

Throne — *Āsandī, Pāllanka, Siṃhāsana*: An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

‘Throne’ refers to a ‘chair for a king, queen or bishop used during ceremonies’ it also refers to ‘the seat of a deity’ and Greeks refers it ‘elevated seat’. The ‘Throne’ or ‘seat’, in most of the cultures of the world, is associated with both the powers; sacred and monarch. The *thrónos* in Greek and *thronus* in Latin languages are the different words referring to origin of the term ‘throne’. In India *āsandī* or *āsanam* or *pāllanka* are the terms used for raised seat or the ‘throne’ referred in the Vedic literature in Sanskrit language. These terms got mention in *Atharvaveda*, one out of four Vedas, which talks in detail about the ritualistic customs of Vedic period. The excavated materials of various Harappan sites, literary references of Vedic and later period, representation of throne is evident throughout the Indian art. From rectangular raised platform to proper seat with raised arm, back and foot rest is the fascinating journey. Different materials used for making throne, their names, shapes and sizes etc are also equally significant. The development of throne shows variety of its design and forms in ancient period, which continued in later period, and there are many historically famous thrones too in Indian history. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace the history of throne in Indian context from Harappan period (3rd millennium BCE) and have been restricted up to ancient period (5th-6th centuries CE) only.

Key word: *Āsanam, Āsandī, Pāllanka, Siṃhāsana*, Throne

1. ETYMOLOGY OF ‘THRONE’

‘Throne’ refers to a ‘chair for a king, queen or bishop used during ceremonies.....the ‘seat of a deity’ and it has Greek origin which means “elevated seat”.....as mentions in most of the English dictionaries (Compact Oxford Dictionary, 2001). The long description in *Britannica encyclopedia* further elaborates ‘seat of this kind have become symbolically identified with the status of their occupiers is suggested by the fact that in monarchies the office of the ruler is often referred to as ‘The Throne’ (www.britannica.com/topic/throne).

Throne uses and meaning of ‘it’s symbolic seat’ is common to almost in all the cultures¹. The *thrónos* in Greek and *thronus* in Latin languages

are the different words referring to origin of the term ‘throne’ and India also refers to throne as, *āsandī, pāllanka āsanam* and *rājāsandī* in the Vedic literature in Sanskrit language. The *Atharvaveda*, one out of four Vedas, talks in detail about the ritualistic customs of Vedic period. The text describes about the raised seat or throne used during the ritualistic ceremonies.

2. EARLY REFERENCE OF SEAT/THRONE

In addition to literature, representation of throne is apparent right from Harappan period (c. 3rd millennium BCE) and its beautiful illustration is evident throughout the Indian art. The journey of throne from flat rectangular raised platform to proper seat with raised arm, back and foot rest is

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¹ Greek-Klismos (c.410-400 BCE, Roman adopted Greek chair, Solomon throne, Sargon II of Assyria, Chinese T’ang dynasty (618-907 CE) drawing and paintings shows houses and its interiors.

the fascinating record of material culture with its social significance. In fact development of throne shows variety of design and forms in ancient and later period also. There are many historically famous thrones in Indian history like Peacock throne of Mughal emperor Shahjahan period and Maharaja Ranjeet Singh (of Punjab). In this paper an attempt has been made to trace the history of throne in Indian context from Harappan period and have been restricted up to ancient period (5th-6th centuries) only.

3. RECTANGULAR SEAT/THRONE: HARAPPAN PERIOD

Rectangular throne or raised seat and stool are some of the early examples of sitting furniture prevalent during the Harappan period (c. 3rd millennium BCE). The terracotta miniature model of a throne/ seat, three legged stool and visual evidence of throne on seal has been excavated from sites of early and mature Harappan phase. The earliest example is the handmade terracotta miniature seat or cot excavated from Kalibangan, Dist. Hanumangarh, Rajasthan, belongs to early Harappan period (c.2450-2300 BCE). The slightly raised seat² has four flat legs, which were made by pressing and pinching and has curved end portion. Two steatite seals from Mohen-jo-daro³ and molded tablet from Harappa⁴ are the important visual examples of throne from Harappan period (c. 2500-2400 BCE). All visual shows man sitting cross legged on the rectangular seat in yogic posture and hand resting on knee almost in similar manner. Yogi is also popularly known as Lord Paśupati (Lord of animals) as He is surrounded by many animals in the NM seal (Plate 1). These rectangular seats are small and plain except length



