CHAPTER III

Socio-Economic Background

In this chapter, an attempt is made to describe the social and economic conditions forming the background to the life of the Buddhist communities in Western India. It should be remembered here that the time span, under review, is long, that of over a thousand years, during which conditions must have been changing from one age to another and when one deals with such a large chronological spread one is inevitably involved in generalizations. It should also be borne in mind that the materials are both scanty and patchy if one relies only on epigraphic sources. Therefore, the picture that emerges is necessarily inadequate, nevertheless, the main features are sufficiently clear.

A. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Of social organization and life, there are numerous incidental notices. The inscriptions made references to certain castes, gotras, communities and families in relation to donations. Facts about the hereditary nature of certain occupations and women's religious rights and their social status are also revealed by the inscriptions.

1. Castes

The sole reference to the word "varna" is in Nasik cave III where Gautamiputra Satakarni is said to have stopped the contamination of the four varnas. Otherwise, there is no mention of the four main castes by name in the inscriptions.

a. Brahmana

Though Gautamiputra Satakarni claimed to have destroyed the differences between the four varnas, the same inscription speaks of him as "a unique Brahmana". This means that the caste system
did not come to a stop. But the good thing about Gautamiputra Satakarni is that though himself a Brahman he was not against Buddhism. He even made land grants to the Buddhist Sangha at Karle and Nasik. The persistence of caste-consciousness in western India can be inferred from a Kuda inscription in cave IX. The donor of this cave specifically called herself as a Brahmani, the wife of Ayitilu the Brahmana.

b. Kshatriya

The word occurs only once in the Nasik inscription of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi where Gautamiputra Satakarni is said to have "crushed down the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas". The other two castes, viz., Vaisya and Sudra, got no mention by any record.

2. Occupational castes

Some of the donors at Junnar made a mention of their castes based on their occupations. One of them was Lakshmi who is mentioned as the wife of Torika the Nadika by caste. She donated a cistern. The twin donors of the sole mentioned Oposatha Hall (Upathanasala) at Junnar also specifically mentioned their castes as Murdhaka and Gauli (herdsman). According to Manu, it was to the herdsmen that the owners of cattle like buffaloes, cows, sheep and goat entrusted and that the herdsmen were responsible for pasturing and protecting them from wild beasts and thieves. This persistence of caste distinction among the donors may be assumed that Buddhism in Western India, and elsewhere too, did not pose a challenge to the caste system among its lay-followers. Thus the religion was more successful in attracting people from all walks of life. Had Buddhism made its approach very rigid with the cutting of one's previous practices it would not have been embraced by that many.
3. Gotras

Gotra denotes the ancestral family from which its members traced their descent. In ancient India, the gotra name of an individual was of great importance for determining his true position in the democratic social assemblies which functioned for several purposes and at several levels. According to Panini, originally there were eight gotras founded by eight sages, viz., Bhrigu, Kausika, Angira, Bharadvaja, Atri, Kasyapa, Vasishtha and Agastya. Later, within these gotras, other persons of distinction and learning were born who were considered to possess the dignity of gotra-founder and they in turn became founders of new gotras reckoned as branches under the original gotra. For example, under the Bhrigu gotra several new gotras arose, e.g. Vatsa, Bida, Yaska, etc. The gotras mentioned in the inscriptions are: Vasishtha, Vachhi, Gadhi, Gautama, Vatsa, Kausika and Karvatya.

Our earliest reference to a gotra is in Ajanta cave X where a man named Katahadi is said to have been a son of the wife of a man from Vasishtha gotra. Katahadi donated the facade of the cave some time in the middle of the second century BC. About three decades later, Mitradeva of the Gadhi gotra from Paithan donated a pillar at Patalkhora, while the five-celled cave at the same place is said to have been donated by the royal physician Magila of the Vachhi gotra. Apart from this, nothing more is known about these gotras. One of the most original popular gotras is the Gautama gotra. A reference to this gotra is found in Buddha cave XII where the record says that the cave was donated by a lady of the Gautama gotra. The first ancestry of the Gautamas, according to Panini, began about a thousand years before him, i.e. about 1600 years before the record.
Reference to the Vatsa gotra, which arose from the original Bhrigu gotra, is obtained in a Junnar inscription. It records that Ayama, the minister of Nahapana, was of this gotra and that he donated a cistern and a hall. Of the Kausika gotra, one of the eight original gotras, reference is made in Nasik cave XX where the record reveals that Mahāsenapati Bhavagopa was of this gotra and that his wife donated the cave as her meritorious gift to the Buddhist community on mount Tiranhu. Dr. S. Gokhale noticed that the Kausika, Gautama, Vasishtha and Vatsa gotras were present in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Deccan during the period 300 to 1300 AD. The last known gotra from the inscriptions under review is the Karvatiya gotra which occurs in Ajanta inscription. It tells us that Mathura of this gotra donated Ajanta cave IV, which is the biggest vihara in Ajanta.

From the preceding paragraphs it becomes evident that even though the founder of the Buddhist religion did particularly belong to the Gautama gotra he opened his religion for all and not only to the Gautama gotra. Thus we have a wide representation of other gotras which further shows that there was no gotra-distinction in the Buddhist religion.

4. Communities

Outside the family, people expressed their fellow-feeling through social co-operation. The co-operative spirit also finds expressions in so many religious enterprises. Thus it is seen occasionally that the entire population or a certain section of a locality united to make a gift. Such a social co-operation was in vogue as early as in the first century BC. For instance, the people of Dharthika village made a joint donation for the common
expense for the decoration of a cave's entrance. In the same way, the community of traders (vanija-gamesa) from Dhenukataka jointly donated a pillar at Karle. This suggests that there might have been more of such communities. Incidentally, one of the cisterns at Kanheri is the donation of the community of ascetics and lay-brethren in c. 200 AD.

5. **Families**

Family was the smallest unit of social organization. It was considered to be the fundamental unit of society in ancient India. Society was an aggregate of families, each comprising several members under the headship of the father or in his absence the eldest brother, and as far as possible partaking of a common household. Family system was already well established in Panini's time. The sphere of relationships constituting the family is indicated by the following list from his *Ashtadhyayi*: mother, father, maternal uncle, paternal uncle, uterine brother, brother, sister, father's sister and her children, mother's sister and her children, sister's son, brother's son, mother's father, mother's brother, maternal uncle's wife, etc. This long list of family relationships indicates that, in Panini's time, families were well settled, well defined and the responsibilities and duties, status and positions of the family members were in a strict order. Rules and regulations were set which were strictly to be followed.

The inscriptions also throw much light on family relationships. Out of more than fifty families that the epigraphic records provide, a few of them will be cited here for examples. They are found in Kuda, Kanheri and Nasik caves.
Sulasadata + Utaradatta (wife)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sivabhuti + Nanda (wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivama + Vijaya (wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulasadata + Sulasadatta (wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivapalita + Sivapalitā (wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivadata + Sivadata (wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapila + Sapā (wife)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sivabhuti and his wife Nanda donated Kuda cave I while his brother, Sivama, donated Kuda cave VI and the latter's wife, Vijaya, donated the rock carvings in cave VI. The pillars in Cave VI were jointly donated by the four sons and daughter-in-laws of Sivama. Here, it can clearly be seen that, the entire family of Sulasadata was actively involved in making donations to the Buddhist Sangha at Kuda.

About two decades later, in c.310 AD, cave no. VII of Kuda was, in the same way, donated by the entire family of Somadeva. And for the donation of a pillar in Karle Chaitya Hall, the whole family of Mitidasā was involved: himself, his wife, Jayamitra and sons Bhayabhumī and Jebubhumī.

