
Symbolic Significance of the Karṇaveṣṭana from Chandankheda, District Chandrapur, Maharashtra

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Abstract: The present paper aims at investigating symbolic significance of a unique karṇaveṣṭana found in the archaeological exploration from Chandankheda in the district Chandrapur of Maharashtra. The excavation at Chandankheda was carried out jointly by the Department of Archaeology and Museum, Government of Maharashtra, RTM Nagpur University and INTACH. The terracotta object karṇaveṣṭana is embellished with numerous symbols and images. It is significant to mention here that such decorative ear ornament has been reported from well-known early Buddhist sites such as Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Kaushambi etc which is rare in context of Vidarbha. An attempt is made in this paper to comprehend meaning and significance of various symbols and images depicted on the karṇaveṣṭana. Further, the paper is also an endeavor to analyze the religious-cultural aspects for the depiction of different symbols. The depiction of semi-divine figures on the karṇaveṣṭana deserves a special mention. Finding of such ornate karṇaveṣṭana from early Buddhist sites further confirms its significance in the contemporary religious-cultural setting.

Keywords: Karṇaveṣṭana, Chandankheda, Terracotta, Buddhist Sites, Semi-Divine Figures, Early Historic, Habitation Site

Introduction

The history of the symbols goes back to prehistoric period, when human beings first time saw and observed the nature and started the symbolic worship of the natural elements. Apart from this, they also started to make paintings of the animal hunting scenes as well various activities of human on the walls of the natural rock shelters. Every scene of the paintings has different symbolical meanings and interpretation. However, a number of symbols have come up over the period of time in the history of

mankind. The purpose and meaning of every symbol are beckoning us to examine them and unravel the mystery which shrouds their significance (Chandra 1991: 3).

The ear ornament was almost universally worn both by men and women. Sometimes ear ornaments were associated with rituals. When performing rituals, men wear a ring made of *kuśagrass* which is called *pavitri* (Purifying). A *pavitri* which was worn in the ear has been referred to by Bāṇabhaṭṭa. It seems that the ornaments for the finger or the ear purified by the recitation of Vedic *mantras* (hymns) were called *pavitri*.

It is stated in the *Harṣacharita* that Rajyavardhana wore a *pavitri* in place of an earring inlaid with a sapphire. The common terms for the ear ornament are *kuṇḍala* and *karnika*. Evidently the term *karnika* is derived from *karna* (ear), but different names are assigned to different shapes (Pandey 1988: 122).

According to Meyers, 'the practice of wearing ornaments which presupposes an injury of some part of the body is a relic of barbarious manners. It may be pointed out here that piercing the ear-lobe as a mark of beautifying the ears was not looked down upon in India. In fact, piercing the ear-lobes (*karnaavedha*) of children of both sexes was given a religious sacrament and was observed as one of the Saṃskāras.

The Śuśruta Saṃhita states that the ears of a child should be pierced through as a measure of protecting the child from the evil influence of malignant stars and spirits and for the purpose of ornamentation as well. According to some text boring of ears would prevent the child from the diseases of hydrocele and hernia (Ayyar 1987: 48).

About Chandankheda

Chandankheda (20° 16' N; 79° 13' E) is located on the bank of Erai River in Bhadravati taluka of Chandrapur district. It was jointly excavated in 2009-10 by Department of Ancient Indian History Culture and Archaeology, RTM Nagpur University, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Nagpur division of Government of Maharashtra and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) under the direction of Pradip Meshram and Co-direction of A. V. Bhoyar and Ashok Singh Thakur. The excavation revealed five-fold cultural sequences (Meshram *et al* 2014: 5-27; 2015: 562-580). Present specimen of *karnaṇaveṣṭana* ear ornament was reported on the surface from Chandankheda (Pardhi *et al* 2017: 841; 2017: 118-119).

Karnaṇaveṣṭana

The ear ornament resembling a metal or clay roll twisted in two trapezoidal parts with shaping into two square ends. In Ramayana it was described and identified with *karnaṇaveṣṭana* (Sivaramamurti 1956: 109). Similarly, it can be also referred to as *prākāravaprakūṇḍala* in the Mahābhārata (Ayyar 1987: 50). V. S. Agrawala points out that this epithet for an ear ornament 'implies a comparison between the abrupt height of the rampart or city wall (*prākāra*) and the cubical front portion of the ear ornament'. According to him '*vapra*' indicated the spiral attachment (Agrawala 1942: 19-22).

***Karṇaveṣṭana* from Chandankheda**

A beautiful terracotta ear ornament (Reg. no: 32) was found on surface exploration from Chandankheda, district Chandrapur, Maharashtra (Figure 1a, b). It measures such as length: 6.6 cm, width: 4.7 cm and weight: 33 gm. It is moulded and red in colour; surface is coarse and has some cracks; fabric is coarse to medium and well baked. It appears as clay roll twisted in two trapezoidal parts with shaping into two squares ends. It can be divided into two side's right and left and between them a decorated central panel is seen. Both sides have same bass relief decoration such as standing male and on both the square end lotus motif with human head in the centre is depicted but presently one end is broken. On opposite side of both males there is a depiction of sitting lion, while the left side lion is chipped off. The rear portion of both sides are plain. A decorated central panel consist of three *śrīvatsa* like symbol and two *āmalaka* like motifs (Pardhi 2017: 118-119; Pardhi *et al* 2017: 841). All these symbols and images depicted on the *karṇaveṣṭana* have some meaning and significance. A detail of each part of ear ornament is discussed below.



Figure 1: a) *Karṇaveṣṭana* (Ear) Ornament, b) Line Drawing of *karṇaveṣṭana* from Chandankheda

Standing Male Figurines

Above the right side of the trapezoidal part have a standing male figurine (Figure 1c), who is wearing a short (reaching the knees) lower garment (*antariya*) of *dhoti*. One end of the dhoti is gathered into two pleats and tucked in at the front. The dhoti was secured on the waist by a simple girdle (*mekhalā*); bejewelled by a beaded necklace, small ear ornaments and coiled bangles or wristlet. His facial details are worn out and are not clearly visible. Left hand is raised above from the elbow and holds a thick shaft in the right-hand. On the top corner of the left hand there is a dotted circle with a dot at its centre. The top end portion of the shaft is thick and round and a circular like feature around it. The lower end is thin and not rounded and has two circular features around

it. His left leg is folded, and the right leg is straight. He is wearing probably trefoil head gear that is rendering in the form of two side-masses and in the centre, a bun. On the left side, a similar standing male figurine head, shoulder and top part of the shaft are broken. It also has similar decorations and features like of the right side. It is enclosed with a beaded line.