Plate 1. Seal depicting Lord *Paśupati* {Lord of animals} seated on rectangular raised seat, Mohen-jo daro, Paksitan, C.2500-2400 BCE, steatite, 3.4 × 3.4 × 1.4 cm, DK 5175/143

of throne on tablet, which is bigger in compare to other two. The most interesting element is the legs of these thrones, which are different in shape. Throne legs in NM seal are in *damaru* or drum shape, while IM throne legs are conical in shape, both show two legs only. The molded tablet's four legs are straight and clearest. Apart from throne, short stool example is also evident on the same tablet, which depicts a person seated on it. The height of small stool is lower in compare to throne but legs seem quite steady as only two legs are visible from side. Another important example is the three legged stool from Harappa. It illustrates a man comfortably seated on the handmade terracotta stool. The stool's legs are properly shape as it goes evenly narrow towards end.⁵ *Paśupati* and man in yogic posture in all three evidences

² Rediscovering India: an exhibition of important archaeological finds, 1961-2011', (ed) Exhibition catalogue by Archaeological Survey of India, 2012, pl-68; Size: 7.5 x 3 cm; Archaeological Museum, Kalibangan

³ One is in National Museum (further NM) and other is in Islamabad Museum (further IM) IM seal pub. in Mackay, E. J. H. 1938 *Further Excavations at Mohenjodaro*. New Delhi, Government of India. p-335, pl. LXXXVII

⁴ www.harappa.com/indus2/142.html similar throne is also found in terracotta triangular sealing, which is in Ashmolean museum, acc.no. EAMd.13

⁵ On display in Harappan gallery of NM: acc.no. 11732-223

give the impression that rectangular thrones were used by someone having the higher status in social or religious system of the society during the Harappan period.

4. ĀSANDI: VEDIC LITERATURE

Concept of using raised seat or special seat for priest or king or man of higher status continued during the Vedic period, as it got mentioned in literature of that phase. Although the Vedic text are mostly connected with ritual, however there are some references of furniture like; seat, throne or bed, its types, material and shape; recommended user etc. *Rgveda* mentions *Prastara*, a sacrificial seat consists only of strewn grass (*darbha*) *barhis*, for the seat of the Gods (Griffith, 1896-7, X.14, 4). *Taittirīya Samhitā* records the word *kūrṣa* which is a bundle of reedy grass for a seat or a small square grass-mat easily rolled into a bundle (Weber, 1871-2; 1885). There were other types of seats also, which the performer frequently uses at the time of sacrifice and watching rituals. These have been a raised seat and of style specially associated with his office. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mention the golden *kūrṣa*, which was the special seat on which the king sits at the time of *Aśvamedha* (Weber, 1885). According to commentary, 'it was a golden stool with feet, having a *kūrṣa* like pad over it' (Sarkar, 1928, p.48, note no-10). The seats mentioned in the ritualistic texts were made of long grass or reeds etc. but 'beds', 'couches for reclining' and other 'seats' which had little connection with the sacrificial ritual, are of woodwork principally. *Atharvaveda* and others Vedic texts talks about the generic term *āsandi* for some sort of comfortable chair.⁶ *Atharvaveda* gives the general description of seat, which has two feet square and made of wood (Roth and Whitney, 1856). These were often covered with cushion (*āstarāṇa*) and pillow (*upabarhaṇa*)

and support (*upaśraya*), which makes the whole thing a form of modern chair. *Āsandi* were comfortable chair of wooden framework made of diverse materials and reference of long reclining seat is also mentioned in *Atharvaveda* (Pandit, 1895-8; 1.5.3.2). This type of wood seat was also for the king at the royal consecration (Aufrecht, 1879 and Agashe, 1896; -8.5.ff. VIII.5, 6), however for ritual tradition it was replaced by grass, reed and seat of *udumbara*-wood. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* denotes that '*āsandi*' should be made of *khadira* wood perforated and joined with straps (Weber, 1885, 5.4.4.1). It also informs that the imperial seat is to be of shoulder-high, made of *udumbara*-wood and bound all over the cords of *balvaja* grass (Weber, 1885, 14.1.3.8). It further narrates the measurement of seat, which should be a span high and a cubit in width and depth (Weber, 1885, 6.7.1.12). A tiger skin serves as *āstarāṇa* or coverlet of the king's seat in the royal consecration (Aufrecht, 1879 and Agashe, 1896; -8.5.ff. VIII.5, 6,12; Bhattacharya, 2007). *Kātyayāna Śrauta Sūtra* mentions that *āsandī* is a wooden stool for king Soma, which is made of *udumbara* wood, it should be navel-high, measuring one *aratnī* in other parts and all parts tied and woven with the cord of *muñja* (Sarma, 1933-7, 7.9.24). Another type of seat named '*rājāsandī*', is recorded in *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*, which is for the king on which a black antelope's skin is spread over it (Garbe, 1892-1902, X.29.7). On the basis of these literary references Dr Ranade had tried to provide line drawing of *āsandī* and *rājāsandī* in the book on Vedic Ritual (Ranade, 2006, p.114 and p.272). However line drawing does not completely match with the earliest portrayal of throne in Indian art, which one gets from Mauryan period sculptures. Dr. N. P. Joshi mentions several names for seat like '*pāllanka*', '*patta-pāllanka*' '*āsandi*',