Three inscriptions at Kanheri furnish us with the family of Rohinimitra from Chaula as follows:

Rohinimitra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sulasadata (Kan. 7:14) donated a cistern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhamanaka (Kan. 7:15) donated a path.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivapalitanikā (Kan. 4:11) donated a stūpa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the family members of Rohinimitra donated three different items of gift. Sulasadata donated a cistern, Dhamanaka and his wife, Sivapalitanikā, donated a path and a stūpa respectively at Kanheri.
Another record to show the involvement of the entire family for a single donation is obtained from Kanheri cave XXI. The record gives us names of a three-generation-family:

Ananda son, Aparenuka son, Ananda wife, Juvarinikā, Dharmadevi = all of them jointly donated Kanheri cave XXI.

A Kanheri inscription plainly mentions that merits were to be accrued to the family relations as the result of one's meritorious donation. The two brothers, Gajasena and Gajamitra, started the excavation of Kanheri Chaitya Hall, i.e. Cave III, the biggest cave at Kanheri. The excavation was started by them in honour of their deceased parents, their wives, their sons, their daughters, their step-brothers, their sisters' sons and multitude of blood relations. Like above record, there is no better way of describing a person's deep concern for the well-being and happiness of his family members and blood relations in the inscriptions than the description given as below. A person, whose name is effaced, is said to have donated Kanheri cave X, a water-cistern and a cell in honour of his mother Nandinikā, his son Je...., his nephew Aryaghosa, his daughter Sanghadévanakā, his grandsons and granddaughters, great-grandsons and great-granddaughters, his daughter-in-laws, and his whole family, deceased, living and unborn and all living beings. Thus it appears that the prevailing condition of the families was that of intimacy and harmony, caring and desiring for the happiness of one another.

6. Personal Names

In ancient times, a child was usually given two names. One on its birth-day and another on its naming day. One was considered secret and the other was common. However, the ancient sutras are
not synonymous on the account of naming a child. Names were usually given or derived from gotra, country or locality, mother's father, father's father, father, sage, deity, ancestor, stars or heavenly body, etc. In naming a child a distinction was made between a male and a female child. In the case of a female child the name was an odd number of syllables, generally three, and were to end in a long letter either 'ā' or 'ī'. But the odd number of syllables seems to have been not followed strictly.

A detailed analysis of the proper names that occur in the inscriptions is given in the appendix. However, one of the most common practices in naming a child, i.e. giving the child its grandfather's name will be dealt with here.

In a Kanheri inscription the upasaka Aparenuka appears to have named his son after his father's name. Thus we get:

\[ \text{Ananda son } \rightarrow \text{Aparenuka son } \rightarrow \text{Ananda.} \]

A century later, in 310 AD, the donor of Kuda cave VI also followed the custom. One of his four sons was named after his father. Thus we get:

\[ \text{Sulasadata son } \rightarrow \text{Sivama son } \rightarrow \text{Sulasadata.} \]

Around this time, at the same site, the donor of Kuda cave VII also followed the tradition. So his son bore the name of his father. Thus we get:

\[ \text{Isirathita son } \rightarrow \text{Somadeva son } \rightarrow \text{Isirakhita.} \]

This custom was practised by the royal families, too, as late as in the ninth century. The Silahara King Pullasakti, remembering his father's greatness and acquisitions, named his heir son after his father. Thus the following succession is obtained:

\[ \text{Kapardin son } \rightarrow \text{Pullasakti son } \rightarrow \text{Kapardin.} \]

\[ 814-825 \text{ AD } \rightarrow 825-850 \text{ AD } \rightarrow 850-878 \text{ AD.} \]

Analysis of the personal names shows that about one fifth of
the total (over) 350 names is Buddhistic. Names derived from the Buddha is a dozen while Dharma is one score and four and Sangha is ten. Five have derived their names from Bodhi and six have the name Ananda. Names derived from "happiness" also counts for a dozen. And there are a few more Buddhistic names which have no particular root to be derived from. It may be assumed that majority, if not all, of those who had Buddhistic names were Buddhists. It should be noted that many of those who bore Brahmanical names were also Buddhists as suggested and indicated by their positions as nuns, monks and lay-devotees. For example, Dhamula, who donated a pillar at Karle, was a lay-follower. Isipalita was the son of a lay-follower. He donated a chaityagriha at Junnar. Nuns like Sapila, Sapam, Asadhamita and monks like Satimita, Agimita, and Sivadat bore Brahmanical names.

Of the Brahmanical names three dozens derived from Siva, about a score from Vishnu, more than half a dozen each from Krishna, Indra, Naga and about three dozens from heavenly bodies. These names indicate that Siva worship was the most popular one and that was followed by Vishnu, then Indra, Naga, etc. But the interesting fact which remains is that these people still showed their welcome for Buddhism by supporting it with numerous donations in cash and kind. This fact suggests that there was a general harmony between the populace of the two religions and the two religions grew up hand in hand.

7. Hereditary of occupation

As in modern times, children taking up parents' occupation was a common phenomenon in ancient times. This fact is also revealed by the inscriptions in connection with certain donations.
The donor of Kuda cave X, Sivapalita succeeded his father as a gardener (malakara), while Dhamanaka also succeeded his father, Rchinimitra, as a royal treasurer (heranika). Dhamanaka came to be known for his donation of a path at Kanheri. Visvavarma of Nasik became interested in his father's profession as an accountant, so he took up that profession as his own. In the same way, Isipala inherited his father's livelihood as a merchant (negama). One of the most prestigious professions from ancient times is that of a physician. A Kuda inscription records that Somadeva was, like his father Isirakhita, a physician (veja). He donated Kuda cave VII.

8. Hereditary of position

The eldest son succeeding his father, when the latter died or was incapable of ruling, is a common practice in a monarchial system of government. So the epigraphs provide us with the Vakataka kings, the Asmaka kings, and the Satavahana lords as examples. Even the feudal lords of Mahābhojas and Maharathis enjoyed the same pattern of royal succession. These dynasties have been mentioned in the epigraphs in relation to their donations and their patronage of Buddhism. While royal succession in a dynasty is common or expected, a son succeeding his father as a minister is a rare case. There are two references to this matter in the inscriptions. A record in Ajanta cave XXVI seems to say that both Bhaviraja and his son Devaraja were ministers of two different Asmaka kings, viz., Uependragupta and Kacha respectively. Another record in Ajanta cave XVI and the Chatotkacha inscription make it clear that Varahadeva succeeded his father as a Vakataka minister. His father was a minister to Devasena and he was Harisena's minister. He donated the cave.
9. Polygamy

Polygamy in ancient India, especially among the rich, was not unknown. Varahamihira refers to co-wives and to men with two or three wives. The practice and existence of polygamy in Western India during the period under review is corroborated by inscriptive evidences from Bedsa and Kuda. A cistern at Bedsa is recorded to have been donated by Mahādevi Mahārathini Śrīmadinī-kā, who was the second wife of Apādevanaka. It was around 100 AD. A little more than a century later, Sivadatā, the second wife of Vehamita, donated Kuda cave XXIII. It is not known whether Apādevanaka of Bedsa married his second wife while his first wife was still alive or after her death. The same principle is applicable to Vehamita of Kuda.