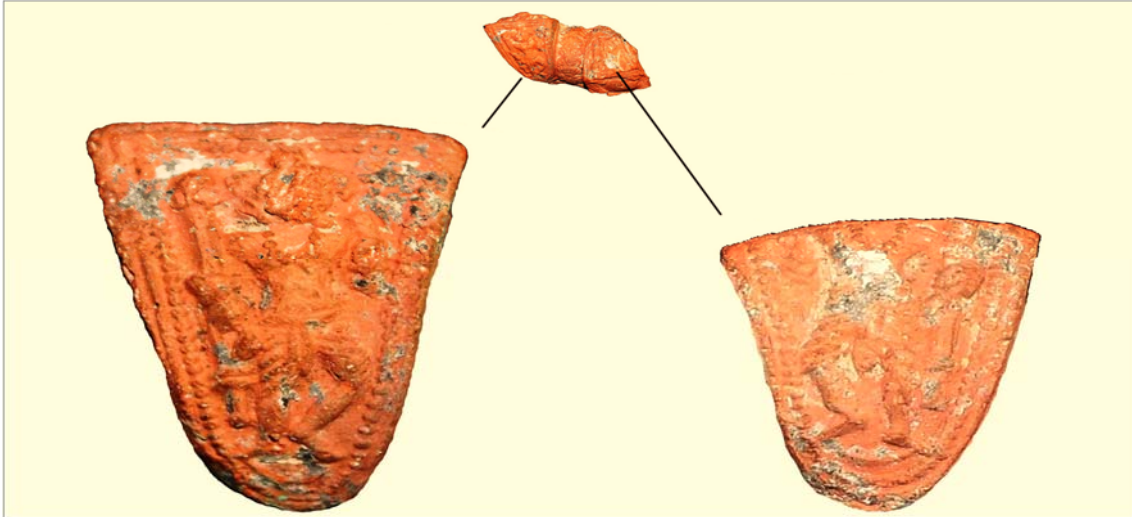


Figure 1c: Right and Left Side Standing Male Figurines Depicted on *Karṇaveṣṭana*

Human Head in the Centre of Lotus Flower

On the same right side on top of the head, a square end which consists of a decoration of lotus flower and the centre of it has a human head (Figure 1d). It is elongated in shape and has clearly visible nose, upper and lower lips that are prominent. It is wearing round ear ornaments, apart from which, it has round face and 'U' shaped chin. Likewise, on the left side, similar to the right side, once had a lotus flower motif which is chipped off and enclosed with beaded lines based on small intact evidence present.

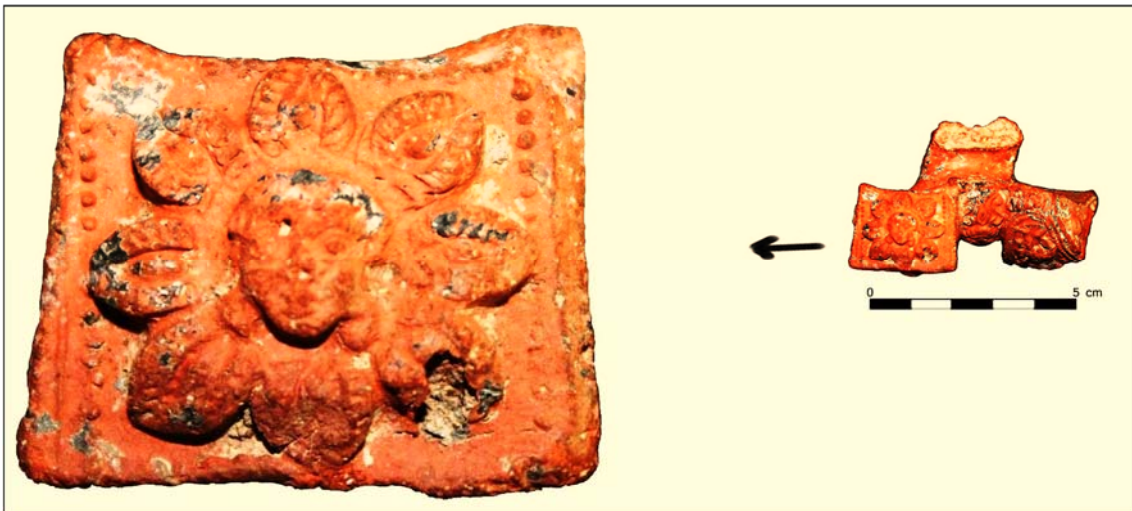


Figure 1d: Human Head Depicted in Centre of Lotus Flower of *Karṇaveṣṭana*

Seated Lion

The right side of a male figure has a seating lion (Figure 1e), robust body with shaggy mane; looking towards the front with both the legs stretched forward, and the tail lifted upward. The facial features are not clearly visible and both the ears are in raised fashion and round in shape. The minute details of legs are shown clearly. Mouth opened and probably in roaring stance; the lower jaw is broken whereas the upper jaw is well preserved. It is enclosed with a border of single beaded or dotted line. On the left side along with the male figure there is a similar seated lion, but most of the portions are chipped off, only rear portion; lifted tail and left ear are visible. It is also similar with right side seated lion and enclosed within a border of single beaded or dotted line.

Decorated Central Panel

Between both sides, a decorated central panel (Figure 1f) which consists of a three *śrivatsa* like symbol and two *āmalaka* like motifs is seen. After each *śrivatsa* symbol, *āmalaka* motif comes. At the end of the central panel straight vertical bigger beaded line is found. Both the sides have four leaves which enclosed horizontal lines on top as well as bottom by two lines. The end has two joint slit but partially broken which is angular and used to come in the centre and fitted in the earlobe.

