

Fig. 10. Upper panel O:
Siddhārtha cutting his hair.



On double panel O, Siddhārtha leaves the palace in 'the great departure' or 'renunciation' (Fig. 10) clearly shows the prince cutting his long hair while a servant, probably Chandaka, crouches to gather it in a vase. In the lower panel (Fig. 11) Siddhārtha mounts Kaṇṭhaka.

On the lower register of the wing N (Fig. 12), Chandaka leads Kaṇṭhaka back to the palace with the prince's renounced crown on the saddle. At the end of the register Yaśodharā, sits sadly with her cheek resting on her left hand. Courtiers observe the returning horse on the two upper registers.¹⁴

Chapters 16 to 21 of the *Lalitavistara* recount Śākyamuni's extreme asceticism over six years



and his return to meditate for several weeks under a pipal tree in Gayā, undeterred by the taunts of the demon Māra. The assault of Māra's army is depicted on the double-panel A (Fig. 13). The upper panel of A shows Māra on an elephant shooting an arrow and the lower panel shows his three daughters holding spears of desires attempting to seduce and distract Śākyamuni in the final moments of his meditation. The defeat of Māra's army features on the three registers of the wing B (Fig. 14); the lower register showing a line of soldiers collapsing with their shields.

The double panel E shows Śākyamuni shortly thereafter attaining enlightenment under the bodhi-tree. Upper panel of E shows him under the tree. A woman sitting near him is probably Sujātā offering him a bowl of milk-rice. The lower panel of E has gods and goddesses gathering to celebrate the enlightenment (Fig. 15). In the three registers of wing D we see many figures presenting flowers and offerings to Śākyamuni, who is sitting on the top register and walking under a parasol on the lowest register.

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¹⁴ Nandana Chutiwongs (2011) sees the lowest register as the return of Chandaka and Kanthaka to Kapilavastu, but she interprets the two registers above as the jātaka tales of Caṇḍakumāra and Kṣāntivādin.

Fig. 11 Lower panel O: Siddhārtha mounts
Kaṇṭhaka.