10. Fine Arts

Cultivation of the fine arts such as music and dancing was an integral part of a cultured life. Of musical instruments the flute, drums and cymbals are shown in paintings. The cultivation of music by Gautamiputra Satakarni is known from a Nāsik inscription where he is said to have inherited the privilege of learning kingly music from a long line of ancestors. The Silahara king Pulakesaki is recorded to have obtained the five Mahāsabdas in a Kanheri record. The five Mahāsabdas are the horn, the tabor, the conch, the kettle-drum and the gong. Of rock-carving as a fine art, there are two references to rock-carving in the inscriptions. In a Nāsik inscription, Gautami Balasiri is mentioned to have made a donation for making sculptures (chitana-nimita). Another record is in Kuda cave VI in which Vijayā, wife of Sivama, is said to have donated the rock-carvings in the cave which is numbered not less than sixty pieces.
11. Women's education and social status

The women, especially those who entered into the monastic life, enjoyed the privilege of studying under competent senior members of the monastery. The Kuda and Kanheri records manifest the truth about this. The inscriptions disclose as many as nine women who were studying under the Thera Bhadantas, the senior most members of the monastery. Regarding monastic education, a detail discussion will be made in the next chapter.

The monastic women were not only given the privilege of studying but they were also promoted from one stage of nunhood to another. The inscriptions furnish us with five bhikshunis and a theri. Regarding this too, a discussion will be made in the next chapter.

A Nasik inscription informs us that in 130 AD, at the court of king Gautamiputra Satakarni, the secretary to the king, the chief lady-in-waiting, was Lóta. This is the only reference to a woman with a high post. The donor of Nasik cave XX was a Mahasenapatini Vásu. Vásu was not by herself a Mahāsenapati, but she was only the wife of a Mahāsenapati Bhavagopa. She has just derived her husband's designation. Panini also refers to women who derived their designations from their husbands, e.g. Mahāmātri is wife of a Mahāmātra; Ganakī is wife of a Ganahea and Āchāryānī is the wife of an Āchārya.

12. Women's religious rights.

It appears that women moved freely in the society and had the privilege of making religious gifts. Analysis of the donations shows that about 20% of the total donors is from the women-folk. It is quite a high ratio. And most of them are married women. The following chart will make this point very clear.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>Site: Cave: Dr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150BC</td>
<td>Bādhā</td>
<td>wife of a ploughman</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Dhaj. 6:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50AD</td>
<td>Bhāyilā</td>
<td>mother of Mahadevanaka</td>
<td>pillar</td>
<td>Karle 8:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Asādhamitā</td>
<td>bhikshuni</td>
<td>rail-pattern</td>
<td>do 8:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>kodī</td>
<td>bhikshuni, a mother</td>
<td>rail-pattern</td>
<td>do 8:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Mahamatrā</td>
<td>wife of ?, f. Dhenuka.</td>
<td>pillar</td>
<td>do 8:33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Jayamitrā</td>
<td>wife of Mitidasa</td>
<td>pillar</td>
<td>do 8:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70AD</td>
<td>Bhatapālikā</td>
<td>wife of Agiyatanaka</td>
<td>chaityagriha</td>
<td>Nasik 10:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100AD</td>
<td>Sāmadinikā</td>
<td>second wife of Apadevanaka</td>
<td>cistern</td>
<td>Bedsa 5:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120AD</td>
<td>Gauyammā</td>
<td>daughter of Hala</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kuđa 12:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Vijayaniikā</td>
<td>daughter of Sudamsana</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>do 13:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Dakkhamitā</td>
<td>wife of Usavadata</td>
<td>2 cells</td>
<td>Nasik 10:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>————</td>
<td>wife of Sivadata</td>
<td>(cave)</td>
<td>Junn. 28:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125AD</td>
<td>Dharmasiri</td>
<td>wife of Sivadata</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kol 4:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150AD</td>
<td>Kumī</td>
<td>mother of Sulasā</td>
<td>cistern</td>
<td>Junn. 39:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Sulasā</td>
<td>daughter of Kumī</td>
<td>cistern</td>
<td>Junn. 19:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Sivapālita..</td>
<td>wife of Dhamanaka</td>
<td>stūpa</td>
<td>Kanhe. 4:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Bhayilā</td>
<td>wife of Brahman Ayitilu</td>
<td>chaityagriha</td>
<td>Kuda 9:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Velidatā</td>
<td>wife of Ramadatta</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>Kuda 15:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>————</td>
<td>a hamana from Aparanta</td>
<td>pillar</td>
<td>Junn. 26:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>————</td>
<td>queen of Vasīśa, Satakarni</td>
<td>water-cist.</td>
<td>Kanhe. 5:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>————</td>
<td>daughter of Mahābhōja</td>
<td>(cave)</td>
<td>Kuda 11:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160AD</td>
<td>Lakshmī</td>
<td>wife of Torika</td>
<td>cistern</td>
<td>Junn. 20:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Nadabālikā</td>
<td>wife of Isimulasami</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180AD</td>
<td>Sapīlā</td>
<td>kinswoman of Vinhuja</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kuda 16:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Vinhuja</td>
<td>kinswoman of Sapīlā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Podhī</td>
<td>female pupil of Sapīlā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181AD</td>
<td>Māmā</td>
<td>upāsika</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>Nasik 20:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Vāśū</td>
<td>Mahāsenapatiini</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Nasik 20:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190AD</td>
<td>Juvārinikā</td>
<td>wife of Apameṣha</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kanhe 21:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>Site: Ca: Ing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190AD</td>
<td>Dharmadevi</td>
<td>wife of Ananda</td>
<td>niche</td>
<td>Kanhe.21:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200AD</td>
<td>Lavanikā</td>
<td>wife of Achala</td>
<td>cistern, cave</td>
<td>Kanhe.75:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230AD</td>
<td>Sivapālita.</td>
<td>wife of Sakhuvaru</td>
<td>cave, cistern</td>
<td>Junn. 48:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Ponakīasanā</td>
<td>theri</td>
<td>cave, cistern</td>
<td>Kanhe.54:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Dāmilā</td>
<td>bhikshuni</td>
<td>cave, cistern</td>
<td>Kanhe.98:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Nandasiri</td>
<td>mother of Purisadatā</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>Nasik 6:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Purisadatā</td>
<td>daughter of Nandasiri</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>Nasik 6:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Sivadatā</td>
<td>second wife of Vehamita</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kuda 23:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257AD</td>
<td>Vishnudatā</td>
<td>wife of Rebhila</td>
<td>karshapanas</td>
<td>Nasik 10:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290AD</td>
<td>Padumanikā</td>
<td>pavayitikaya (nun)</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>Kuda 5:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Bodhi</td>
<td>pupil of Padumanikā</td>
<td>cave, cistern</td>
<td>Kuda 5:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Asalhamitā</td>
<td>friend of Padumanikā</td>
<td>cistern</td>
<td>Kuda 1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Sātimitā</td>
<td>a female-pupil</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>Kuda 5:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>friend of Sātimitā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>'Nandā</td>
<td>wife of Sivabhuti</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kuda 1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300AD</td>
<td>Sapā</td>
<td>pavayitikaya (nun)</td>
<td>cistern</td>
<td>Kanhe.65:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Ratiniikā</td>
<td>sister of Sapā</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kanhe.66:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Nagamulanikā</td>
<td>daughter of Mahārathī,..</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Vadasiri</td>
<td>wife of Vi...</td>
<td>chaityagriha</td>
<td>Mahad LL1073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Siāgutanikā</td>
<td>wife of Usabhanaka</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Shela.8:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Sanghā</td>
<td>daughter of a bhikshuni</td>
<td>chaityagriha</td>
<td>Shela.8:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Buddhā</td>
<td>partner of Sanghā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310AD</td>
<td>Isipalitā</td>
<td>daughter of Somadeva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Pusā</td>
<td>daughter of Somadeva</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>Kuda 7:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Dhammā</td>
<td>daughter of Somadeva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Sapā</td>
<td>daughter of Somadeva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Vijaya</td>
<td>wife of Sivama</td>
<td>rock-carvings</td>
<td>Kuda 6:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>4 daughter-in-laws</td>
<td></td>
<td>pillars</td>
<td>Kuda 6:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380AD</td>
<td>Vyaghraṇā</td>
<td>upāsīka</td>
<td>Buddha image</td>
<td>Kuda 6:7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above chart shows that Iuda has the highest number of women donors 24, followed by Kanheri 11, Junnar 7, Nasik 6, Karle 5, Shelarwadi 3, and Bhaja, Bedsa, Kol and Mahad one each, thus totalling about 60 in all. The time-span covered by them is four and half centuries, i.e. from c. 150 BC to 310 AD. It is noteworthy that most of the women donors fall within the Hinayana phase and about one third in the transitional period between the Hinayana and Mahayana. The reason for the disappearance of women donors in the Mahayana phase is not known. Probably, during the Mahayana phase, not so many new excavations were carried out to require the help of the women folk. It is a known fact that many of the Hinayana caves were re-occupied by the Mahayanaists and they only made a few more excavations here and there and added various images in the Hinayana caves.

B. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

For the Buddhist communities of Western India, support for their material needs such as food, clothing, dwellings and places of worship came from the lay society engaged in the production, transport and exchange of commodities. It will be seen that the supporters of the Buddhist Sangha at various establishments in Western India were engaging or pursuing various types of professions. People from all walks of life took part in the donation scheme heralded by the Sangha, donation as the easiest way to accumulate merits for oneself as well as for one's relatives and friends.

1. Agriculture

Tilling of the soil can be inferred from the terms hala and
kutumbika. In the Gahasattasai, ploughs are mentioned by the terms like hala and langala. A Bhaja record mentions Badha was the wife of a ploughman (Halakiya). She donated a cell at Bhaja. Nasik cave XXIII is the gift of Dhanama who was an husbandman (kutumbika). A kutumbika is one who supports his family with the products of his land. The Shelarwadi inscription is very interesting, on this account, that it provides us with the name of a donor who was both a kutumbika and halakiya by occupation. His name is given as Usabhanika. Hala was a piece of land which could be ploughed by a pair of bullocks in a year. It was used as a land measure equal to one-fourth of a sira, half a kula. These inscriptional references are sufficient proof to the existence of agriculture during the period under review.

Of the various kinds of oil-seeds, tila (sesame) seems to have been extensively cultivated. The commercial value of this oil is shown by the development of the guild of tilapishakas (oil-pressers) in Nasik region. This guild served as a bank where money was invested the interest of which was going to help the Buddhist Sangha at Nasik.

A Junnar inscription refers to the guild of corn-dealers (Dhamnika) which must be taken to mean a long period of agricultural development involving production of food-grains in sufficient quantities so as to be a marketable surplus. It also indicates the fact that this surplus production and trade in it must have gone on a long time since the traders are now organised into a guild. This particular guild was directly involved in making a donation by gifting a seven-celled cave and a cistern.
The reference to the guild of weavers (Kolika) at Nasik indicates that weaving work had gone on for a long time and the necessity to form a guild was felt. There is a direct mention of spinners and weavers of clothes in the Gahasattasai. This guild also did not only serve as a bank but provided jobs to many people. Though there is no record, it might have provided robes to the Buddhist communities at least at Nasik and other Buddhist establishments nearby.

Along with the growth of agricultural production there was also the growth of flower gardens and tending of trees yielding cash either by way of fruits or lumber. In the time of Brihat-samhita, cities and towns in India were abounded with gardens and parks. They contained both flower plants and fruit trees. Some of the gardeners (Malakara) at Kuda accumulated surplus cash to be able to make gifts to the Buddhist Sangha there. Kuda cave X and a cistern were meritoriously gifted by two gardeners, viz., Sivapalita and Mugudasa respectively. Gardening seems to have been a commendable job as suggested by the fact that Vadhuka was succeeded by his son, Sivapalita, as a gardener.

Of the fruit trees, coconut was of considerable importance. In a Nasik record, Usavadata is stated to have donated 8,000 stems of coconut trees each at five different places. The uses and importance of coconut need not be discussed here since it is a very commonly known and used fruit. Similarly, Junnar inscriptions tell us the planting of Karanja, Banyan, Sala, Falmyra, Jambu and mango trees as an endowment, the income from which went to support the monastic fraternity there. The Karanja (Pongamia Glabra) was highly valued for its oil and wood, the Sala is a timber tree whose foliage furnishes food for the Lab insect and its
light brown closely-grained hard wood is second only to teak in value. The Palmyra yields a variety of products such as its hard wood used in building, its leaves for thatching or for making manuscript leaves, its fruits can be eaten and its sap can be turned into sugar or wine. Jambu and Mango are well known to us.

Bamboo was also used for commercial purposes, for material building and a variety of other uses. Bamboo workers were organised into guilds which again indicates a long development in bamboo cultivation. The Bamboo guild at Junnar also served as a bank.

2. Ownership of land

Usavadata's inscription mentions that he had purchased a field from a Brahmana with 4,000 Karshapanas. This record proves that right of an individual over his landed property was respected by the state. Even when the state required a certain plot of land it was not confiscated outright but generally purchased from the holder. All the mines, including salt-centres, treasure-trove, canals and tanks and unoccupied lands were the state's property.

3. Land Measurements

The frequent mention of nivartana in the epigraphs seems to suggest that it was almost the universally accepted standard of land-measurement in the Deccan, particularly in the Western India. A nivartana was probably so called because originally it represented a day's ploughing by a team of eight or six oxen, measuring the area from which they stopped after a day's work. The area of a nivartana is different from one authority to another. The most commonly used one is 240 x 240 cubits which is equal to 3 acres.

Nivartana as a land-measurement occurs twelve times in the
Junnar inscriptions. The total donation of land including fields, villages, tree plantations, etc. is 125 nivartanas. These were donated in the latter half of second century AD. From this one can get some idea of the number of Buddhist ascetics there at Junnar. A sudden rise in land-donation seems to suggest that there was a rise in the Junnar Buddhist monastic members. The produce of the donated land could have sufficed the provisions required by the Sangha at Junnar as it amounted to (3 x 125) 375 acres of land.

The royal land grants, known as "bhikshuhalas", to the Buddhist community at Nasik amounted to 300 nivartanas. This is excluding the two bhikshuhalas, one at Nasik itself and another at Karle as the inscriptions do not specify the sizes of them. The Nasik Buddhist fraternity was very privileged indeed to enjoy the produces of such a vast land of 900 acres during the first half of the second century AD.

Another land-measurement used in Western India is hala. It may have originally indicated an area of land that could be cultivated by a pair of bullocks during a year. A Junnar inscription specifically mentions that four hala land was donated for the sake of drinking water hall (panasala).

4. The guilds and their services

The term 'Sreni', that has been translated as guild, is defined as a corporation of people belonging to the same or different caste but following the same trade or industry. It appears that almost every important art of craft in a locality formed a guild-organization. The guild in ancient India possessed both executive and judicial authority. The guilds were headed by high executive officers who were assisted by committees of two, three or five
called advisers. The chief leader of a guild is called setthi (sresthin). The inscriptions refer to a number of persons who held the setthi post. They will be dealt later in this chapter.