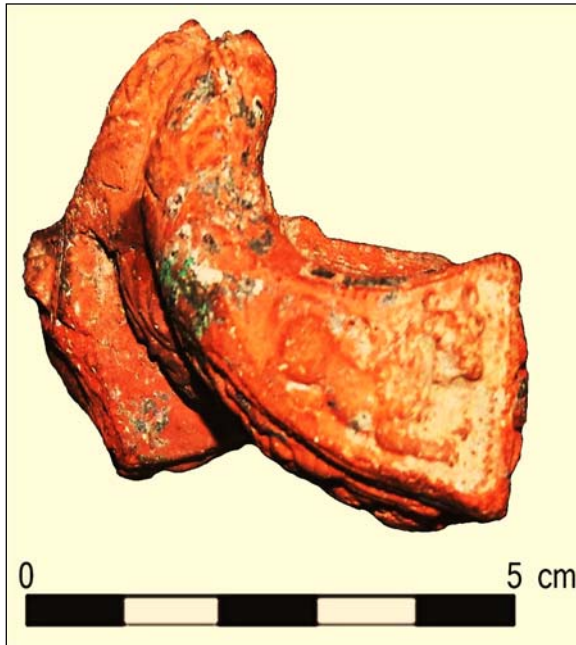


Figure 1e: Seated Lion Depicted on Right Side of *Karṇaveṣṭana*



Figure 1f: Decorated Central Panel of *Karṇaveṣṭana*

All the motifs of *karṇaveṣṭana* ornament have a border of beaded enclosed or dotted line showing the resemblance with the North Indian as well as Eastern Indian terracotta art traditions of Śunga Period (Dhavalikar 1977; Sengupta *et al* 2007; Bautze 1995 and Srivastava 1996).

Depiction of *Karṇaveṣṭana* at Various Early Historic Sites

There are a number of Early Buddhist as well as Early Historic sites in India that have observed the depiction of ear ornament of *karṇaveṣṭana* on various stupas and rock cut sculptures of the semi-divine, nobles, *Jātaka* stories, couple or *dampati* and devotees (Figure 2). The stupa sites mainly Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Kanaganahalli, Jaggayyapeta and rock cut caves Karle and Bedsa have the depiction of *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornaments. Apart from Early Buddhist sites it also found in the form of artifacts made of terracotta as well as metal from some of Early Historical sites. They are mainly reported from Adam, Pauni, Kaushambi and Andhra Pradesh.

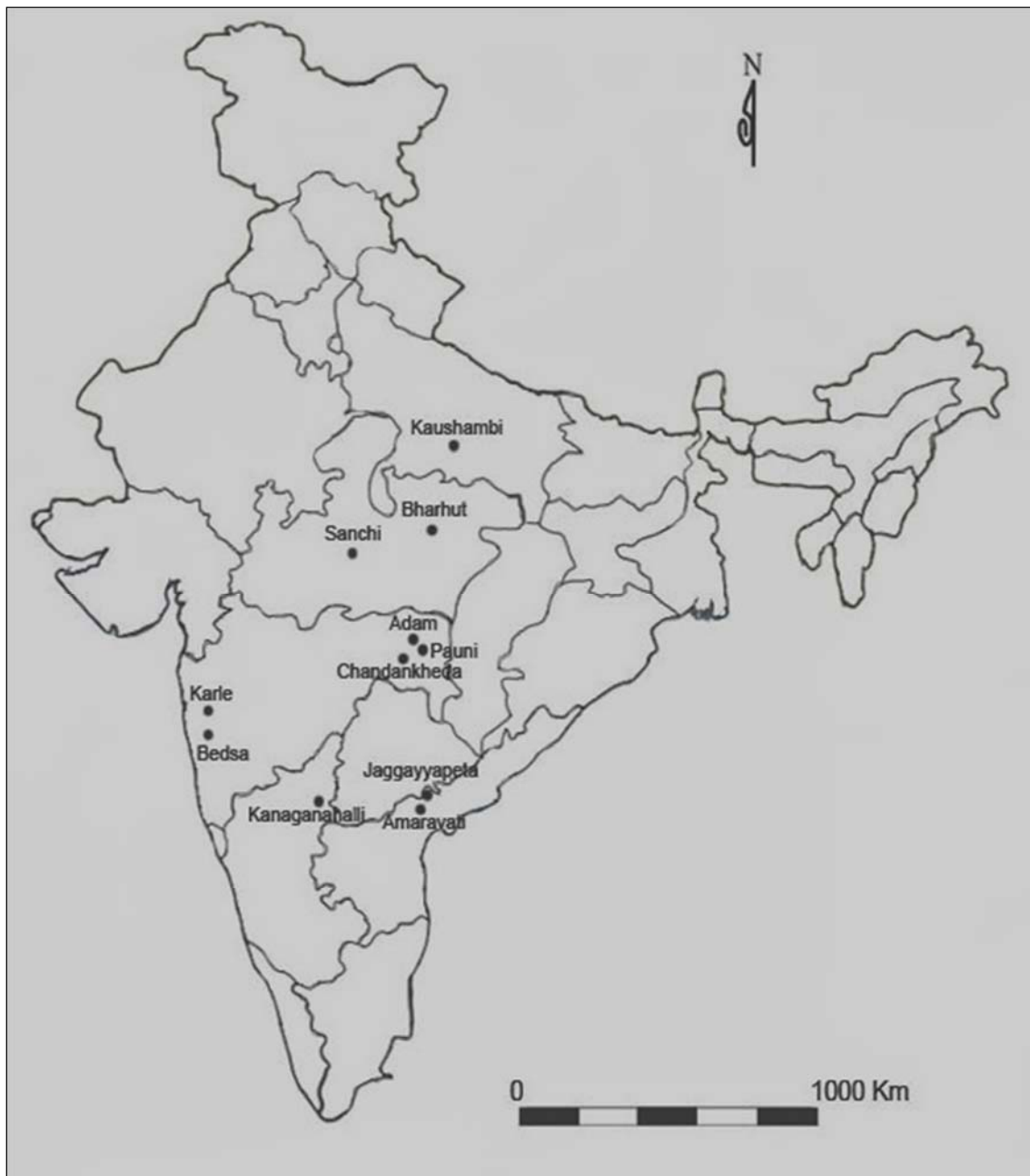


Figure 2: Map Showing *Karṇaveṣṭana* Reported Sites in India

Early Historic Stupa Sites

Bharhut: The unique or extraordinary ear ornaments of *karṇaveṣṭana* twisted into two parts with finishing of square shape end first time appears in sculptural art on the Bharhut railing and pillars. There are many *yakṣas* and *yakṣis* of Bharhut who are seen wearing *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornament either on both the ears or on a single ear. Bharhut type of ear ornament has become more sophisticatedly decorated with embellishment of petals, flowers, pearls and other motifs. In the centre of some of the decorated panels and also in medallions of railings also have the depiction of this ear ornament. The Bharhut sculptural ear ornaments come in the time frame of 2nd c. BCE (Figure 3). Around thirty to forty percentage of Bharhut sculptures have depiction of *karṇaveṣṭana* ornament.

