CHAPTER IV

Buddhist Religion As Reflected In The Inscriptions

The presence of Buddhist communities in some parts of Western India, as early as in the third century before Christ, can be inferred from the archaeological evidence such as the fragment of the eighth Asokan rock edict at Sopara and the Kolhapur inscription in a relic casket. Following these, more archaeological evidence came into being in the form of excavated Buddhist chaityagrihas, viharas, cisterns and stupas. The rapid increase in these architectural and sculptural structures, which were of great importance from utility point of view, indicates the fast growth of the Buddhist communities in various parts of Western India.

In response to the increasing demand of chaityagrihas for (combined) worship, viharas for living, cisterns for storing water and stupas as the object of worship (in the place of the Master), these were generously provided by the lay-adherents as meritorious acts on their part. As the number of donors increased, some of them made their names and the gifts inscribed on the things donated what and for what purpose. The primary intention in inscribing was just to record the names of the donors and the gifts donated. But, sometimes, the scribes were asked to engrave certain things such as the praise of the Buddha, the particular sects, social castes or gotras that the donors belonged to, the occupations or trades they pursued, the purpose of the donations, etc. As engraving was not that easy as writing, the engravers were extremely economical in their employment of words, so that each word in the inscriptions is with great significance. The present work could come about as the result of careful and detailed analysis of the inscriptions. In
this chapter, Buddhism is treated with justice through its three jewels, viz., the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

A. THE BUDDHA

At the outset, it should be made clear that the term "the Buddha" applies only to the historical Buddha, Gotama of the Sakya clan, who was born in the sixth century BC. He was known as Sakyamuni by his contemporaries. In a strict sense, he was the only Buddha that ever actually born, lived and died. He was the founder of the Buddhist religion. To the Hinayānists, the Buddha was just a man, a mortal being who had found the new way to salvation, i.e. the middle path. Later on, in the scriptures, accounts on his life began to be encrusted with legendary and mythological material to the extent that the Buddha figure emerged as a Great Person (Mahāpurīsa), God of gods (Devatideva), Teacher of gods and men (sattha devamānuṣanam), the Worthy One (Araha), the Lord (Bhagavat), the Highly Enlightened One (Sammāsambuddha), the Well-Fared One (Sugato), the Knower of the world (Lokavidu), the incomparable charioteer of disciplined men, etc. His body was endowed with the 32 signs of greatness and miracles were attributed to him.

Then the Buddha was treated as a super-man and raised to the level of a super-human, transcendental being. The next stage of development, according to the Mahāyānists, was to regard the Buddha as a 'Principle', the Ultimate Reality. Then it was believed that the Buddha, the Ultimate Reality is not something eternal that has to be achieved or attained but a potential ability-called Buddha-nature, that has to be awakened. Then came the belief that Buddha-nature is inherent in all beings. Therefore, it is
not Gotama alone that attains Buddhahood. Anyone who believes in this inner Buddha-nature and carries out holy practices for its realization is a bodhisattva, he is able to attain Buddhahood after going through various stages. This Mahāyānist doctrine gives rise to the use of the terms like "a Buddha" or "Buddhas".

Who is a Buddha?

A Buddha is a man who has perfected himself by realising his self to the highest degree possible for man. Only a man can become a Buddha. Beings of non-human spheres, though leading happier state of lives, can not become Buddha. They are subject to the laws of change and evolution and as such not free from birth and death and their attendant conflicts; hence they are not released from dukkha. A Buddha is a human being who has realised that there is a happier state than this world of conditioned phenomena. After a persevering mental struggle, he realises this unconditioned state which is free from duality. Therefore, this psychological state is described as free from both sorrow and happiness in the ordinary sense. It is the highest happiness in the transcendental sense. It is a state of imperishableness, changelessness, and therefore, permanent. It is this that is described as "Nirvana".

A Buddha is respected, esteemed, revered, honoured and venerated. And in whatsoever states he desires to abide in these does he abide. His heart is upright, gentle, supple, composed, loving, controlled, calm, free, pure, stainless, honest, steady, firm, rid of attachment, not clinging, incorrupt, sober, like the earth, like water, like fire, like air and emancipated. His knowledge is emancipated; he has removed obstacles. Thus, a Buddha is
superior to all other beings in seven matters, namely; body, living, wisdom, virtue, practice, mystery and deliverance. All these qualities of a Buddha was originally made applicable only to the Buddha, but later, when the belief on many Buddhas came into being, these attributes were made applicable also to them.

