

Donors of Korara

A.K. Singh

Korara is modern Koravaī of Vidiśā district, which among other things is famous for their donors at Sāñchī. Its variant forms as Kurara, Koraghara and Kuraghara are also known from the minor inscriptions of Sāñchī. Sāñchī is situated in the Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh, 9 km. South-West of Vidiśā, which was on the ancient trade route. From 3rd century B.C. onwards persons came from distant places at Sāñchī and their contributions resulted into the magnificent art of Sāñchī. It is interesting to note that the art of Sāñchī was not only patronized by the royal persons but it is mainly the contribution of the commoners. In general, donations are made by individuals obviously for their own spiritual welfare. Donors include the name of male donors as well as female donors. More than 240 men and 170 women donated in the great Stupa of Sāñchī, i.e., Stupa I. Apart from individual, donations are also made collectively by whole family, more than one members of the family, community of the town, village etc. The monks, nuns, bankers, elite and commoners made such donations. The foreigners like Yona also made donations.

The donors of Stupa I had come from different far and near places, the number of which is more than 60. Of these, the number

of donors of Korara is higher, then comes sequentially the number of the donors of Ujjaina, Nandinagara (Nandera, Raisen), Vidiśā etc. However, there are more than 15 such places from where the name of only one donor is known.

The male donors of Korara are Arahaguta (Arhadgupta), Ghosaka (Ghoshaka), Dataka, Dhamaka (Dharmaka), Dhamapala (Dharmapāla), Nāgadatta (Nāgadatta), Nāgapiya (Nāgapriya), Namda, Bhaḍika, Vala, Vimala, Sagha, Sagharakhita (Saṃgharakshita), Savalita, Siha (Siṃha) and Subhaga. Of these, Dataka and Bhaḍika were monks (*bhikhus*) while Nāgapiya and Siha were bankers (*sethi*). The collective donations are made by Nāgadatta with Sagharakhita, and Nāgapiya with his son Sagha, while Nāgapiya also had donated individually. Besides, a person also had donated more than one piece, as the name of Namda is carved on three south-west quadrant rail-pillars of the ground balustrade.

As for female donors, Achāviti (Rikshavati), Arahadinā (Arhaddatta), Arāhagutā (Arhadguptā), Arahapālītā (Arhatpālītā), Balhī, Belavā, Devadatā (Devadattā), Dhamasenā (Dharmasenā), Isidatā (Rishidattā), Isimitā (Rishimitā), Kāṇā, Kiṭi (Kīrti), Mitasiri (Mitraśrī), Nāgadinā (Nāgadattā), Nāgamitā (Nāgamitrā), Narā, Piyadhamā (Priyadharmā), Pusā (Pushya), Pusadatā (Pushyadattā), Saghā (Saṃghā), Saṃghapālītā, Sagharakhitā (Saṃgharakshitā), Sātīlā, Sātīsiri (Śāntīśrī), Sevāsri (Sevaśrī) Sihā (Siṃhā), Siridevi (Śrīdevī), and Subhagā find mention. Apart from these, the name of the two lay-worshippers (*upāsikās*) are unmentioned and a donor is known as the mother of Tāpasī. Of these Achāviti, Belavā, Bodhi, Devadatā, Dhamasenā, Isidatā, Kāṇā, Kiṭi, Mitasiri, Piyadhamā, Saghā, Saṃghapālītā, Saṃgharakhitā, Sātīsiri, and Sihā were the nuns. As for collective work, donations are made by Sihā with Devadatā, Piyadhamā with Bodhi, while Kāḍā, Subhagā, and Pusā donated with two male members, named Nāgadatta and Sagharakhita. These male members also gifted individually. And Nāgamitā is the donor of two north-east quadrant cross-bars of ground balustrade. Likewise, the nun Dhamasenā and Kāḍā gifted two berm balustrade.

There is great variety in the names given to persons, numbers of them are religious. Some are related to Buddhist religion like Bodhī, Dhamaaka, Dhamasenā, Dhamapala, Sagha, Saghā, Sagharakhita, Sagharakhitā, Saghapālītā; and Arahagutā, Arahaguta, Arahadinā, Arahapālītā. Except Araha, which is related to Arhat, others denote Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha three *ratnas* of Buddhist. Mitasiri, Sridevi and some other names are related with Vedic religion. The presence of Nāga-cult at that time is evident by the name of Bhāgamitā, Nāgadinā, Nāgapiyā and Nāga. Pusadatā, Pusā denoted moon star while Sīha related to zodiac sign and so shows the popularisation of different religion during the period.

The statistical study of the donated materials also furnish important information, mainly about the socio-economic differences between man and woman. The materials donated by the natives of Korara includes berm balustrade, gateway pillar, rail pillar, coping stone, cross-bar, pavement slab and stairway. The data analysis represents that 16 pieces of berm balustrade were donated by women including one of the lay-worshipper and eight of nuns. On the other hand only three pieces of berm balustrade are gifted by male in which one of the monk. As for coping stone, three pieces are donated by nuns. But when we see the donation of rail-pillar, which is a larger piece, only three pieces are related with nuns, two of them are collectively donated. While male members of Korara individually donated 11 rail-pillars including two of the monk. Not only this but Namda alone donated three rail-pillars and banker Sīha donated two. Bhāgapiya of Korara was the banker at Achāvada who gifted two pillars of the gateway. However, the number of woman donors are again larger in the relation of cross-bar which is a small piece. The three pieces of stairway belongs to men and one to female. As for pavement slab, one is related to each group. The object of three donations is not clear. These reveal though women were free to donate but they were less economically good in comparison to men.

REFERENCES

1. Sir John Marshall and Alfred Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchī*, vol. 1, Mainly text of inscriptions edited, translated and annotated by N.G. Majumdar. Delhi, Reprint, 1982.
2. K.D. Bajpai, "Some Place Names of the Sanchi Inscriptions", N.K. Madhav and C.R. Srinivasan (ed.), *Studies in Indian Place Names*, vol. 2, Mysore, 1981, pp. 13-16.
3. D.C. Ahir, *Heritage of Buddhism*, Delhi, 1989, pp. 88-92.