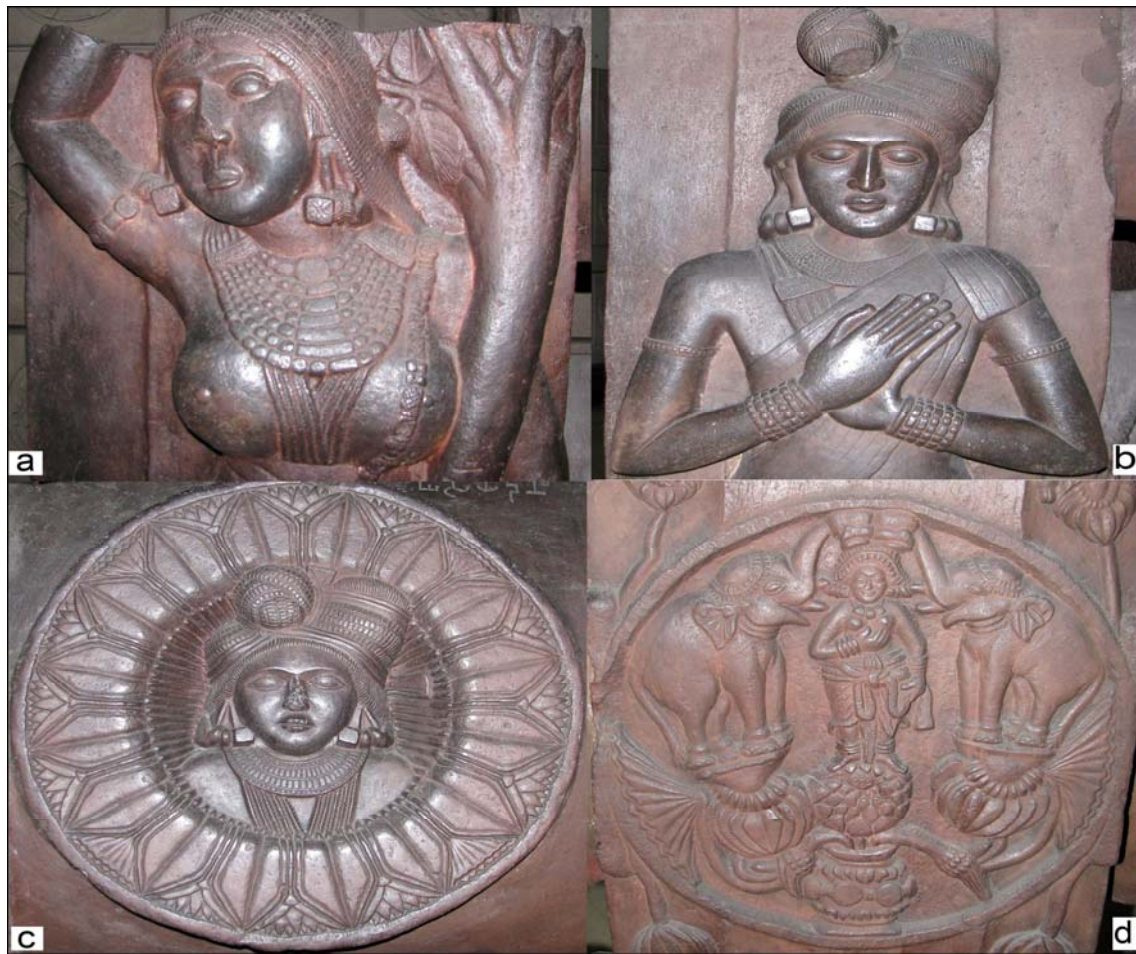


Figure 3: *Karṇaveṣṭana* worn by a) *Shalbhanjika*, b) *Gangita yakṣa*, c) Human head in lotus medallion and d) *Gajalakshmi* from Bharhut (Courtesy: Shrikant Ganvir)

Sanchi: The *karṇaveṣṭana* type of ear ornament has been seen in the Sanchi sculptural reliefs of all gateways (Srivastava 1983; Postel 1989: 214). They are generally depicted on the ears of divine, semi divine, noble persons, flying *Gandharva* and devotees. Similar to Bharhut, thirty to forty percentages of sculptures have depiction of *karṇaveṣṭana* ornament in Sanchi (Figure 4).



Figure 4: *Karṇaveṣṭana* Worn by a) Yakṣa, b) Devotees of Shravasti Miracle and c) Male Devotee from Sanchi

Amaravati: The *Candamukha yakṣa* of Amaravati has a similar depiction of square faces with full-blown lotus carved on it and the centre stalk appears twice curled on the earlobe and then hangs freely (Sivaramamurti 1956: 108; Plate no. viii, Figure 22) (Figure 5).



Figure 5: *Candamukha yakṣa* from Amaravati worn *Karṇaveṣṭana* (After Sivaramamurti 1956)

Kanaganahalli: Similarly, in the Kanaganahalli Mahastupa excavation number of sculptural panels related to various *Jātaka* stories were found. Amongst them, some of the male and female sculptures depict the similar *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornament. Depiction of ear ornaments are seen in the ears of male and female of various panel like *Śuka Jātaka* (Pl. LXV B, Figure 73 h), *Aridamiya Jātaka* (Pl. LXX B, Figure 72 s), panel of the Mauryan Emperor Ashok (Pl. CIV A, Figure 47 b) and Suvira with his retinue (Pl. CXXI B, Figure 64 a). Most of the front square faces have a decoration of flower, may be lotus with enclosed dotted border. Kanaganahalli (Sannathi) was a flourishing Buddhist centre between 1st c. BCE to 3rd c. CE (Poonacha 2011) (Figure 6).

