

## Archaeological Remains at Thanapada: A Preliminary Study

Manjiri Bhalerao & Amar Reddy

### **I**ntroduction

Nasik (N. lat. 20° , E. long. 73° 51'), in the district of the same name is an ancient town, located on the banks of river Godavari. Being a famous pilgrim place for the Hindus, Jainas and Buddhists, this city is visited by the devotees throughout the year. Its proximity with the famous Trimbakeshwar (20 miles south-west of Nasik), one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, also makes it a very important city. Nasik has not only been an important pilgrim place but has also been a major trade centre. It is *en route* from the western coast to the central Indian trade centres. After crossing the Thalghat, the first major town on the plateau is Nasik. This strategic location has increased its importance in respect to the trade and mercantile activities since ancient period. The Buddhist caves here are the most important testimony to this fact. The town continued to be a flourishing place as can be seen with the Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanical monuments in the vicinity. The Chamarleni Jaina caves at Mhasrul, Ankai Tankai, Mangi Tungi, etc. (all ranging from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century CE) show that this region was inhabited by rich patrons of Jainism also. The Brahmanical donors invested a lot of money in the construction of numerous structural temples like those at Sinnar, Anjaneri, Deolane, etc. However, it appears that the Jaina patrons also donated money for the construction of Jaina temples, some of which can be seen at Anjaneri. There are many other sites where temples of all the religions were constructed by their devotees but due to the ravages of time and negligence by the local people, these monuments are vanishing day by day. This paper aims to document and bring to light the cases of some such architectural remains at Thanapada.

## Archaeological remains at Thanapada, Tal. Trimbakeshwar, Dist. Nasik

Thanapada is a small sleepy village today, 49 kms North of Nasik. The southern part of the village, which is also the centre of the village, is in fact the old habitation. On the way to the habitation one comes across a part of a pedestal of a sculpture. It appears to be a broken one. It has a decoration of a lion, an elephant and a wheel. To the extreme left end is the figure of a Yakṣa carved, seated on a throne (Fig.1). It has been converted into a garbage dump and the unwanted trees have grown in that part. There are remains of two Jaina temples in a very dilapidated condition in this part of the village. Further there are a few idols of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras lying in the ground and half buried in the earth.



Fig.1 : Broken pedestal on the way to the centre of the village

### Jaina temple No.1

The Jaina temple No.1 (Fig.2) has still managed to stand in the midst of the



Fig.2 : Jaina temple No.1 in the centre of the village

overgrown bushes. The front portion of the temple has fallen down. One has to enter the *maṇḍapa* directly. The ceiling of the *maṇḍapa* has fallen down and the stones of the *antarāla* part have also become loose and can fall any time (Fig.3). The *maṇḍapa* is approximately 3.1 meter square. It has four free standing pillars with geometrical decorations consisting of diamonds and arches. The pillars are bereft of any

figural decoration. The doorframe of the sanctum is of three *dvārasākhās* with sequence *Ratna*, *Stambha* and *Patra sākhā*. The lintel has the image of a Tīrthaṅkara, whose attribute is not clearly shown (Fig.4). Hence it is difficult to identify him.

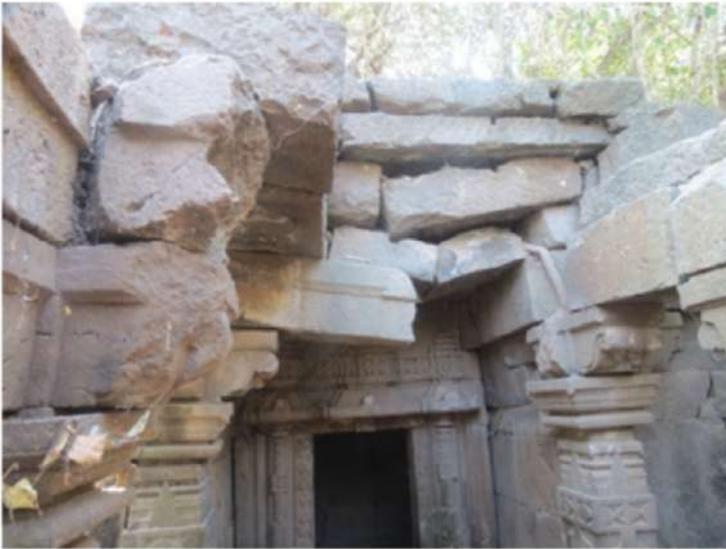


Fig.3 : *Antarāla* of the Jaina temple No. 1



Fig.4 : Tirthaṅkara on the lintel

Above the lintel is a cornice capped by diamond decoration. Except the Tirthaṅkara on the lintel there are no figural sculptures in this temple.

A portion of the pedestal of a sculpture is broken and lying in the *maṇḍapa* (Fig.5). Considering the stylistic similarity and the iconographic scheme, it can be suggested that this (Fig.4) is the broken part of Fig.1. The indistinct figures of the Yakṣa and Yakṣīs on the extreme right and left part of the pedestal also suggest their association with each other as there is a figure of Yakṣa carved on one part of the pedestal and that of a Yakṣi on the other part. There is no decoration on the exterior of this temple.