1. Epithets of the Buddha

The Buddha is described by various epithets. These epithets have their origins with Gotama Buddha and were later applied to all Buddhas. Fortunately, our few inscriptions from Ajanta and Kanheri yield us with the most commonly known and major epithets of the Buddha.

a. Bhagavat

The earliest inscripational reference to the Buddha as Bhagavat comes from Ajanta cave X where he is addressed as: "Bhagavát, first deva of Yatis, master of Yatis". Bhagavat is the epithet by which the disciples generally addressed the Buddha. It is one of the most popular epithets of the Buddha. It means Blessed. Yati means a pious ascetic, a Buddhist monk. Therefore, according to the inscription, the Buddha is the first god of the pious ascetics, the master of the monks. Elsewhere in the Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha is referred to as the god of gods, and even the great Brahma himself was inferior to him.

About six centuries after the above inscription, in the middle of the fifth century AD, a venerable monk named Dharmavatsa was particularly designated in a Kanheri inscription as "one who follows the religion of Bhagavát Buddha". Then in the ending part of the same century, another inscription from the same site refers to the Buddha as Bhagavat. Reference to the Buddha as
Bhagavat as late as in the ninth century AD is obtained from Kanheri cave LXXVIII, in which Vishnugupta is said to have set aside 20 drams for the worship of Bhagavat (Buddha).

The above references show that the epithet "Bhagavat" for the Buddha was indeed popular and well-used in Western India for a period of, not less than, a thousand years. The Buddhist scriptures, too, reveal that this epithet was indeed very popular as it can be seen in the Sukhavati-vyuha and Vagragkheda of the Mahayana Sutras.

Why was the Buddha so addressed as Bhagavat by his disciples? The answer is because he has completely destroyed all obscurity and he has rescued the world from the mire of transmigration. According to Buddhaghosa, Bhagavat is a term signifying the respect and veneration accorded to the Buddha as the highest of all beings and distinguished by his special qualities. It is not a name given by anybody, but is derived from his final liberation, together with the acquisition of omniscience at the foot of the Bodhi tree. In his Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa further gives six reasons why the Buddha is called Bhagavat:

1. because he is fortunate (Bhagyava),
2. because he is possessed of enlightenment (bhaggava),
3. because he is associated with blessings (bhagehi yutto),
4. because he is the possessor of what has been analysed (vibhattava),
5. because he has frequented (bhattava) and
6. because he has rejected going in becoming (bhavesu vantagamano).

Thus he is Blessed (Bhagavat).

b. Jina

There are three references to Jina, as the Buddha's alternative appellation, in the inscriptions of which one belongs to the Hinayana phase and the other two are of the Mahayana records. The first
record is in connection with the bhikshuhala grant by Vasishthi-putra Pulumavi in 149 AD. The inscription starts its long lines with a praise of the Buddha: "The Being exalted in perfection and majesty, the excellent Jina, the Buddha". This commendation was proclaimed by Vinhupala. The other two Mahāyāna records of Jina are in connection with the Buddha images. While one record declares that "the making of Jina (the Buddha) image as a meritorious deed" the other recommends the making of more Jina images by saying: "whoever makes an image of Jina (the Buddha) becomes complete in beatitude, auspiciousness, and good qualities and his splendour is brilliant through virtues, and physical organs and is delightful to the eyes".

The Fali word, "Jinno" means victorious, conqueror. According to the scripture, the Jinnas are those who have reached the extinction of the asavas. The Buddha is a Jina because he has overcome all imperfections.