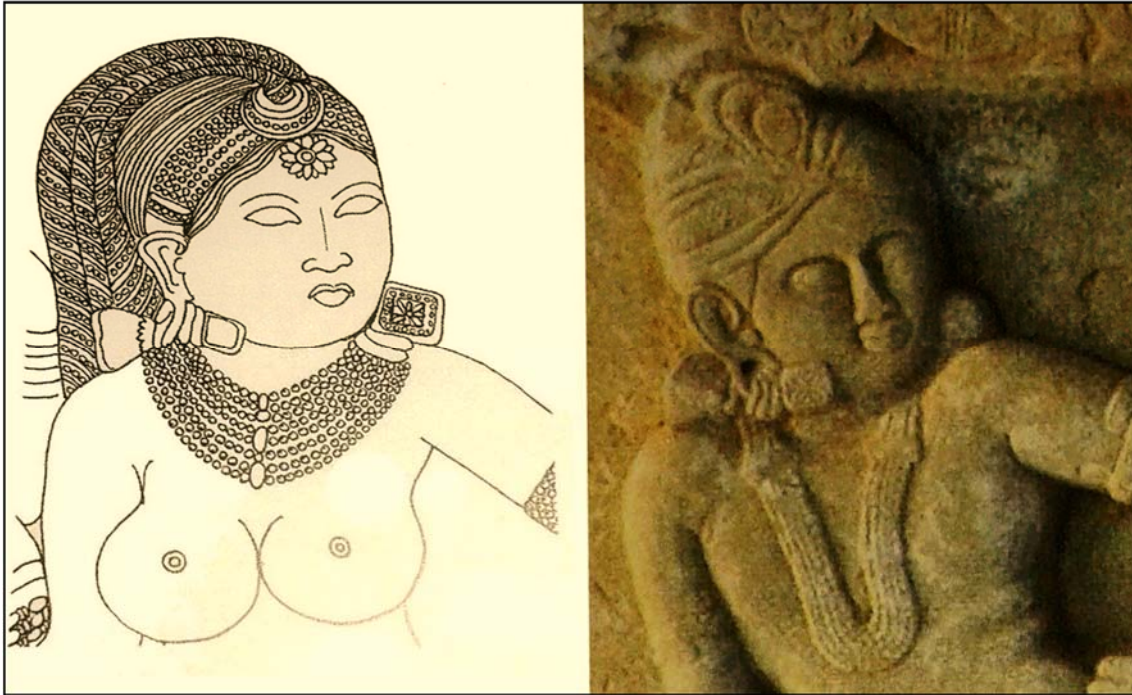


Figure 6: Noble Women and King Brahmadatta with *Karṇaveṣṭana* in Both the Ears from Kanaganahalli (After Poonacha 2011)



Figure 7: *Karṇaveṣṭana* Depicted in the Ears of *Dampati* from Karle

Early Rock-cut Cave sites

Karle: Karle is one of the important early Hinayana Chaityas in Western India (Dhavalikar 2004: 31) situated in Pune district of Maharashtra. In the porch of the cave

no 3 of Karle on both the opposite side walls and inside the chaitya hall on the pillar capital of both the sides there is a depiction of the *dampati* in relief. Some of the *dampati* have worn similar *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornaments which is bigger in size and simple in nature (Figure 7).

Bedsa: The Bedsa chaitya has depictions of *dampati* near the entrance gate. Thee two massive pillars and two pilasters with box like capitals have surmounted *dampati* who is riding the animals and are wearing similar *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornaments. They are bigger in size and simple in nature (Figure 8).



Figure 8: *Karṇaveṣṭana* Depicted in the Ears of *Dampati* from Bedsa

Archaeological Habitation Sites

Adam: Adam is one of the important Early Historic site in India in general and Central India in particular. It was excavated from 1988-89 to 1991-92 continuously four seasons under the direction of Amarendra Nath of Nagpur excavation branch, Archaeological Survey of India. Excavation revealed total five cultural sequences, among all, from Period V (150 BCE to 250 CE) of early level there are single terracotta fragment similar to *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornament. It is double twisted coiled ends terminating in a trapezoidal block bearing three decorated surfaces (Figure 9a). The frontal surface has

a design, excavator identified it as trident like motif (Nath 2016: 454) but if minutely observed it is a palmette (a sacred tree symbol) showing the Persian influence in Indian art at this period (Postel 1989: 34). It has one fragmentary twisted trapezoidal block and another block is missing. There must have been some sort of decoration On the square end but it is missing. A fragmented portion of silt was found which may be a part of *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornaments which is fixed in the earlobe. Along with terracotta, it also found in metal like lead (Reg. 3918) from early level of Period V (Bhadra-Mitra) (Nath 2016: 514). A metal roll twisted twice and finishing in a square shape end and has no decoration (Figure 9b).

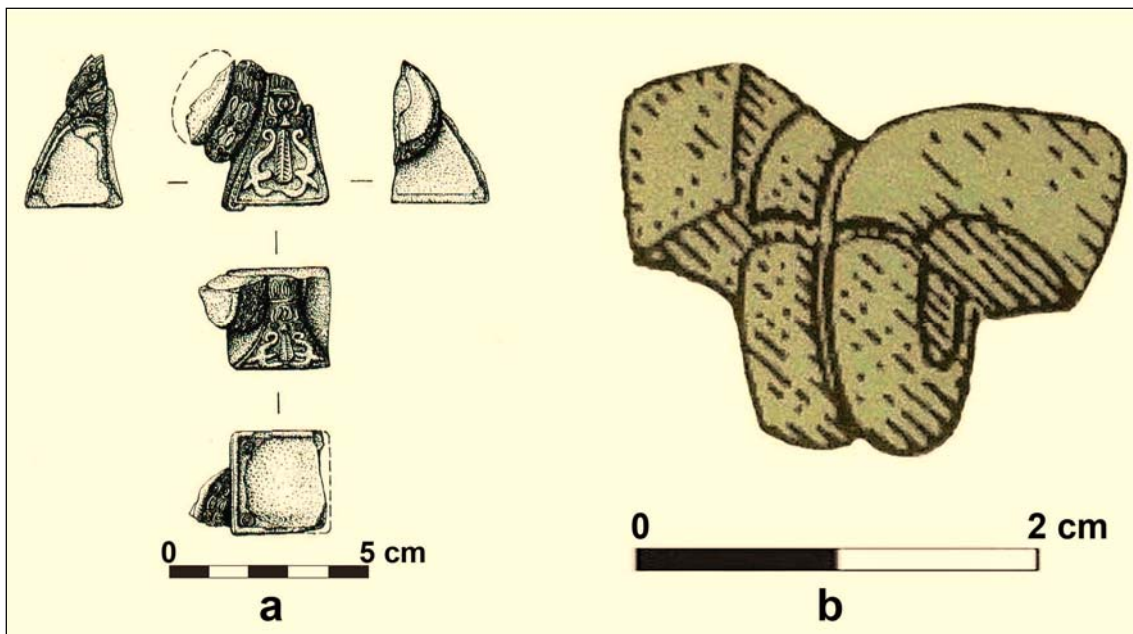


Figure 9: a) Terracotta *Karṇaveṣṭana*, b) Lead *Karṇaveṣṭana*, both from Adam
(After Nath 2016)

