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—A REVIEW

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The excavation revealed the complete outline of the temple (pi. LV). The cella was found to be surrounded by bases of fifteen (brick) pillars. The temple itself shows two structural phases; of these, the lower one, preserving the full outline, is built of 48 x 23 x 7 cm. size mud-bricks, while the upper one is seen only near the entrance side in the east, where remains of a baked brick superstructure were found. The superstructure along with the fifteen pillars belong to a later phase of the temple, situated on a platform which was bounded by a brick-wall. On the basis of the coins found in the brick debris, this later phase is assignable to the time of Kanishka I. The measurements of the temple were as follows: diameter of the apse, 3-80 m.; the length of the apsidal temple, 7*3 m.; the entrance opening 1-60 m. framed by a 1-10 m. broad wall-pillar each to the left and right sides; the distance between the axle of a pillar and the outer edge of the apsidal wall, 0-85 m.; the distance between two pillars, 1-20 m. to 1-40 m.; and the size of the platform on which the temple is built, 15 m. by 11-50 m. Wall structures protruding underneath seem to have been covered by an artificial slope. South of the apsidal temple, at a distance of about 5 m. from the platform, were found fragments of a stone railing. Likewise east of the temple, some pieces of a gateway came to light. These obviously had fallen when the gateway collapsed. This points to the fact that the apsidal temple was provided, at least on its southern side, with a stone railing and on the east, a gate of the three-architrave-type. The line in which the *stambha* fragments and *suchis* were found, supports the assumption that the railing had a straight course.

There is no doubt about the nature of use to which this later phase of apsidal Temple no. 2 was put. The finds showing snake representations are so frequent and its meaning and position so clear that one can, with all certainty, talk of a shrine for the *naga* cult, decorated by a few of the best artists of the time. Samples of the stone remains are the western end-piece of the bottom architrave with the depiction of a *makara* and a *naga* (pi. LVI A), the relief on the middle bottom-lintel with a nineteen-figure *naga* scene (pi. LVI B) and a *salabhanjika* bracket (pi. LVI C) from the western side of the gate.

61. EXCAVATION AT SARAI NAHAR RAI DISTRICT PRATAPGARH.—The Department of Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology, University of Allahabad, and the State Department of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of Uttar Pradesh, conducted excavation at Sarai Nahar Rai. The work was conducted under the direction of Prof. G. R. Sharma, with assistance from Dr. R. K. Varma, Sarvashri V. D. Misra and D. Mandal of the University of Allahabad. Shri R. C. Singh of the State Department of Archaeology participated as a trainee.

The site is situated about 15 km. south-west of Pratapgarh on the bank of a horseshoe lake, the major portion of which is now dry; only near the village of Srinagar, nearly 4 km. to the west, it still survives for about 8 months of a year. The ancient soil is marked by saline character while that of the lake by blackish colour and its fertile nature.

In all, eight skeletons, four hearths and a floor were exposed in this season's excavation. In the case of skeletons it was found that shallow oblong grave-pits were dug out in hard natural soil. On the floor of each grave-pit was a soil cushion, 3-4 cm. in thickness, over which was placed the skeleton along with microlith and a particular type of shell. The skeletons (pls. LVII A and B and LVIII A and B) were found to be in an extended position, in west-east orientation, with the head lying towards the west. In the case of at least two graves, a tumulus of about 5 cm. in thickness was also noticed.

In three graves microliths were found attached with or sticking into the bones of the

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skeletons. In the case of one burial, a point (microlith) was found having pierced one of the ribs. The skeletons have an average height of nearly 1-80 m.

Besides the graves, a number of hearths (pi. LIX A) either oblong or circular on plan and a floor were also excavated. These yielded burnt clay lumps, animal bones—charred and uncharred—and microliths (pi. LIXB). The animal bones recovered from the hearths and floors indicate existence of stag, bison and rhinoceros. Fish, tortoise and shell collected from the lakes constituted an important source of food supply. Pottery was completely absent from the deposits in the graves or hearths. A radiocarbon date of 8395 ± 110 B.C. was indicated by the calcified bone, obtained in the earlier excavation. More confirmatory dates are, therefore, needed for this assemblage.

62. EXCAVATION AT TAKIAPER, DISTRICT VARANASI.—The Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, under the direction of Shri T. N. Roy, carried out excavation at Takiaper in Tahsil Chakia. The site is located on the right bank of the Karmanasa, about 10 km. north-west of Chakia. The objective of the excavation was to ascertain the cultural sequence of the region. As a result of the excavation, two cultural periods, with a break in occupation, were recognized. The characteristics of each period are as follows:

Period I was represented by the occurrence of the black-and-red, black-slipped and the more famous N.B.P. Wares. Other finds included bone points, few microliths, antimony rods, pottery discs, terracotta animal figurines, besides copper and iron objects. No structural remains of the Period were brought to light in the cuttings.

Period II was distinguished by the cultural assemblage of the early centuries of the Christian era. Two successive structural phases were encountered in the deposits belonging to this Period. In the foundation of the buildings of the earlier phase, the use of stone was very popular. In the later phase, the structures were only of large-sized bricks.

The stone-house complex (pi. LX A) had two wings, each having two rooms (pi. LX B). In the smaller wing, the sizes of the rooms were respectively 2-15 x 2*10 m. and 2-26 x 2-10 m., while in the larger, these were 4-10 x 2-70 m. and 1-60 x 2-20 m.

In the smaller wing, the two rooms, were also interconnected through an opening. The main entrance to these rooms was from the front corridor but there was a small opening also from the back. In the longer set, the rooms were not interconnected, although there was an entrance in one of the bigger rooms. In the later structural phase, remains of a room (pi. LXI A), measuring 4-90 x 3-20 m. and an adjoining floor were exposed.

A notable find of this Period was a seal (pi. LXI B) of black stone, inscribed in Brahmi characters, palaeographically assignable to the first-second century A.D.

WEST BENGAL

63. EXPLORATION IN DISTRICT BURDWAN.—Shri P. C. Das Gupta, Dr. S. C. Mukherjee and Shri P. N. Malakar of the Department of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal, discovered chalcolithic black-and-red ware and the associated red ware on the eroded surface of Siuliburir Danga, a few kilometres to the north of the Damodar near Panagarh. During this exploration, the forest of Gopalpur near Durgapur was revisited. An appreciable number of tools, flakes and cores of Late Stone Age were recovered from the yellowish and sandy silt stretching over the lateritic detritus of the region. The tools included crested and backed blades as also scrapers of chert.