Kautilya refers to some guilds such as the guilds of weavers, miners, metal-manufacturers, gold and silver smiths, braziers, carpenters, workers in stone, medical men, etc. The epigraphs of Western Indian caves also refer to some guilds of which a few have already been referred to. The guilds functioned as the banks do today. For instance, the two weavers' guilds at Nasik received permanent deposits which they held as trustfunds, the principal of which they were to keep intact and were responsible for the safety of the deposits. But for the use of that money they had to pay interest at certain stipulated rates to the beneficiary named in the grant. The Saka prince Usavadata is said to have made a permanent investment of 2000 karshapanas in a weavers' guild at Govardhana on the condition that the latter would give 12% annual interest on the deposit. The second investment of 1000 karshapanas was made in another weavers' guild of the same place and this time the rate of interest was only 9%. Since the investments were made with the vowed objects of providing out of the interest the monks keeping rain-retreat in the Nasik cave with cloth money and money for food, the guilds appear not only as banks but also as trustees and executors of charitable endowments.

In another case, a lay worshipper named Vinhudata is said to have instituted a perpetual endowment for the well-being and happiness of all beings and in order to provide medicines to the sick of the Sangha on rt. Tiranhu. This endowment was divided into three parts and invested in three guilds of Govardhana. Thus, 2000
karshapanas was invested to the guild of hydraulic engineers (odayantrika), 1000 karshapanas to the potters' guild (kularika), and 500 karshapanas to that of oil-pressers (Tilapishaka). An inscription at Junnar shows that at least the guilds of the bamboo workers and braziers of ancient Junnar received similar type of public endowments. Besides cash deposits, the guilds accepted landed property, managed it and assigned an interest out of its income. This fact has been revealed by another inscription from the same place which records the investment of the income of a field at Vadahika for planting Karanja trees and of another field for planting banyan trees with the guild at Konachika by Aduthuma.

The guilds, however, were not merely the recievers of others' gifts, but also made gifts themselves in the name of the corporation. The guild of corn-dealers has been referred to, and the guild of goldsmiths (suvarnakara) is now referred to here. It made the gifts of a coarse land, a grazing land and the king's share of grains to the Buddhist Sangha at Junnar. These lands were within the village of Danagara, near Junnar. Since money was deposited in the craft-guilds by persons of every walk of life ranging from princes to the commoners, it is clear that these guilds had already earned much goodwill for their efficient handling of public money.

The number of guild was not limited to those which have been mentioned. The reference to various arts and crafts, professions and occupations shows that there were many more guilds organised in various parts of Western India and the contributions of these guilds to the Buddhist Sangha are numerous.
5. Currency

The frequent reference to karshapanas in the inscriptions suggests that karshapana was the currency used in Western India for many centuries. Karshapana was the name of the silver punch-marked coin of which numerous hoards have been found in various parts of India. It was the standard medium of exchange from about the sixth century BC downwards. It was the standard coin of Panini's time. Karshapana was a coin (of copper, silver or gold) weighing one karsha which is 80 ratis or 146.4 grains.

Reference to karshapana has been made above in relation to guilds at Nasik. Our earliest inscriptionsal reference to karshapana is found in the Nanaghat inscription of Vedisiri, where he is said to have donated thousands of karshapanas for religious expenditures. Reference to karshapana as the current coin at Kanheri is found seven times at the same site.

The other currency mentioned in the inscriptions is dramma. The word dramma, found on certain copper coins issued by the Yaudheyas about the third century AD, was derived from the Greek drachma, its old Attic standard being 67.5 grains. Some of the silver coins issued by the Indo-Bactrian kings were drachmas weighing about 65 grains. The Indo-Greeks also issued hemidrachmas, which were later imitated in their silver coins by the Saka Kshatrapas, the Guptas, the Traikutakas and the early Kalachuri king Kishnara. The earliest inscriptionsal mention of the dramma occurs in the Kanheri inscriptions of Vishnucupta dated 844 AD. Dramma were coined in silver only and not in gold. The inscriptions of Gomuk Avighnakara in 851 AD and that of Veva in 878 AD also mention dramma. This suggests that by the ninth century AD dramma was currently used in Western India.
5. **Mercantile professions**

The inscriptions employed at least four different terms to designate the mercantile professions. They are, setthi, satthavaha, negama and vanija.

a. **Setthi**

The Sanskrit term "sresthin" is defined as a banker, a merchant or the foreman of a guild. A setthi is a cashier, treasurer or a wealthy merchant.¹⁰³ The reference to a number of setthis in various places suggests that there were certain guilds in those places. For instance, the presence of a certain guild at Vaijayanti is indicated by the mention of Bhutapala as a setthi. As the president of a guild he contributed most for the excavation of the Earle Chaitya Hall, which is said to be the best rock-mansion in India.¹⁰⁴ The donor of the famous dam (talaka) at Kanheri is also recorded as a setthi named Punaka from Sopara.¹⁰⁵

Kuda would not have flourished as a trade centre without the presence of certain mercantile and craft guilds. Certainly, one of the guildmen, named Vasula, is recorded to have donated a bathing tank while another is said to have gifted a cave and a cistern as his precious gifts to the Buddhist Sangha there.¹⁰⁶ It is interesting to note, again, here that one of the bankers at Nasik asked his son, Fusanaka, to go over to Bedsa and donate a cave there.¹⁰⁷ At Mahad, setthi Sangharakhita was kind enough to provide the expenditure for excavating a chaityagriha and a cave in the name of his daughter-in-law, Vadasiri.¹⁰⁸ A cistern at Nanaghat is the meritorious gift of setthi Kamaghosa from Kamavana while a cave at Kol bears its donor's name as setthi Sangharakhita.¹¹⁰ Visapur was also fortunate to receive a cistern from another setthi named Kasa.¹¹¹
b. Satthavaha

A satthavaha is a trader, a merchant or a member of the mercantile community represented on an administrative board like the Pancayat. The satthavahas were those who specialized in the carrying trade, who organized large convoys of oxen and other draft animals to carry merchandise over long distances. They may have carried on trade on their own account besides being responsible for carrying the goods of other merchants.

Kuda is the only place where satthavahas are mentioned. For instance, Kuda cave XVII is the meritorious gift of a satthavaha named Naga, while cave no. XXIV and a path are said to have been donated by Asalamitra, son of Achaladasa the satthavaha. About the same period, i.e., c. 125 AD, Sivadata also donated Kuda XXIII as her precious gift. She is recorded as the second wife of Vehamitra the satthavaha. All these references seem to suggest that Kuda was a trade centre, where trading was carried on and from where traders set out to other places. The contribution of these satthavahas to the Kuda Buddhist Sangha is significant.

c. Negama

The word "negama" is derived from the root word 'nigama', which means a marketing town or place. One of the earliest epigraphic references to nigama as a mart occurs in the Junagad rock inscription of Rudradaman, dated 150 AD. A negama is a merchant who normally operates in a nigama or marketing town. The marketing towns of Western India as can be inferred from the inscriptions are Chaula, Junnar, Kalyan, Nasik and Sopara. From the marketing town of Sopara merchants like Samika and Mudapala donated a cistern and a field respectively at Kanheri.
The marketing town of Kalyan produced at least six merchants who made their donations to the Kanheri Buddhist Sangha within the period of a century and half. The merchants are Vasuyata's son Chita..., upasaka Aparenuka, Achala, Golanaka, Dhamma and Vishnunandin. Their donations are Kanheri caves XXI, XXXII, XXXVI, LXXIII, LXXIV, a niche, four cisterns, a bathing tank and a field. The Junnar merchants namely Virabhuti and Virasenaka made their gifts right there at Junnar. Their gifts are Manmodi cave II and Sivneri cave XLIII. The latter is said to have been a chief householder and upright merchant. Ramanaka was the negama from Chhakalepa, a village near Nasik township. He donated Nasik cave XII and 100 karshapanas for the purchase of robes. Thus, it has been clearly seen that the Buddhist Community in Western India had been greatly blessed and benefitted by the merchants who operated their business in the marketing town of the region.

