



Fig. 9 The three next scenes.



Fig. 10a Hermit addresses a parrot?

The hermit behind a rock, his face close to the parrot and his right forefinger pointing upwards. On his left side there is a squirrel standing on its hind legs with its forelegs folded together as though listening to the sage.

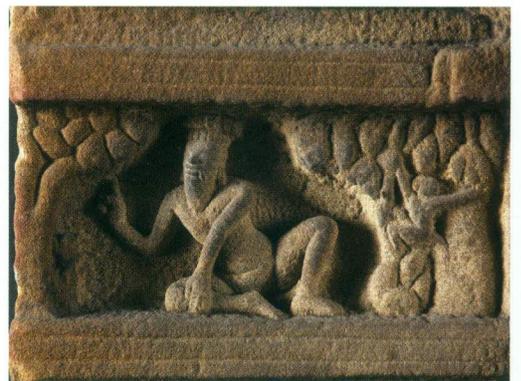


Fig. 10b Hermit addresses a squirrel?

In the next scene, the hermit turns his head to the other side to address the squirrel. Behind him, a monkey or gibbon climbs up a tree. These birds and animals were once abundant in the forests of Mý Són valley. On the rear side of the pedestal, there are six scenes that are here read from left to right.

The sage lies on his back against the rocks, left leg stretched and right leg bent. His left hand rests on a rock and his right holds a rosary (*akṣamālā*) on the right knee. His eyes are closed in meditation. His mass of hair is neatly tied into a high bun. His anatomy is carefully observed as he sits beside a tree with a kettle. The moment is captured with a natural touch that makes it one of the finest carvings on the pedestal. In Fig. 11b an ascetic sits playing the flute, with high, braided hair and the mark of Śiva's third eye on his brow.



Fig. 11a Ascetic holds a rosary.

Fig. 11b Playing the flute.