c. Muni

Another popular epithet of the Buddha, "Muni", occurs as both prefix and suffix. The epithets related to Muni are not only interesting but very significant because they tell us the stage to which the Buddha had gone in his ascetic life. One of the longest inscriptions in the whole of Western India is in Ajanta cave XVII. This inscription is opened with a salutation to the Buddha. It describes Muni as one who has completely attained to the three sciences. Who is a Muni then? The twelfth sutta of the Sutta Nipata defines Muni as one who lives the homeless life, free from encumbrances, devoid of strife and covetousness, firm, self-restrained, thoughtful, and delighting in meditation. He has overcome all obstacles and knows
all things. He is as different from a householder as a peacock from a fast-flying swan.\(^\text{24}\) The Dhammapada defines Muni as one who avoids sin by observing ahimsa (non-injury), aparigraha (non-possession), aparsha (non-touching) and mauna (silence). Without desire for pleasant things he is pleased with anything.\(^\text{25}\)

The same Ajanta inscription addresses the Buddha as Muniraja (the King of the sages) and Munindranatha (Lord of the highest ascetic). About the same time, in c. 500 AD, the Ghatotkacha inscription speaks of the Buddha in a similar expression as Munir muninam (the Ascetic of ascetics).\(^\text{26}\)

As a suffix, the term Muni occurs in two different forms, viz., Sakyamuni and Paramamuni. The former is given under the painted figure of the Buddha in cave XXII of Ajanta.\(^\text{27}\) Sakyamuni is the name given to the Buddha by his contemporaries.\(^\text{28}\) It is, indeed, the most commonly known name or epithet of the Gotama Buddha. It means the Muni of the Sakya clan. Sakya is a tribe in North India. The Buddha belongs to this tribe. Their capital was Kapilavastu. The Sakyas were a haughty people and were very jealous of the purity of their race.\(^\text{29}\) The other inscription which refers to the Buddha as Sakyamuni is the Kanheri Copper Plate inscription of Buddharchi. This record mentions that Sakyamuni is strong in the possession of the ten powers, revered and possessed of perfect knowledge.\(^\text{30}\) The ten powers (dasabala) as given in the Majjhima Nikaya are as follows

1. He knows what is and what is not a causal occasion.
2. He knows whither every course of conduct tends.
3. He knows the various elements which make up the world.
4. He knows the divers characters of beings.
5. He knows the conduct of other men.
6. He knows the good and bad force of karma.
7. He knows the fault and purification of attainments in meditation.
8. He knows the many modes of his former lives.
9. He sees beings as they are deceasing and uprising.
10. He attains the destruction of all defiling lusts.

What is the perfect knowledge that the Buddha is spoken of as having possessed it in the Kanheri Copper Plate inscription? It is the condition of complete enlightenment to which the Buddha arrives, consists in the entire destruction of every evil desire, and the acquisition of that supreme wisdom by which he knows the exact circumstances of all the beings who have ever existed in the endless and infinite worlds, and all the causes, from their beginning to their end, that lead to repetition of existence.

The same Kanheri Copper Plate inscription refers to Paramamuni as another appellation of the Buddha. Paramo, in Pali, means the highest, first, best, greatest, chief, principal, etc. It can be implied obviously from these references to Muni that the Buddha and the Buddha alone is the best Muni, superior to all the rest.

d. Sugata

The fourth main epithet of the Buddha in our list is Sugata. It occurs thrice in Ajanta inscriptions and once in Kanheri. According to the Ajanta cave XXVI inscription, "Sugatas are freed from fear, and they are victorious". In the same inscription, a temple is said to have been erected for the Sugata (the Buddha). Then in the next inscription, Varahadeva, the donor of Ajanta cave XVI, is said to have been "praised by the Sugata" probably for his meritorious deeds. The record describes him as one who was endowed
with the qualities of almsgiving, mercy, generosity, just and ruled uprightly. Our last epigraphic reference to Sugata is in Kanheri cave X, dated saka 775 (Sept. 16, 852). The record mentions that Gomin Avighnakara from Gauda (West Bengal) country was a devout worshipper of Sugata.

Sugato, in Pali, means one who walks well, happy and blest. In the Mahavastu, the Buddha is often referred to as Sugata, and Sugata is described as incomparable knower of the world, driver of tameable men and teacher of devas and men.

e. Tathāgata

The only inscription which mentions Tathāgata is in Ajanta cave XXVI where the record says that "the Tathāgatas should be worshipped even by a learned person. Their hearts are soft through mercy and they were greatly popular among people by their well-known virtues." Though the inscription speaks of the Tathāgata in plural form, it can be taken to apply to the Buddha also.