d. Vaniya

The last group of the mercantile community is called vaniya. The Pali word Vanijako means a trader, a horsedealer or a merchant. Another word vanijja means to trade in cloth. As early as in the middle of the second century BC a vaniya named Ghanamadada had been enthusiastic in the Buddhist religion that he donated a hall and two cells at Ajanta. About two centuries later in the middle of the first century AD, Isalaka, son of Gola the vaniya from Dhenukataka and a community of traders (vaniya-gama) from the same place donated two pillars at Karle. A century later another trader (unnamed) from Damanadesh made a donation of 8 nivartanas of land to the Kakaputiyasangha at Junnar. As a whole, the mercantile community did make a very considerable contribution to the Buddhist church in Western India.
7. **High ranking services**

Among the high ranking services the inscriptions refer to mahamatra, rajamatya, rajamacha, amatya, mahasenapati, bhandagarika, heranika, lekhaka, ganapaka and veja. Except the last four the rest have been discussed in the previous chapter.

**a. Heranika**

Heranika is taken to mean a treasurer and obviously it is derived from hiranya, meaning gold. But he could not be a goldsmith for whom a distinctive term suvanakara is used. In the Pali Dictionary heranika is specifically defined as a royal treasurer. So, it is indeed a very high ranking service with a high reputation. Quite a few people of this service are mentioned in the inscriptions. A heranika family at Chaula is referred to in three Kanheri inscriptions. The father is recorded as a heranika. His two sons and a daughter-in-law are mentioned to have donated a cistern, a path and a stupa respectively at Kanheri. One of the chaityagrihas at Junnar was meritoriously donated by Sulasadata, son of a heranika at Kalyan. Another heranika named Kanhadasena from Pitalkhora is noted to have donated a Yaksha image there. If heranika is strictly taken to mean a royal treasurer, then it would seem to suggest that Chaula, Kalyan and Pitalkhora were the seats of some political powers, at least the feudal lords or the provincial governors.

**b. Lekhaka**

Lekhaka is a writer. It is a technical term for one who wrote a record (on copper plates, stone slabs, etc. in order to facilitate its correct engraving by an artisan). According to Kautilya, one who is possessed of ministerial qualifications acquainted with
all kinds of customs, alert in composition, competent in legible
writing, and quick in reading should be appointed as lekhaka.

Writing was regarded as sacred in ancient India. Only a few
people learned writing. People who entered into the religious
orders and only the well to do people had the privilege of writing.
As a result, those who met the conditions laid down by Kautilya
were highly honoured and respected. Moreover, they were hired to
serve in the royal courts. Though the word lekhaka is not used to
specifically designate a person, the inscriptions of Gautamiputra
Satakarni reveal that a number of the officers who were serving at
his court were lekhakas. In 124 AD, the great Satavahana king
Gautamiputra ordered verbally for the making of the inscription
no.4 in Nasik cave III. Sivagupta wrote down word by word the
verbal order of the king. The note of order was safely preserved
by Mahasvamikas. Tapasa then engraved the king's verbal order
in the cave. Two weeks after, the king made another verbal order
at Karle. This time Sivaskandagupta was the one who wrote down
and engraved the verbal order of the king. Six years later in
130 AD, the king again made his third verbal order at Nasik. This
time, the king's verbal order was written down by Lota, the chief
lady-in-waiting. After consulting Samaka, the minister at Govard-
dhana, Sujivin engraved the king's order in Nasik cave III, just
down below the previous inscription. Nineteen years later, in 149 AD,
Gautamiputra Satakarni's son Vasishthiputra Pulumavi ordered
another inscription in the same cave. The order was written by
his general, Mahasenapati Mehduna.

Six years later the above incident, in 155 AD, one of the
cisterns at Visapur was donated by a lekhaka named Nugadapalita.
By the end of the third century AD, Sivabhi, lekhaka to a Mahabhoja ruler, together with his wife donated a flat roofed rectangular chaityagriha at Kuda. These are the sure proof that the lekhakas served in the royal courts. Another lekhaka at Nasik must have earned surplus money by his writing because he could pay the expenses for the excavation of Nasik cave XXIV and three cistern near to it. He was a Saka named Damachika Vudhika. Another cave at Nasik was voluntarily gifted by Ramanaka whose father was Sivamita the lekhaka. The lekhakas, by and large, had been a great blessing to the Buddhist Sangha in western India as they were responsible for the existence of a number of caves and cisterns.

The long maintained tradition of writing at Nasik can be inferred from an inscription in Nasik cave X where Usavadata is said to have registered his donations of karshapanas and other items at the record office (phalakavare), according to the custom. The word phalakavare occurs twice in the inscription. It literally means "the store-house of plates or boards". The custom of registering one's donation at the record office seems to have been there before Usavadata as he also registered accordingly. Therefore, from above references, it can be inferred that from the beginning of the second century AD, if not earlier, Nasik became a centre of a writing tradition which continued for not less than half a century.

c. Ganapaka

This word occurs only in Nasik. Ganapaka means accountant. The inscription shows that it is one of the jobs which a son can inherit provided he got a training in the job. The accountants
Rebhila and Visvavarma seem to have accumulated surplus money as Vishnudata, the former's wife and the latter's mother, was able to deposit 500, 1000, and 2000 karshapanas to the guilds of oil-miller, potters and hydraulic engineers respectively, the interest of the invested money was supposed to be used for the purchase of clothes and medicines for the Buddhist monks on Mt. Tiranhu.

**d. Veja**

The physicians are at all times highly esteemed and paid due respects and honour for their healing ministry which is essential to the whole human race regardless of social classes and castes. There have been some kind of physicians, who devoted their lifetime for caring the sick and suffering, from time immemorial. The inscriptions of Western India also not lack to provide us with the names of some physicians. The earliest reference to a physician is at Pitalkhohra where the record specifically mentions that Magila was a royal physician. It was in the first century BC. This record suggests that the royals and nobles in ancient times had their personal or family physicians. And the physicians used to accompany the royals wherever they went, particularly in times of war and hunt.

A Karle inscription records that one of the pillars in the Chaitya Hall was donated by a physician named Mitidasa. The continuous presence of physicians at Kuda for two generations, at least, is witnessed by the Kuda cave VII which is still existing today. The cave was jointly donated by Somadeva the physician with his three sons and four daughters. It is interesting to note that Somadeva's father was also a physician.

The presence of these physicians must have been a source of security and happiness for both the general population and the Buddhist Community.
8. **Craftsmen**

Most of the profession under this category had become hereditary for we have a frequent mention of names of father and son following the same profession. There had also developed a degree of specialization in trade and crafts.