⁶ S.C. Sarkar Av. XV, 3, 2ff. p-49; *Atharvaveda*, ed, R. Roth and W.D. Whitney, Berlin, 1856, ed., S.P. Pandit with Sāyanò's com, Bombay, 1895-8; 14.2.65; 1.5.3.2; *Kaucītaki Upanicad*, ed., E.B. Cowell, Calcutta, 1861, 1.5 and *Jaiminīya BrāhmaGa*, ed. H.W. Bodezits, Leiden, 1973; ed. Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra, 2nd edition, Delhi, 1986, 2.24.

āsandika, *bhadra-pitha*, *āmalakavanòtaka-pitha* etc (Joshi, 1967, pp-51-60; Fig.-126-165).

5. EARLY ILLUSTRATION OF SEAT/ ĀSANDĪ

Mauryan period (3rd century BCE) witnessed development in all the fields from political, economical, trade, religious, social to art and architecture⁷. There are number of antiquity remains which tell about the material culture of that period and two of them are important in seat's perspective. A stone and terracotta image of Mother Goddess show the existence of raised seat tradition. Handmade terracotta image of Mother Goddess, holds a child, sits on a round stool kind of seat.⁸ This figurine is made with appliqué technique, which appears the continuation of Harappan figurines tradition. Another Mother Goddess (?) image is of sandstone sits in *Pralambapada* or European pose.⁹ The plain unembellished form of her seat provides a solid, secure base for the statue. The slightly raised seats round or square in shape, were prevalent during this time, perhaps for religious person.

The proper throne with arm, back and foot rest starts appearing from 2nd century BCE to 1st-2nd century CE, known so far, in Indian art. Representation of such throne are evident from terracotta small plaque, illustrating 'lovers relaxing on throne' and stone sculptures depicting Buddha's symbolic representation in the form of 'throne'. This Sunga period terracotta plaque is made from mould belongs to Kausambi, Uttar Pradesh (Plate 2). It represents the couple, surrounded with flowers, sits on throne, which portrays the side view only. Throne has square seat



Plate 2. Couple seated on throne/couch having arm, back and foot rest, Sunga period, c.2nd century BCE, Kausambi, Uttar Pradesh, terracotta, 10.4 × 9.3 × 1.7 cm, acc.no. 67.19

with raised armrest, seems it has been fixed with frame. Long legs of throne have bell shaped base and roundish rings style decoration shows its good height, which is being supported with rectangular foot rest at appropriate level, makes the throne complete. This period sites; like Kausambi, Ahichhatra and Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, have yielded terracotta plaques illustrating seated figures and few are on throne, shows the popularity of using throne in northern region.

6. ĀSANDĪ/THRONE IN BUDDHIST ART

Buddhism was one of the popular religions during this phase, which got patronized by many rulers in north and south. Buddhist *stūpās* like; Bharhut and Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh) and Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh)¹⁰, were decorated

⁷ The concept of '*Rāṣṭra*' (united nation or one country) was introduced by Mauryan emperor Chandragupta Maurya, whose role, nationally and internationally is very significant in the history of India. The excavated material and literary references also mentions about the construction of palaces (Kumargarh, near Patna) various activities in court. In court there must have been different type of sitting arrangements.