The term Tathāgata was first applied to a sentient being generally, but afterwards it was transferred to the Buddha. As an epithet of the Buddha it means the Being par excellence. The Great Being Gotama Buddha frequently, in the Suttas, speaks of himself as the Tathāgata. Its literal meaning is the 'one who has thus come' or 'the one who has thus gone'. But Mrs. Rhys Davids suggested to mean 'one who has reached the truth'. The Dīgha Nikāya gives the following reasons why a Tathāgata is so called: 1. In regard to things that are past, present and future, the Tathāgata is a speaker at a suitable time, a speaker of fact, on what has bearing of Dhamma.

2. Inasmuch as what is seen, heard, felt, cognized,
achieved, sought, pondered in the mind by recluses and Brahmins, devas and men, inasmuch as it is all fully awak­
kened to by the Tathāgata.

3. He awoke to the supreme self-awakening to the final Nirvāṇa without the groups of existence remaining in that interval what he spoke, declared and explained, all is exactly so and not otherwise.

4. He speaks so he does and he does as he speaks.

5. In the world with its devas, Maras and Brahmas, amid living beings with recluses and Brahmins, and mankind, the Tathāgata is the victor, unvanquished, the absolute seer.44

f. Sarvatnya

Sarvatnya as the Buddha’s epithet occurs twice in the inscrip­
tions. In the Panheri Copper Plate inscription the Buddha is ad­
ressed by this epithet and in Ajanta inscription he is called "sarvajñabhava" one who knows the secret murderous act of (Ekadhī­
pati) on his younger brother Samba.45 Sarvatnya means omniscient, i.e. all knowing. The Mahāyānists claim that the Buddha with unimpeded cognition, knew correctly all the aspects of existence, in all its details. The omniscience of the Buddha consists in
his acquaintance with the means of attaining heaven and liberation, he also comprehends all things without exception, including such unnecessary pieces of information as the number of insects in the world.46

9. Lokaguru

This epithet of the Buddha occurs only once in the inscrip­
tion. It is in Ajanta cave XVI where the record mentions that Varahadeva had made a prison(?) all around for the teacher of
the world (Lokaguru). It is not possible to ascertain what is meant by a prison here. The Buddha as Teacher occurs also in Ajanta cave XXVI where the ascetic Achala is said to have caused built a mountain-dwelling for the Teacher (the Buddha). The Ghatotkacha inscription describes the Buddha as Teacher of teachers.

h. Sambuddha

The Kanheri Copper Plate inscription designates the Buddha as Sambuddha which in, Pali, means thoroughly known or understood, one who is completely enlightened, has known or discovered the Truth. In the Sutta Nipata (186-190), the Buddha is called as Sambuddha, perfect in all things, one who has attained the power of all knowledge, one who sees clearly in every thing, one who has arrived at the destruction of all things, and is liberated in the destruction of the upadhis.

i. Āryagana

The same Kanheri Copper Plate inscription furnishes us with another appellation of the Buddha. In that the Blessed One is addressed as "the Āryagana of his sravaks". The word "Ārya" means honourable, venerable and worshipful. This epithet is given only to those who have mastered the four spiritual truths:

1. Misery is a necessary condition of all sentient beings.
2. The accumulation of misery is caused by the passions.
3. The extinction of passion is possible, and
4. The path leads to the extinction of passion.

j. Mahāboṣhi

The word "Mahāboṣhi" occurs only in Ajanta cave XXVI where it is recorded that "it is filled with all the spotless qualities". Bodhi is the tree of wisdom, the sacred Bo tree under
which Gotama Buddha arrived at perfect knowledge. The tree is near the spot where Buddhagaya is now, about 60 miles from Patna. It is regarded by pilgrims as the centre of the world. It is also spoken as Mahābodhi. Since the Buddha's enlightenment was under the bodhi tree, the term Mahābodhi became synonymous with the Buddha himself.

Of all the epithets of the Buddha only two have their occurrences in the Hinayana inscriptions. The epithet "Bhagavāt" is referred to in the second century BC by one inscription in Ajanta cave X and the epithet "Jina" in 149 AD by another in Nasik cave III. All the rest have their mentions in the epigraphs of the Mahāyāna phase. This shows that the Buddha's epithets were used with more frequency and more appellations were ascribed to Him in the Mahāyāna phase as He was extensively deified so that, to the Mahāyānists, He became the creator, the sustainer and the owner of the whole universe. All the epithets cover the three divine attributes of the Buddha, namely; omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience.