**a. Suvanakara** The goldsmith, whose skilled hands made various ornaments, pursued such a trade which could flourish only in the towns and cities inhabited by fashionable and luxurious people. Kautilya laid down certain rules regarding this profession. He said, "in order to manufacture gold and silver jewellery, the superintendent of gold shall have a goldsmith's office consisting of four rooms and one door. No person who is not an employee shall enter the goldsmith's office. Any person who so enters shall be beheaded. The state goldsmith shall employ artisans to manufacture gold and silver coins from the bullion of citizens and country people. Whoever causes gold or silver articles to be manufactured in any place other than the mint or without being noticed by the state goldsmith shall be fined 12 panas, while the artisans who does that work shall be punished with 24 panas. Weighing balance and counter weights shall be purchased from the superintendent in charge of them. Otherwise a fine of 12 panas shall be imposed".

From this many things become clear. 1) The craft of goldsmith was a highly organized craft of the state, 2) The goldsmiths were in control of the manufacturing of gold and silver articles, including the coins, 3) The goldsmiths were highly respected and 4) They had their own living quarters and offices.

The cities of Junnar and Kalyan must have housed a number of goldsmiths in the second and third centuries AD. Two inscriptions
clearly refer to their gifts at Junnar and Kanheri. One of the
cisterns at Junnar was willingly donated by the state goldsmith
Sanghaka. He hailed from the Kalyan goldsmiths' office. He
might have come to Junnar to primarily contact his fellow gold-
smiths there and while he was there he noticed the great need of
the Buddhist Sangha. So he donated a cistern. Another inscrip-
tion from the same place (Junnar) mentions that a coarse land, a
grazing land and the king's share of grains at Danagara village
had been donated by the guild of goldsmiths. This implies that
the goldsmith profession had begun long before and the growing
membership of the craft necessitated to form a guild. So by the
middle of the second century AD, the goldsmiths at Junmar had
their own guild and donations were made in the name of it.

About three decades later, the state goldsmith Samidata from
Kalyan made a donation of a cistern at Kanheri. Another water-
cistern at cave XCIII in the same site was donated by Sivatana,
who was also a goldsmith. Since the inscription is badly damaged
the place from where he hailed could not be ascertained. But most
probably, he was also from Kalyan.

d. Manikara

The inscription refers to a jeweller only once. Our sole
jeweller Nagapalita is said to have come from Sopara. Along with
other donors from his town, he also made a gift of Kanheri cave
LXXXVI. The existence of jewelry is also corroborated by the
literary evidences. The Gahasattasai, for instance, refers to a
string of rubies and emeralds, ear-ornaments of sapphire, corals,
pearls, etc. which are the main articles and ingredients of a
jeweller's shop. The Brihatamsamita also mentions the various
kinds of ornaments worn on different parts of the body such as head ornaments, pearl necklaces, ear-rings, armlets, bracelets, anklets, golden mid-bands called haimakaksya and zones worn by women. The jewellers' deep knowledge in his field is also shown by the mention of various gems, viz., diamond, emerald, ruby, carnelian, chrysoberyl, cat's eye, garnet, vimalaka, rajamani, rock-crystal, moonstone, topaz, pearl, coral, etc.¹⁵²

c. Kamara and Lohavaniyiya

Both the terms can broadly be translated to mean the blacksmith. The Kuda cave XIV is recorded to have been donated by an ironmonger from Karad.¹⁵³ And a path at Kanheri was the free gift of Nanda the blacksmith. These two men, as we know, were responsible for providing iron implements like arrows, ploughs, knives, shares, sickles, needles, saw, spike, peg, etc. in their own areas. The ploughmen and the blacksmiths were close friends. The latter had work to do for the whole year as they were the main suppliers of iron or metal goods related to daily use. Besides contributing in the form of architectural pieces the blacksmiths must have helped the excavation of the Buddhist caves by providing hammers, chisels, etc. The Gahasattasai also refers to the articles made and produced by the blacksmiths.¹⁵⁵

d. Tabake

One inscription distinctly mentions the craft in copper work as a profession. It says that one of the pillars in a Junnar chaityagriha was donated by a man whose father was a coppersmith. Expert coppersmiths were employed to mint copper coins. The Gahasattasai again mentions a kalasa (pitcher) which is made of copper. This shows that the coppersmiths also had sufficient work to do for earning their livelihood.
e. Kasakara

Another important profession from the utilitarian point of view was that of the kasakaras or braziers. The existence of guilds of the braziers and the practice of accepting public endowments by many of them suggest that the industry was already well organized in Western India by the beginning of the Christian era. Of the various articles turned out by the braziers, an essential household object was the mirror. Highly polished metal plates were used as mirrors in those days. The Gahasatasa refers to bells which are manufactured by the braziers.

f. Vadhaki

One of the most important and indispensable craftsmen, particularly from the villagers' point of view, was the carpenter. In those days, the carpenters used to receive about 2% of each peasant's yield, against this they kept the houses, farm implements and wells in repair. A Karle inscription refers to one of the carpenters named Sami from Dhenukataka. This man had done some work related to the door of the Karle Chaitya Hall. Besides him, a number of other carpenters must have been responsible for wooden works required in the Buddhist rock-cut caves. Wooden planks were required for the doors of the cells, for the ribs of the chaitya halls in early stage and for the umbrellas over the stupas in the hall.

g. Kularika

The potters, an essential elements in both rural and urban population, sometimes organized themselves in trade guilds. At Nasik, there was at least one such potters' guild which used to receive public endowments. The potters might have directly supported the Buddhist Sangha in Western India by supplying the
ever required article, i.e. the begging bowls and in some places bricks needed for the erection of stupas and even for some structural purposes. In ancient times, the potters also made bricks.

9. Other professions

There are a few more professional lines which the inscriptions refer to. They may be briefly sketched as follows.

a. Sutradhara

Thanks to the engravers of the inscriptions for providing us with the names of people from different walks of life. Thus we have the privilege of knowing one of the master artists who was responsible for some of the exquisite paintings at Ajanta. Ajanta is the only place in Western India where we have the largest and most beautiful Buddhist cave-paintings. And it is the only place too, which records the name of one of the great painters, Yugudhara, the master artist of Ajanta, with only six pigments in his hand, created the vocabulary of the entire colour-range, each speaking its own language and giving meaning to others. The paintings are his only signature which become immortal.

b. Vanakara

In ancient times, people were very fond of dyed clothes. So, clothes were often dyed in yellow, blue and red. The ascetics wore saffron-red garments and consequently styled as kasayin. The fondness for coloured clothes led to the growth of dyeing profession. And the inscription made note of one of the professional dyer named Sarasavanna who is also recorded to have donated four halas of land for the sake of making a drinking water hall at the Gridhravihara at Junnar. This man might have also directly helped the Buddhist Order at Junnar by dyeing the monastic robes.
c. Gandhika

The word gandhayukti stands for the art and science of cosmetics and perfumery. It literally means a combination of perfumes. It is one of the 64 subsidiary arts connected with erotics. The wide-spread use of perfumes gave rise to a specialized class of artisans who took to the manufacture of and trade in cosmetic for their occupation. Not only as beauty aids, the perfumes and scented powders were used also for decorating the houses and streets. Thus the demand for perfumes was great which led to the development of separate industries in different parts of western India.