⁸ On display in Mauryan-Sunga gallery of NM, 4th-3rd century BCE, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh; http://museumsfindia.gov.in/repository/record/nat_del-60-291-98

⁹ Nongarh South Bihar, 2nd -1st c. BCE, Ht: 87 cm <http://asianart.com/eskenazi/mothergoddess.html>

with intricately carved panels of Buddha and his life, which belongs to around 2nd century BCE to 1st century CE. As this was the phase when the image of Buddha was not yet started appearing in art, rather depiction of Buddha's life eight major events were presented by symbols only (Krishan, 1996, p. 1). The enlightenment of the Buddha was represented with the Bodhi Tree and the presence of Buddha was indicated by the throne below it. Several *stūpās*' stone slabs are found from these sites which depicts devotee or monks worshipping the 'empty throne'. A beautiful 'empty throne' is carved in the center register of Pasenadi Pillar of Bharhut, dated 2nd century BCE. Upper show the Bodhi Tree, Chaitya Hall witnessing Buddha and devotees, while lower panel depict devotees are visiting to worship Buddha.¹¹ Almost square, throne is a plain simple platform, without arm, back and foot rest, however it has four legs, which has stepped base, similar to nearby pillars.

Another most notable illustration of an 'empty throne' and Buddha's footprints is from early phase of Amaravati period, 1st-2nd century CE. This casing slab shows the Wheel of Dharma and prominently carved throne has square seat; legs base in *kalaśa* shape; raised armrest; backrest with circular cushion and the small foot rest (Plate 3). Similar type of throne is depicted on a railing coping slab from the same site, where 'empty throne' are depicted besides other scenes, dated back to 2nd century.¹² The number of sculptures depicting 'throne' as 'aniconic Buddha' are evident from these two centers, which are preserved in Amaravati museum and British museum (Sivaramamurti, 1942; Coomaraswamy, 1998).

Apart from Buddha's representation, there are several sculptures depicting Buddha's life scenes from Amaravati stupa's sculptures, drum



Plate 3. Stupa casing slab showing the Wheel of Dharma, an empty throne and Buddha's footprints, Satavahana, 1st-2nd century CE, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, stone, 95 × 118 × 19 cm, acc.no. 70.L/1

slabs, crossbar, railing pillar illustrates, where thrones are evident. A sculpture depicts court scene of king Suddhodana, dated 1st-2nd century CE. Here king, queen and Asita are sitting on raised seat, while others are on lower seat.¹³ Another Amaravati crossbar sculpture depicts Mandhata Jataka, dated 2nd century CE. Scene illustrates Mandhata and Shakra are sharing a large throne, which has rectangular rest, seat, arm, back and foot. Other courtiers are sitting on round raised seat.¹⁴ A simple and very interesting throne is evident on small panel from Pitalkhora, Maharashtra dated 2nd century BCE, where 'Royal Couple' is shown seated on throne (Plate 4). Panel depicts couple in court (?) and woman is distributing coins, while other women are standing nearby with a tray of coin. Throne is visual partially here, but two observations are interesting;

¹⁰ Bharhut 185 to 72 BCE and Sanchi 300 BCE to 50 CE (Madhya Pradesh) and Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh) has 4 periods; first (c.200-100 BCE); second (100 BCE to 100 CE); third (150 CE) and fourth (200-250 CE)

¹¹ In Indian Museum, <http://www.photodharma.net/Guests/Kawasaki-Bharhut/Bharhut.htm>

¹² The other scenes are procession of horses, Enlightenment scene with Bodhi tree, in British Museum acc.no. 1880.0709.18

¹³ On display in the National Museum, New Delhi, acc.no-70.L/2

¹⁴ In British museum, acc.no.1880.0709.12



Plate 4. Royal Couple seated on throne, which has a tiger skin covering, Sātavāhana period, 2nd-1st century BCE, stone, 47 × 45.5 × 18.5 cm, acc.no. 67.194.

square or octangular seat, on which couple is sitting, as the panel is only partially preserved and the complete view of throne cannot be seen here. Another is the ‘animal skin covering’ on throne having tassels, perhaps ‘tiger skin’. This reminds the continuation of Vedic period tradition, as the literature mentions about the use of these animals’ skin covering for royal consecration.