The mention of a cluster of the Buddha's epithets in an inscription is a clear indication that the believers, by the fifth century AD if not earlier, had a deep and profound knowledge about the Buddha and His various attributes and the scriptures hitherto written. For examples, the inscription in Ajanta cave XVII refers to Muni, Muniraja, Munindranatha and Sarvatnya while the Kanheri Copper Plate inscription mentions Bhagavat, Sarvatnya, Sahayamuni, Paramamuni, Aryagana and Sambuddha. A passage in the Sutta Nipata (p.5) runs in parallel to the above inscriptions: "...since we have seen Bhagavat,...be thou our Master, O great Muni,...we lead a holy life before Sugata".
2. Praises of the Buddha

Certain praises of the Buddha are recorded in the inscriptions. The earliest of them is in Nasik cave III, in 149 AD, which says "the Being exalted in perfection and majesty, the excellent Jina, the Buddha". Then another beautifully worded praise of the Lord Buddha comes from the Ghatotkacha inscription. This praise was recorded some time in the first half of the sixth century AD. It very much sounds like a summary of a few epithets. It says, "Glory to him who is called the Buddha, the Ascetic of ascetics, the Immortal among immortals, the Teacher of teachers, the Best among the good, a Store of marvels, to Him who attained (supreme) knowledge by abstaining from fruition".

The third line of the inscription in Ajanta cave XXVI mentions that "saluting the Buddha and reciting his virtues is fruitful and of great and abundant advantage". Accordingly, the three long inscriptions of Ajanta caves XVI, XVII and XXVI start their lines with salutation to the Buddha.

In cave XVI, Varahadeva opens his record with the phrase which reads: "Having adored (the Buddha), the extinguisher of the increasing fire of the sins of the three worlds..." The three worlds, here, denote the three spheres of existence comprising the whole universe. The lowest being the region of Kama (the sensuous world) or the world of five senses. This comprises the hells, the animal kingdom, the ghost-realm, the demon-world, the human-world and the six lower celestial worlds. The middle region of the three worlds is called Rupa-loka (the fine-material world). This is divided into sixteen sections. Then the third or highest region of the three worlds is Arupa-loka (the immaterial world).
The mention of the three worlds in the inscription is a reflection on the Buddhist doctrines as recorded in the Buddhist sacred texts. In the *Siṅgha-samuccaya* (p. 1), the compendium of Buddhist doctrine compiled by Santideva in the end of the eighth century AD from earlier *Mahāyāna* sutras) the Buddha is referred to as "who alone is the Saviour of the three worlds". In the same book (p. 286) the praise of the Buddha is further recorded like this: "O sage, pure in voice, body and mind in the three worlds like an undefiled water-lily, I praise thee, who hast passed beyond the three worlds". In the *Mahāvastu*, the Buddha is addressed as "the great lord of the three worlds, who, with unconfused knowledge and pure mind, shines in them like the full moon in the sky". "With his tender, deep and resonant voice, the Buddha was capable of ordering effectively all the three worlds. He is the supreme lord of all beings in the three worlds".

The repeated mention of the three worlds in the scriptures and in the inscription seems to suggest that the idea of triloka (the three worlds) was a common knowledge among the Buddhists.

In cave XVII, before describing his donation of the cave, Achintya first "made obeissance to the Muni who completely attained to the three sciences". The Buddha is praised, here, as one who has mastered the three sciences, which are, according to P. V. Bapat, the Pali Tripitaka which represents the earliest available and most complete collection of Buddhist sacred literature:

1. the *Vinaya-pitaka* or the book of discipline,
2. the *Sutta-pitaka* or the popular book of discourse, and
3. the *Abhidhamma-pitaka* or the collection of books on abstruse philosophy based on psychological ethics.
In cave XXVI, before describing his gift of the cave, Bhikshu Buddhabhadra made a proclamation of the Buddha's superiority to other beings, saying: "The (Buddha) is victorious, ready and attentive to the good of the people, the destroyer of ...... comforts, indued with spiritual knowledge, in whom all the three virtues have grown up, who has.... whose pure splendour is mercy, by whom release from frequent deaths, comforts and power of not growing old, and of immorality, have been obtained and who, though deceased and gone to happy and fearless and houseless final emancipation, (yet) does good to the world."