Pauni: Pauni (20° 48' N; 79° 39' E) is situated on the right bank of the river Wainganga, Pauni taluka, Bhandara district (85 km south-east of Nagpur city). It was excavated in 1968-70 by Nagpur University Department of A. I. H. C and Archaeology and Archaeological Survey of India Nagpur excavation branch under the joint direction of the S. B. Deo and J. P. Joshi. This excavation was conducted on three different mounds locally known as Jagannath tekadi, Chandakapur tekadi and Hardolala tekadi to uncover the Stupa relics of Hinayana period (Deo and Joshi 1972). Whereas, in 1994, Archaeological Survey of India Nagpur excavation branch under the direction of Amarendra Nath, laid trenches in the habitation area and revealed a five-fold cultural sequence (Nath 1998). A terracotta *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornament was found on the surface from the habitation area and presently is in personal collection (*Personal communication* Dr. Priyadarshi Khobragade). It is a similar copy of Chandankheda ear ornament.

Kaushambi: An ear ornament resembling a metal roll twisted twice and finishing in a square shape on both sides was found on surface at Kaushambi. This *karṇaveṣṭana* ear

ornament was made in metal like copper or bronze which is simple in nature and measures 3 cm (Postel 1989: 32) (Figure 10). The Adam and Kausambi metal ornaments are stylistically similar; both are simple in nature with metal twisted in trapezoidal block, square faces and small in size. The Adam specimen is dated 2nd c. BCE to 1st c. BCE whereas Kaushambi specimen was found on surface. On the basis of stylistical similarity with Adam, Kaushambi specimen can be dated to 1st c. BCE to 1st-2nd c. CE.

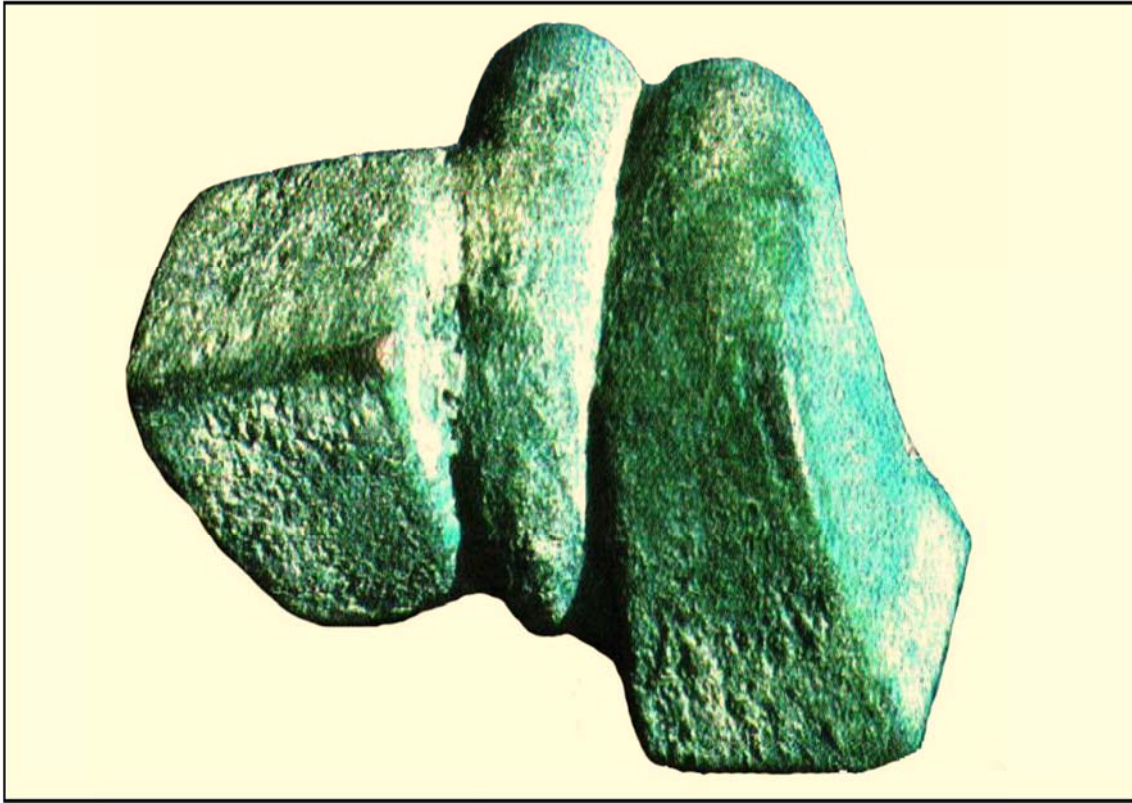


Figure 10: Copper *Karṇaveṣṭana* from Kaushambi (After Postel 1989)

Andhra Pradesh: Two gold *karṇaveṣṭana* ear ornaments found somewhere in the Andhra Pradesh and presently it is in the custody of Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA. It was a gift of Kronos Collection, 1981 and has been described by Mr. Martin Lerner of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 'The Flame and the Lotus'. Both has similarity in shape and vary in size, 'A' number of object measures 34 mm height, 76 mm width and 38 mm diameter (Figure 11A). 'B' number object measures 38 mm height, 79 mm width and 39 mm diameter (Figure 11B). However, 'A' and 'B' both ear ornaments have similar depictions of Lion on one side and elephant on the other, entirely covered with these tiny globules and a palmette (a sacred tree) below it. The square end phases are convex in profile and are enclosed within double beaded or dotted border. The central two twists of metal are decorated with parallel slanting lines and in between have small designs of flowers all made of globules. The gold ear ornament of Andhra Pradesh was made of gold repousse technique which was the classical technique used for making such jewellery and object light in weight. It can be dated 1st c. BCE (Postel 1989: 34-35).