7. BEGRAM IVORY THRONE

Once throne got the proper shape by 1st century BCE, next phase was the throne’s design development, as evident from sculptures of around 1st 3rd century CE. An interesting reference of ivory throne comes from Begram, ancient Kapisha,¹⁵ from the same period. Back of ivory throne is in Kabul Museum, which is made of small plaques, which depicts female seated on raised seat, throne having low height (Stone, 1994, p. 267). During

this phase Kushana (Mathura and Gandhara centers) in north India and Ikshavaku dynasty (Nagarjunkoda) in south India were the important dynasties. Buddhism was the common thread between all these centers, which were the great center for art also, besides the religious activities.¹⁶ Sculptures from these centers depict use of throne by other dignitaries, besides Buddha. So far as design of throne is concern, many variations can be seen, such as the seat of throne, its shape, height, legs, uses, additional decoration etc. Major development was the different shapes of throne legs; pillar, *damru*, bell type or roundish and importantly introduction of ‘*Siṃha*’ (lion) as the throne legs. Each of these elements has an interesting development.

8. ĀSANDĪ TO SĪMHĀSANA

Fabric covering on throne is an interesting and important feature of this phase as evident from sculptures from both the centers of Kushana period. A beautiful illustration of throne is found from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, belongs to early Kuṣāna phase (2nd-3rd century CE). Prominently depicted throne shows rectangular seat having arm and back, which appears to be made with frame and it also has big foot rest. Apart from round cushion on throne, an additional element of this throne is the nice illustration of fabric covering with folds and fringes. The legs of this throne have square base and roundish upper portion.¹⁷ The round cushion and fabric coverings with many folds on throne’s of Gandhāra sculptures of this period are the other features. The fabrics covering are beautifully illustrated by many folds, which remain plain or decorated with patterns. These floral or geometric patterns were perhaps embroidered, as this region has a rich embroidery tradition.¹⁸

¹⁵ Summer capital of Kuṣāna, Ivory plaques excavated from Begram have workmanship of Indian style.

¹⁶ Red sand stone was used in Mathura center, schist stone in Gandhara and lime stone in Nagarjunkoda

¹⁷ In Victoria and Albert Museum, London; acc.no: IS.1039-1883

¹⁸ Religious coverings of Kashmir, Punjab region were embroidered with colourful threads, which continued in later period also.

Next two broad types of 'Buddha's throne' of this period sculptures were Buddha seated on lotus throne (Coomaraswamy, 1998, p. 39) and on rectangular pedestals. Within the lotus pedestal there are variations like; inverted¹⁹, obverted²⁰, with long stem²¹, without stem with two petal layers²² or multi layered²³ or it rests on elephant back²⁴. Another feature of Buddha's pedestal is the simple small rectangular platform kind of seat. These seat were used to illustrates many things like; monks in *anjali mudrā* (folded hands)²⁵, devotees, bowl etc.

Lion's association with Buddha's throne is the most distinctive feature of Gandhara, Mathura and Nagarjundakonda sculptures in around 2nd-3rd century CE. This lion throne form is actually favored in the case of the oldest representations of the Buddha in human form at Mathura, and it long survives in literature and art, often in combination with the lotus (Coomaraswamy, 1998, p. 42). The 'āsana' or 'āsandī' got new term 'Siṃhāsana', it's a combination of two words, 'Siṃha' (lion) and 'āsana', which refers to āsana having siṃhā. The gradually development of lion's position, their number, size is evident from sculptures of this period. The two small lions, benign form, are coming from corners in a Gandhara sculpture²⁶, bigger lions, little frontal viewing, is also depicted in another sculpture of same center²⁷. Three lions; two in corners and third one is in center are illustrated in one of the Mathura Buddha.²⁸

Lion in Gandhāra Buddha are usually front facing, while often these are side facing, back to back in Mathura Buddha. The clearer view of front facing lions is illustrated in some of the Nagarjunakonda sculptures (from 3rd century CE onwards). A long Ayaga frieze from Nagarjunakonda portrays different types of thrones. It is divided into many scenes like; Buddha in *abhaya mudrā*, Buddha's life and Jataka. Buddha, in center division, is seated on rectangular throne and throne's legs are in shape of lions, which are front facing (Plate 5). Perhaps this was the time when lions were used as throne legs and it developed a long way with modifications and many changes.²⁹ The seat of throne appears square, does not have armrest; however it has long backrest almost up to the shoulder of Buddha and a foot rest. Another interesting element between the backrest's frame and base is the illustration of galloping deer on either side, like a bracket figure. The empty throne with Bodhi tree represents the enlightenment of Buddha in the early phase, in later period throne with deer is represented the 'First Sermon' scene. One such example is from Amaravti panel of c.2nd century CE and another is from Nagarjunakonda panel, where Buddha is shown seated along with deer (Coomaraswamy, 1998 plate no- III; fig.- 12).³⁰ Another type of throne, titled *vajrāsana*, the Diamond throne of Enlightenment, is depicted when Buddha was attacked by Mara, at the time