The three virtues that the Buddha is said to have developed are the three morality of the eightfold path namely right speech, right action and right livelihood. Right speech includes abstaining from killing, stealing, and unlawful sexual intercourse. Right livelihood covers abstention from a livelihood that brings harm to other beings, such as trading in arms, in living beings, intoxicating drinks, poison, slaughtering, fishing, soldiering, deceit, treachery, soothsaying, trickery, usury, etc.

Why does one praise the Buddha? Sikṣā-samuccaya (p.287) says that man receives choice virtues of all kinds as a result of praising the Conqueror, at the end of paradise he receives bliss amongst men, and he is a treasury of merit in all the world. By thy worship men get bliss of various kinds, divine; thus amongst men one becomes rich, wealthy, powerful, a king, etc.

3. The Buddhas

The belief in many Buddhas, even before the advent of the Mahāyāna, is met with in a Nasik inscription. The record, dated 120 AD, declares that certain gifts were donated to the Buddhist
Community at Nasik by a yavana named Indragnidata in honour of all Buddhas. The record does not specify the number of Buddhas. Therefore, there is no way of knowing the number of Buddhas that the donor wanted to honour.

The legend of the Buddhas came into being with the life of Gotama Buddha. Gotama actually never claimed to be the only Buddha or the original founder of the Dharma. He taught 'the way trodden by ancient Buddha'. In the past, before him, there had been many Buddhas, and in the future too, there will be many more who will attain Enlightenment by treading the same way. The difference between the Hinayana belief of many Buddhas and that of the Mahayana is that the former believes in only one Buddha at a given period while the latter believes in innumerable Buddhas at a given period. In other words, the Mahayana believes that many Buddhas are existing simultaneously. Thus we read in a Mahayana inscription at Kanheri, "May all living beings thereby become Buddhas". This inscription is in total support of the Mahayana bodhisattva idea, i.e. that all have the potentiality to become Buddhas and that all should aspire to be Buddhas.

The belief in many Buddhas is also concretely attested by an epigraphic record in Ajanta cave XXII. In this, the names of eight Buddhas are given in an order below the eight figures painted on the left side of the shrine. The order of names given in this epigraph is exactly in the same order as the texts do. Of the eight Buddhas, the first six are former Buddhas, the seventh one being the present Buddha and the eighth one is the future Buddha. Their names are: Vipasvi, Sihhi, Visvabhu, (Kakusanda), Kanakamuni, Kasyapa, Sakyamuni and Maitreya.
In the Mahāvastyu (I, 244-245), the last seven Buddhas, including Sakyamuni, are said to be all mighty Buddhas. Another list of Buddhas in the same book (III, 236-237) includes Maitreya. It says that the first three Buddhas were nobles, the last three were brahmans, Sakyamuni was gentle and Maitreya will be called who will pervade the worlds of men and the lords of suras. This list is exactly in harmony with the Ajanta list. In the Sutta-vibhanga, the Buddha enumerates the former Buddhas starting from Vipassin to Kāsyapa. And he explains that the first three: Vipassin, Sīkharī and Vessabhu were idle in preaching dharma in detail to the disciples, and these had little of the Suttas in prose or in prose and verse, the expositions, the songs, the verses of uplift, the quotations, the jātakas, the miracles, the miscellanies, the course of training for the disciples was not made known, the patimokkha was not appointed, etc. But the last three Buddhas, viz., Kakusanda, Konakamuni and Kāsyapa did and performed what their predecessors had neglected to do.