A Karle inscription records one of such perfumers who involved himself in the making or selling of the perfumes. His name is Sinhadata. He is said to have donated a cave door. Besides this architectural piece Sinhadata might have directly donated some of his perfumes and scented powders to the Buddhist Sangha there as these appear to have been very useful in the chaitya hall. The Siksha-Samuccaya makes the following promises to one who would bring either perfumes or scented powders to the chaitya hall. "A noble palace he obtains, of delightful scent, divine, excellent, of bright sandal wood, if one anoints with perfume a shrine of the Conqueror. All the lusts, disgusting, unclean, contemptible, he escapes, established in his mass of virtue; he walks along in holiness, who has anointed with perfume a shrine of the Conqueror. He becomes excellent in speech, delightful in voice, dear and beloved, and revered by much people, his happiness is always peaceful, etc. if he daints a shrine of the Conqueror".

d. Dasaka

Fishing is a very old profession. Fishing was pursued in the coastal regions and along the rivers. Kautilya says that a fisher-
man was required to give one-sixth of his haul as fees for fishing license to the king. It is noteworthy that even fishermen, with whatever means they got, took an active part in making donations to the Buddhist Order. Two inscriptions at Nasik record the gift of Nasik cave VIII and a cell by a fisherman named Mugudasa, who was also an upsaka of the Chetika sect.

**e. Vachedu**

Buddhism, in the middle of second century AD, attracted many people from all walks of life in Western India. It was not only those people from higher professions that made donations but also from the lower professions as well. A man who was known by his profession, Vachedu, also made a grant of two nivaitanas of mango field to the Bhikshusangha at Junnar. Vachedu means one who carries people in his two-wheeled cart to and fro.

**Conclusion**

The picture of socio-economic activity which the inscriptions furnish us is one of great diversity of occupations and their specializations, extensive trade and commerce, a flourishing agriculture and significant accumulation of mercantile capital. The great attachment of people to religion or religion as a part of their life is indicated by their very names. Analysis of names seems to indicated that the population was a mixture of followers of Buddhism and other religions. Yet the non-Buddhists' sympathetic welcome for Buddhism is endorsed by their numerous donations such as dwelling caves, cells, water-cisterns, paths, sculptural pieces, lands, etc. If it were not by the hearty co-operation and generous goodwill of the general populace regardless of caste and creed, Buddhism alone, by its zeal and power, might not have been able to make such
numerous and costly rock-cut monuments in Western India. It might not have been able to achieve its greatness and make its influence largely felt in the region, for centuries together, without the generous supports from the general populace. One thing is significant to note that Buddhism, during its ascendancy, could easily win the favour of people because it was indifferent to caste, so all could join it on a footing of equality.

It is clear from the analysis of the inscriptions that, for the ancient people religion was very much interwoven with their socio-economic life that one cannot be separated from the other. A high regard and respect for any religion can be inferred from the inscriptions. It not only seems that there was a harmony and inter-religious understanding between the followers of different faiths but also a genuine concern for the welfare and growth of one another was there. As a result, donations were made by followers of one faith to the other faith.

The aim and motto in life was to honour the divine-being through their gifts. A Nasik inscription mentions that a cave, a chaityagriha and (two) cisterns were donated to the Buddhist Sangha there by Indragnidata the Yavana for the honour of all Buddhas. Happiness was the goal of human endeavours. Therefore, anything that can bring happiness was diligently sought out. At the same time, Buddhism made easy the way to accumulate merits whereby one can attain happiness. The scripture says: "Let the able man with cheerful mind give food, drink, raiment and dwelling places to the learned men (monks)." Therefore, for the attainment of spiritual blessings and happiness the donors made various types of gift. Lands and money were donated to meet the primary needs of the Sangha such as food, clothing and medicine. One of the
basic needs of the Sangha was shelter and it was provided in the form of viharas (dwellings caves) and cells. Later, as the Buddhist church changed its trend from Hinayana to Mahayana, the need to have Buddha images and other sculptural pieces were felt. As a result, these things came into existence as they were meritoriously donated by the people. Detailed analysis of donations will be made in the last chapter.

The inscriptions present us with the order of ranks in the Buddhist society regarding which also will be dealt with in the next chapter. Besides monks and nuns who entered monastic life, the inscriptions also made mention of the gifts contributed by the upāsakas (laymen) and upāsikas (laywomen), and the gahapatis (householders) and gharinis (housewives). What the inscriptions present to us of the Buddhist society is that of a democratic hierarchy in a decent order both for the monks and the nuns. Unlike other religious society, the Buddhist society made an attempt to elevate the position of women so much so that a separate Order for the nuns was constituted. Members of this order, i.e. Bhikshuni-sangha, were also very active in the promotion of making gifts to the church.

Besides the individuals in the Buddhist orders, people from all walks of life in the general society also actively participated in making donations. The records reveal that starting from kings and queens, princes and princesses, ministers and councillors, generals, writers and physicians, treasurers and accountants, jewellers and goldsmiths, blacksmiths and coppersmiths, ironmongers and braziers, the caravan leaders and chiefs of the guilds, corn-dealers, and hydraulic engineers, carpenters and painters, gardeners and perfumers, potters and bamboo workers, weavers and
dyers, and down to the fishermen and people who pulled two-wheeled carts, with whatever means they had, took active participation in the generous donation scheme for the accumulation of merits. The remarkable contributions of the above mentioned people are still visible in their original forms as rock-cut monuments in Western India.

Therefore, one can say that Buddhism, in order to leave very remarkable and gigantic footprints of its splendid past life in various parts of Western India, rose and developed in the right time when people, in general, were very religious minded and had magnanimity. On the other hand, Buddhism is indebted to the then existing religious systems for not defying against it but extending their generous and friendly hands. Otherwise, the history of the Buddhist religion would have been totally different from what it has been till now.
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7. Agrawala, V.S., 1970, India as described by Manu, p. 36.
12. Pitalkhora inscription (3:1), Ibid.
15. Junnar inscription (Man. 7:17), ASWI-IV, 103.
18. Ajanta inscription (4:3), ASWI-IV, 83. About 550 AD.
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28. Kanheri inscription (3:5), Ibid., pp. 75-76.
30. See Kane, P.V., 1938, Naming a child in I.H.Q.-XIV, 224-244.
34. Karle inscription (8:24), EI-XVIII, 326.
35. Junnar inscription (66:14), ASWI-IV, 94.
39. Karle inscription (8:8), Ibid., p. 54.
40. Kuda inscription (5:5), CTI, 6-7.
43. Kanheri inscription (7:15), BAWI, p. 334.
44. Kanheri inscription (4:11), ASWI-V, 78.
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59. Kanheri inscription (10:16), CII-VI, 3-6.
64. Nasik inscription (20:24), Ibid., p. 94.
69. Kanheri inscriptions, ASWI-V, 75, 79.
70. Shelarwadi inscription (8:2), CTI, 38.
73. Junnar inscription (Gan. 5:2), ASWI-IV, 94.
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82. Nasik inscription (10:10), EI-VIII, 78.
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87. Junnar inscription (Man. 26:28), See Appendix.
89. Ibid.
90. Nasik inscription (10:12), EI-VIII, 82-84.
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97. Nanaghat inscription, ASWI-V, 63-64.
98. Kanheri inscriptions, Ibid., pp. 79-80, 81,83,85.
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125. Junnar inscription (Pan. 26:32), See Appendix.
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141. Nasik inscription (10:15), EI-VIII, 89.
142. Pitalkhora inscription (4:3), ASWI-IV, 84.
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147. Junnar inscription (Man. 26:28), See Appendix.
148. Kanheri inscription (2:3), ASWI-V, 75.
150. Kanheri inscription (86:35), ASWI-V, 84.
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156. Junnar inscription (Man. 26:33), See appendix.
158. Junnar inscription (Man.26:24), See Appendix.
166. Ajanta inscription (16:25), AO-VII, 152.
167. Junnar inscription (Man.27), See Appendix.
171. Sikṣa-Samuccaya, pp. 273-274.
173. Nasik inscription (8:8), EI-VIII, 77-78.
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