūka* of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* is a hybrid product of śāstric imagination, calqued on a Buddhist example.

The remains of an *eḍūka* seem to have been preserved at site T in Mansar, where ashes have been found (hence our reference to it as ‘*eḍūka*’) and a subterranean brick shaft was preserved, but where there is no longer a column above the ground. With the help of some Gandhāra reliefs we have made an attempt to visualize a structure that possibly once stood on top of the burial shaft and which to contemporaries may have been a ‘stab of pain’ (*śokaśalya*), reminding them of one of the great (wo)men of their age.

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⁹⁴Cf. Irwin 1980, 12: ‘In my first lecture—entitled *The Stūpa and the Cosmic Axis: the archaeological evidence* [not available to this author]—it was shown that the primary component of the early *stūpa* had been an axial pillar of wood. In the earliest stage, this pillar had not been erected simply to mark the centre of the mound: it had taken structural precedence over the raising of the mound itself, the latter serving as an envelope to enclose it. Later, when earthen *stūpas* were superseded by more permanent structures in brick or stone, the axial function of the original type of monumental pillar was taken over by a comparatively slender pole or staff (*yaṣṭi*) bearing one or more umbrellas at its summit.’

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