Figure 11: Gold *Karṇaveṣṭana* from Andhra Pradesh (After Postel 1989)

Meaning and Significance of Various Symbols and Images

There are various symbols and images depicted on the *karṇaveṣṭana* ornament of Chandankheda which are mainly standing *yakṣa*, lotus with human head, *śrīvatsa*, *āmalaka* and seating lion. Details of each is described as following;

Standing *Yakṣa*: Standing male figure which is depicted on *karṇaveṣṭana* ornament can be called as *yakṣa*. The stylistic features of Chandankheda *karṇaveṣṭana* *yakṣa* can be comparable with those carved and erected on all Sanchi gateways. All four gateway pillars of Sanchi stupa have the depiction of standing *yakṣa* who looks like a counter image of Chandankheda *yakṣa* or vice versa. The Sanchi *yakṣa* is not standing exactly straight but is moved slightly to the left side. It appears that his body weight sustains more on left leg and right leg is depicted as moving forward. Whereas Chandankheda *yakṣa* has reverse orientation, his body weight is sustained on right leg and left leg bended below the knees. Both have worn short dhoti tied with simple girdle. The position of the hand another interesting thing to point out. The right hand of Sanchi *yakṣa* is lifted upwards from elbow and may be holding something which is not clear. He wears long bracelet on both hands. Similarly, Chandankheda *yakṣa* lifted his left hand from elbow and he also wears a long bracelet on both hands. The Sanchi *yakṣa* kept his left hand near to akimbo and probably holding a long cloth of one end of the dhoti pleat. However, Chandankheda *yakṣa* is holding a long shaft in his right hand. Both are seen wearing the same trefoil head gear and the facial features are abraded (Figure 12a-b).

The Sanchi *yakṣa* is acting as a guard of the Stupa and has been considered as semi-divine. It is the only cult which was widespread and deeply ingrained in the lives of the people as the *yakṣa* cult (Srivastava 1996: 105). The etymology of the word *yakṣa* is very controversial, some of the scholars trace its origin *yaj* which means adoration with honour. Whereas, *Sāyana* also interpreted it to be the sacrificial offering (Nagar 2008: 101). Various ancient literatures mention about the *yakṣa*. The Vedic period witnessed the starting development of the *yakṣa* and Rig-Veda mentions about their worship (Nagar 2008: 101; Srivastava 1996: 105). However, the earliest clear-cut reference regarding *yakṣa* worship is mentioned in *Atharvaveda* wherein a *yakṣa*-abode is described as *Aparājita-Brahmapuri* (Srivastava 1996: 105). Apart from these, there are

various texts such as *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*, *Vāyu Purāṇa*, *Agni Purāṇa*, *Gṛihyasūtras*, *Mahābhāṣya*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* gives information regarding *yakṣa* (Biswas 1981: 72; Srivastava 1996: 105 and Nagar 2008: 101). The men of the *Rājasika* class who worshipped *yakṣa*, is referred to in the *Mahābhārata* (Biswas 1981: 72). *Yakṣa* also received an important place in Buddhist and Jain traditions. Buddha himself is referred to as a *yakṣa* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* whereas *Atanatiya Suttanta* speaks about good and bad *yakṣa*. Apart from the Buddhist tradition, the Jaina tradition especially *Bhagavati Sūtra*, *Punnabhadra* and *Maṇibhadra* often called *yakṣa* as a powerful *Devas* (Biswas 1981: 73).

