

the beautifully carved column (Fig. 20.1) over 4 feet high was found lying in two pieces near where several large plain slabs, originally riveted together, seemed to indicate the foundations of a gateway on the south-east leading to the temple. The slope of the hillock suggests that the approach from below to the plateau on its top must have lain on that side. The decorative bands dividing the several sections of the column with their garlands held by grotesque heads are of very delicate design. The same applies also to the ornamentation of the ogee-shaped finial (Fig. 20.3), holding in a circular niche the excellently modelled figure of a flying Gandharva.

There was ample evidence to be found that long before its final vandal destruction the ruined temple of Mūr̥ti had been plundered to supply sculptural materials both for Ketās and Chōa Saidān Shāh. From a faqīr's cave near the rest-house at the latter place I recovered by purchase two carved lintels of red sandstone showing within a sunk window-like opening (Fig. 21.8) confronting busts of a male and female. Small richly ornamented columns, undoubtedly carried away from Mūr̥ti, were found in the garden of the rest-house and in a little Hindu temple of the village, where they were used for lamp stands. Local belief was no doubt right in declaring the red sandstone slabs used for paving the terraces and stairs of Saidān Shāh's Ziārat to have been brought from Mūr̥ti. More of such materials may be hidden under the thick hard plaster which covers the walls of the sacred tomb. At Ketās two sculptured door-jambs or balustrades (Fig. 19) in the courtyard of Mahant Sarju Dās, ornamented exactly in the style of the Mūr̥ti sculptures, had already attracted my attention on my first visit. Similarly the red sandstone slabs facing the front of the small temple of Bhagvān Dās, built there in Sikh times, were locally known to have been brought from Mūr̥ti.

After this brief account of the site of Mūr̥ti and the remains recovered there I may proceed to sum up the conclusions to be gathered from the preceding observations as to the identification of the localities mentioned in Hsüan-tsang's description of Simhapura. In the first place, stress deserves to be laid on the striking agreement between the immediate surroundings of Mūr̥ti and the sylvan scenery in which the pilgrim's vivid description has placed the spot sacred to the memory of the founder of the Śvetāmbara sect. In a region generally so arid and wanting in running streams and other scenic attractions as the Salt Range, such close agreement must *a priori* claim special attention. From my acquaintance of the Salt Range, acquired in the course of several extensive tours in years gone by, I may safely assert that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in any part of that area a scene so closely fitting the pilgrim's account in all details.¹⁴

¹⁴ The details of the description leave no doubt in my mind about its having been recorded by Hsüan-tsang from personal recollection. The point deserves to be specially noted since Mr. Watters