

**Continuities and Transformations in the Aniconic Symbols of the Buddha in Kanaganahalli: Recently Discovered Buddhist Site in Karnataka, South India**

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**Abstract:** The recently excavated Buddhist site of Kananganahalli (Sannati), Karnataka provides a unique opportunity to the art historians to reconstruct the religious history of Buddhism in South India. While describing the excavation survey results, particularly of the Maha Stūpa and its imagery, the paper elucidates the unique stylistic characteristics of its art in relation to that of Indian and South East Asian visual culture. It focuses on the form and meaning (metaphysical and ideological) of the symbols of the Stūpa, Cakra, and Buddhapada in relation to those at Sānchi, Amravati, Sri Lanka and Dvāravati. Using literary and inscriptional evidences, it places the efflorescence of religious art at the crossroads of trade (and religion) routes reflecting the local dynamism of Thēravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in South India.