¹⁹ In Allahabad Museum, Uttar Pradesh, acc.no: AM-SCL-127-4175

²⁰ www.sas.upenn.edu Jason Neelis - "Gandharan Materials and Manuscripts from Contact Zones between South Asia and Central Asia: Crucial Evidence for Patterns of Buddhist Transmission"

²¹ In Lahore Museum, Pakistan

²² In Allahabad museum, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh acc.no: AM-SCL-127-4175

²³ Lahore Museum, Pakistan

²⁴ In Oregon, Portland Museum, www.ypah.net

²⁵ In Allahabad museum, acc.no: AM-SCI-126-4128

²⁶ In Ostasiatische Museum, Berlin

²⁷ In Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh

²⁸ In Musee collection dates back to 2nd century CE from Mathura) (http://blog-comptes.rendus.amis-musee-cernuschi.org/files/2013/12/12.2.Bouddha-assis.Abhaya-mudra.Mathura%CC%82.IIe-s.AD_.jpg)

²⁹ Whole range of lion or elephant-lion and *vayal* {mythical animal} concept of throne legs were found from 15th century and continued till date

³⁰ In Archeological museum, Nagarjunakonda, 3rd-4th century CE.



Plate 5. Ayaga Frieze depicting scenes from Buddha's life. Buddha's throne has lions legs, while other thrones' legs are in pillar shape; Iksvaku, 3rd century CE, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh, grey limestone, 40 × 332 × 16 cm, acc.no 50. 18

he was meditating. The sculpture from the early phase of Amaravati depicts round seat with curved rest for arm and back, legs are in the shape of paw of loin and two round cushions (Krishan, 1996, pl- 4a) .

Several sculptures from all the centers also illustrates the thrones, seats for king, prince and queen or other persons in the court and their throne legs were different from Buddha's throne legs like; square and round pillar style etc. The galloping deer feature of Buddha's throne in the Nagarjunkonda sculptures appeared in Ajanta Painting, Aurangabad Maharashtra also. One of the prominent depictions in Cave no-1 is the story of Mahajanaka Jataka depicting prince sitting on throne, having raised backrest with deer and bell shaped throne legs (Ghosh, 1987). A gold coin of famous Gupta ruler, Samudragupta (r.335-375 CE), illustrates Emperor sitting on throne and playing the musical instrument.³¹ The side view of throne is properly visible on the coin, which has long rectangular seat, raised back and its legs have bell shaped base, circular ball style in center.

On the other side throne of Queen is roundish, gives the impression of cane seat. The back rest, legs, side addition each of these were developed in later period also, which are well documented in stone, terracotta, coins and other plastic art.

9. CONCLUSION

Throne defines the higher seat for monarch or for the sacred priest in most of the cultures of the world. Like other languages, in Sanskrit language records the terms 'āsandī' 'pāllanka', 'patta-pāllanka' and 'āsanam' and 'rājāsandī' for throne in the Vedic literature. The *Atharvaveda* and other text mentions the shape of *āsandī* and its uses during the rituals, while *rājāsandī* was used for royals. Literature also mentions that long grass or reeds etc. were used for sacred throne and 'couches for reclining' and other 'seats' are of woodwork principally. The visual narration of throne or the raised platform style seat starts from Harappan period, which was evident on the Paśupati seal, 3rd millennium BCE. Journey from raised platform to square or rectangular seat with proper arm, back and foot rest, the shape of throne was developed by 2nd century BCE during the Sunga period. Prior to introduction of iconic Buddha in art, Buddha's presence was presented in uniconic form and the empty throne was represented to show Enlightenment of Buddha with Bodhi tree. Buddha and Buddha's life scenes of all the leading centers (in north, central and south India) of that phase show several examples of thrones with variations. Once the throne got shape, further design developed like back rest from simple to ornamental back frame. Fabrics covering on throne with cushion and foot rest were the other elements. The throne legs design was the most important; initially these legs were simple *kalaśa* or bell or pillar based. Later on the lion shape throne legs were introduced in around 1st-2nd century CE, which became so popular that it was

³¹ On display in the coins gallery of NM.

used with variations in each centers of that phase. Representation of throne are found throughout the Indian art with distinct features all through the length and width of the country, however here this long journey is restricted up to 5th-6th century, which is very fascinating

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