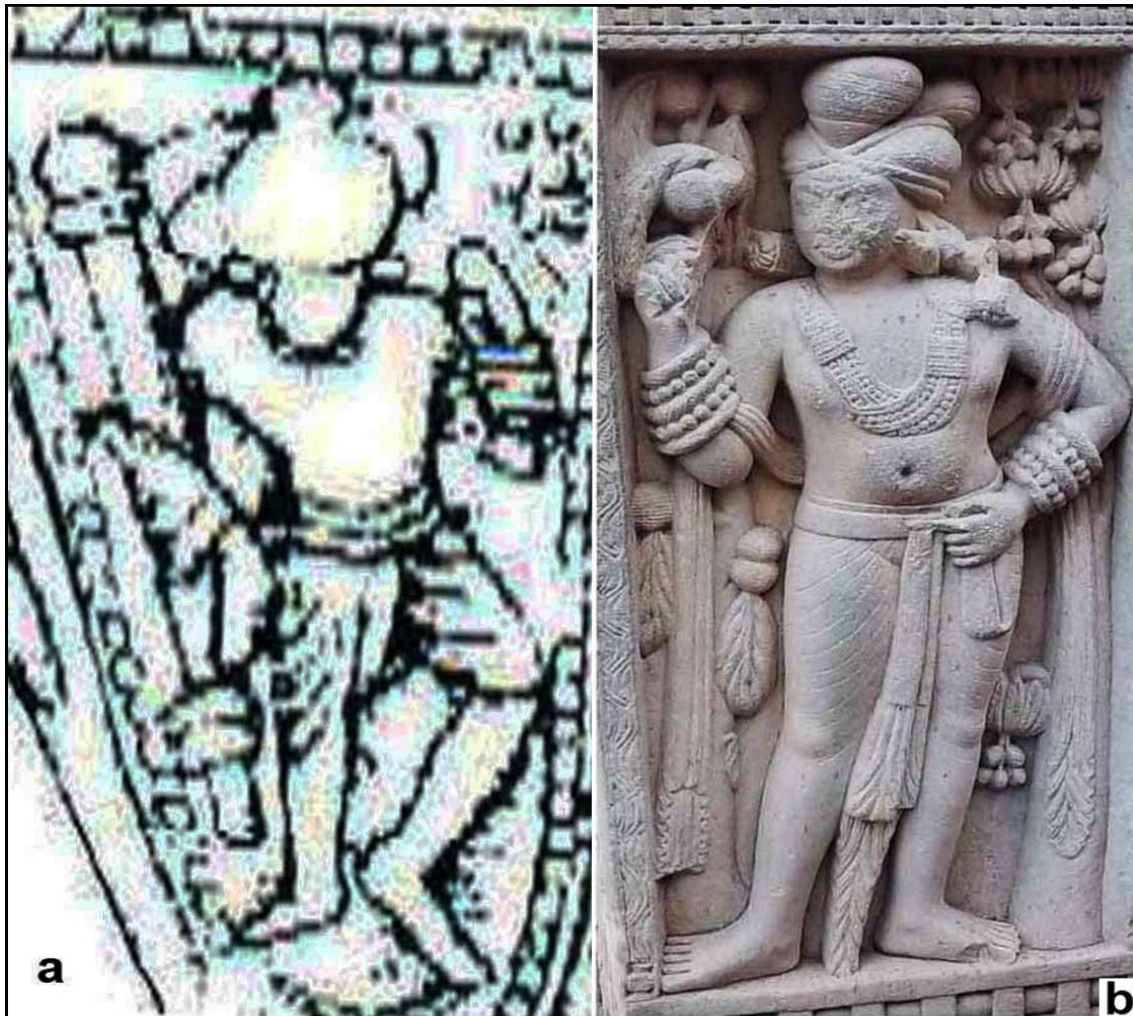


Figure 12: a) *Yakṣa* Image of Chandankheda b) *Yakṣa* Image of Sanchi

Lotus Flower with Human Head in the Centre: It has a depiction of lotus flower on both front square faces and inside the flower there is a human head which is generally seen on Bharhut railing medallion as well as Andhra art medallion. The front square faces sometimes have the decoration of full bloom flower or flower with human face, simple and inscribed designs are seen. There are two human heads depicted inside the lotus that was reported from the two different sites Dhulikatta and Peddabankur

respectively. The Dhulikatta figure (Figure 13) carved on the right side pilaster of the Naga slab inside a lotus medallion of Buddhist stupa and identified as a *yakṣa*. The hair of the *yakṣa* is made into a top-knot (Sastry 1983: 178). This *yakṣa* figure can be compared with human head of Chandankheda *yakṣa*. Both have round face with broad gruesome eyes and nose; hair style of both are comparable. The mouth portion of both figurines is not cleared. Apart from these, there is a terracotta dome-shaped figure which is 6 cm in height and hollow inside. On top of the dome the head of a *yakṣa* is enclosed within a lotus design (Sastry 1983: 185, Pl. 96). The face is round and has 'U' shaped chin. The nose and eyes are broad with elongated ears. The depiction of human head or *yakṣa* inside the lotus medallion was a very old tradition which is generally observed in the Buddhist art. It was so popular during 2nd c. BCE in stone art and continued up to 2nd-3rd c. CE. It was also depicted in clay art as a part of ornamental object. It was so popular among ancient societies that the artists copied it in clay art.



Figure 13: Yakṣa Head inside Lotus Medallion from Dhulikatta (After Sastry 1983)

Lion: The terracotta ear ornament of Chandankheda has a depiction of seated lion on both side appearing in a roaring posture. Similarly, depiction of lion on one side and elephant on another side can be seen in the gold specimen of Metropolitan Museum, USA (Postel 1989: 34-35). They are in standing posture and fully decorated. A depiction of lion on this ear ornament symbolizes power. The Buddha is reckoned as 'The Lion of the Śākya race' (*Śākya-Simha*). In the *Kuṇāla Jātaka* (No. 536), a queen is described as wearing *Kuṇḍalas* (ear-ring) in the shape of lion heads (Deo 2000: 84).

Śrivatsa: *Śrivatsa* is an auspicious symbol represented in Indian art or as a distinctive mark of a great person. The religious text of Brahman, Jain and Buddhist also invariably accept the religious significance of this symbol (Srivastava 1979: 37). This auspicious symbol appears in many sculptures and occur at the beginning of many inscriptions (Deo 2000: 79). The earliest depiction of *śrivatsa* found in Bharhut, Sanchi and Sarnath sculptural art (Srivastava 1979: 49). It is depicted as pendant as a part of garland worn by various early Indian sculptures. Apart from pendant the *śrivatsa* symbols are also observed on the chest of Jaina Tirthaṅkaras as well as Hindu God Vishnu, Punch mark coins, in the centre of a round border of a medallion at Bharhut, displayed on the top of the north gate of Sanchi within the two arms of the Nandipāda and also on seals of Kushan and Gupta period (Chandra 1991: 35-43). Depiction of *śrivatsa* symbol on *karṇaveṣṭana* ornament has shown it's auspiciousness with religious importance.

Āmalaka: There are two depictions of *āmalaka*-shaped lug-collared with broad gadroons. In the early period this symbol generally used in various form such as decorated beads in the form of material cultural or part of decorated necklace of stone sculptures or clay figurines. Later it was continuously seen and evolved as a part of temple architecture.

Discussion

Karṇaveṣṭana was one of the important ear ornaments during early historic period. It has a peculiar shape and rare in archaeological context however, it is frequently depicted in sculptural art. *Karṇaveṣṭana* was made in various materials with or without decorations. Literary sources like Mahābhārata, Mahābhāṣya and the Manusmṛti refers to this ornament of Gold (Ayyar 1987: 50). There are two rare specimens of gold *karṇaveṣṭana* made of repousse technique found somewhere in the Andhra Pradesh and presently display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA (Postel 1989: 3). Right from the ancient time gold was one of the most important and costly metal and was used by wealthy people of the society. Perhaps, its importance and popularity resulted in it being made in terracotta and other metals such as copper and lead. It is significant to note here that the occurrence of this ear ornament is seen mainly from 2nd-1st century BCE to 2nd century CE.

Present specimen of Chandankheda has symbolic importance because it has numerous symbols all around. Most highlight depictions are standing human figure (*yakṣa*), lotus

flower with human head in the centre, animal figurine (lion) and some auspicious symbol (*śrīvatsa* and *āmalaka*). The representation of these symbols on this ear ornament is very much similar with the reputed images of early historic Buddhist architecture probably suggested its socio-cultural importance. The motifs observed on the objects from Chandankheda are also noticed in Bharhut, Sanchi and Koushambi etc. The appearance of these motifs in religious complexes indicates that it may have symbolic importance during Early Historic period. The further observations also suggest that this ear ornament distinctly wore by divine and semi-divine, aristocratic persons. It has been clearly noticed that, this ornament covered extensive area such as North India, Central India, the Western and Eastern Deccan and further South which indicates its wide spread popularity. Sites like Kaushambi, Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Sannathi, Karle, Adam, Pauni and Chandankheda were situated on ancient trade route of north to south and east to west during 2nd century BCE. Due to trade activities during Early Historic Period these sites got prosperity and socio-religious cultural flows in the form of *karnaveṣṭana* possibly paved its way to widespread occurrence from one place to other.

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