On the way to the Jaina temple No.2, there is a huge figure of a Tirthaṅkara half buried under the ground, till the shoulders (Fig.6). As there are no attributes of



Fig.5 : Broken pedestal lying in the *maṇḍapa*



Fig.6 : Tirthaṅkara image half buried in the ground

the Tirthankaras seen on the exposed part, it is very difficult to identify him. However, the size of the figure indicates that it was an important image placed probably at a prominent place in some monument.

Further ahead there is a group of three Tirthankara images buried halfway in the ground (Fig.7). Here also no attributes are seen and hence it is difficult to recognize them individually. Such a group of three sculptures is called as the *Tri Tirthi*.



Fig.7 : Sculptures of three Tirthankaras buried in the ground

## Jaina temple No.2

A little further from these images can be seen a Jaina temple in a very dilapidated condition (Fig.8). This is slightly larger in size than the Temple No.1. The *mandapa* of this temple is still extant and measures approximately 3.75 meter



Fig.8 : Jaina temple No.2

square. The front *mandapa* has fallen down. There are four free standing pillars here also with the decoration of the Kirtimukha and arches. The pilasters also carry these designs. The doorframe consists of the *stambaśākhā*. The most interesting decoration can be seen on the lintel. It is divided into three small shrines, which contains a small

image of a Tirthankara, alternated by two small shrines containing the images of the dancers (Fig.9). The workmanship of these sculptures is quite fine as compared to that of the temple No.1. There are no other figural sculptures in this temple.



Fig.9 : Lintel of Jaina temple No.2

### Śiva temple at Thanapada

The Northern part of the village has preserved the remains of a completely collapsed Śiva temple. The parts of this temple have been used by the villagers for the construction of their houses and for making the boundaries of their fields. The images and a few dressed stones are scattered here and there. The images of Gaṇapati, Bhairava (Fig.10) and a broken Śivaliṅga can be seen.

On the eastern boundary of the village one comes across the remains of some Brahmanical as well as Jaina temples. They consist of a lintel with images; one of them probably being a

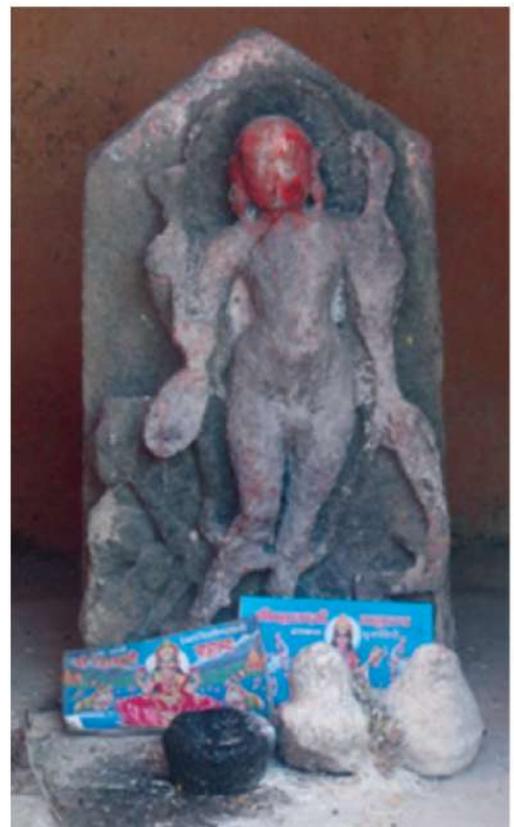


Fig.10 : Bhairava

Varāha (Fig.11), some Tīrthaṅkara images including that of a Pārśvanātha (Fig.12) and a part of the upper portion of the throne with the *Trichatras* indicating them to be those of the Tīrthaṅkaras (Fig.13).



Fig.11 : Varāha on the lintel of a temple

Considering the architectural remains in the village of Thanapada, it can be surmised that Thanapada was a place with rich



Fig.12 : Tirthankaras and Pārśvanātha image

people living there for a long time, due to which these architectural entities could be created at these scales. The stylistic analysis of all these architectural and sculptural remains suggests that these were created during the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century CE.



Fig.13 : *Trichatras* of the Tirthaṅkaras

Unfortunately, there has been no reliable record or oral tradition of the patronage given to these shrines by the rich devotees of this place. The very name of the village, i.e. Thanapada, means that this was some kind of an administrative post during the early medieval period. The existence of the Jaina temples suggests the presence of the Jaina population, who probably came here for trading purpose. But since the nearby town of Harsul became a big trading centre, the focus of Thanapada might have shifted to Harsul along with its prosperity.

Neither are there any inscriptions nor is there any documentation of these remains in any of the published material on the region. However, the beautiful sculptures and the still standing architecture reveal the fine workmanship and good quality of construction. This is just a preliminary documentation and study of the remains in this village. With the clearance of the neighbouring area future work can be carried out.