In order to further identify more specifically as to who these Buddhas were it is necessary to state the fact that in due time the multiplication of the number of Buddha took place, as a result these Buddhas only form a group of Buddhas. In the Dīgha Nikāya and Samyutta Nikāya only seven Buddhas were mentioned with Gotama as the last. But later, eighteen more Buddhas were added to the list which made twenty-five Buddhas, including Gotama. Then in the Lalitavistara the number of Buddhas is increased to fifty-four while in the Mahāvastyu it is increased to more than a hundred and then their number is stated to be countless as the sand in the banks of Ganges.
With the addition of eighteen more Buddhas, the eight Buddhas of Ajanta can be identified as follows:

Vipassin......the 19th Buddha  Kanakamuni......the 23rd Buddha
Sikhi...........the 20th Buddha  Kasyapa..........the 24th Buddha,
Visvabhu.......the 21st Buddha  Sakyamuni.......the present Bud.
Kakusanda......the 22nd Buddha  Maitreya..........the future Bud.

For further identification and details regarding these eight Buddhas, please see the APPENDIX 'C'.

Besides the scriptural and epigraphic references to the plurality of Buddhas, the sculptural representations of the Buddhas are a concrete proof and a living witness to the belief in many Buddhas. In the sculptures, sometimes Maitreya is left out and at other times both Sakyamuni and Maitreya are missing. So the sculptural and painted representations of this list of Buddhas varies from six seated to eight seated Buddhas.

The eight painted figures of the Manushi Buddhas in Ajanta cave XXII as described above are not the only group of Buddhas that occurs in Ajanta. In cave XVI of the same site, figures of four seated Buddhas in the teaching attitude are seen in the lower row, just above the cell-door, and of seven, or eight, more Buddhas in the same attitude in the upper row. Chakravarti is of the opinion that each of these series contained the figures of the eight Manushi Buddhas. Of the eight Buddhas of the upper row, four are said to have been donated by a Sakyabhiṣṣhu Dharmacāṅga Dharmadatta and the last four by another Sakyabhiṣṣhu Dhadanta named Pāṇaka. Then in the next cave, i.e. XVII, there is a row of eight painted figures of the Buddhas. All the eight figures originally had trees over their heads, but now only the pipal tree
over Sakyamuni and asoka tree over Maitreya’s head are recognizable. The eight Buddhas in sculpture can also be seen at Ajanta cave XXVI. They are beautifully carved out in equal size at the rightside of the door in the verandah.

Ajanta is not the only site where the eight Manushi Buddhas are represented both in paintings and sculptures but the Kanheri Buddhist caves also provide us with a few sculptures. In cave II, on the right side of the stupa, as it faces us, on the wall, there are eight seated Buddha figures carved in equal size. This is, no doubt, the representation of the eight Manushi Buddhas, including the future Buddha, Maitreya. Just below these figures, there is another panel of six seated Buddhas in a slightly bigger size. This must be, of course, the representation of the six former Buddhas. Then in cave III, at the right side of the door, on the wall about ten feet high from the floor, there is a row of eight seated Buddhas for whose identification is the same as given above. Cave XLI of Kanheri contains two sets of Buddha figures carved out nicely in two separated rows. One row of seven seated Buddhas is in the inner chamber of the cave and the other row of eight seated figures is in the verandah of the cave. The former row excludes Maitreya but in the latter he is included as in elsewhere. Besides these two major sites (Ajanta and Kanheri) the Aurangabad Buddhist caves also provide us with this set of Buddhas in one of its caves where seven Buddhas are carved in equal size in a chamber.

Unlike the rock-paintings at Ajanta and rock-cut sculptures at Ajanta and Kanheri, the egg-shaped copper casket at Sopara gives a great importance to Maitreya’s image. As mentioned earlier, his image has been sometimes excluded in the paintings and sculptures
but his copper image at Sopara is the biggest among the eight copper images. While the others are about 4 high and 2 broad, his image is about 5 high and 3.5 broad. It is bigger than the rest. All the figures are seated on flat raised platforms, and over each is a horse-shoe arch or canopy. The expression of all is calm and unmoved.

These are the concrete evidences for proving the fact that Buddhism, both Hinayana and Mahayana, believes in many Buddhas. The Hinayana belief of only one Buddha at a given period is based on the following reasons:

1. This world is a one-Buddha-supporting world, so the world cannot bear more than one Buddha at a time. Otherwise, it would bend, tremble and shake, dissolve and be utterly destroyed.

2. If there is more than one Buddha, there would be divisions among their followers saying "Your Buddha, our Buddha".

3. If more than one Buddha arise, all those passages where the Buddha is said to be the most excellent, exalted, the highest of all, etc. would be proved false.

4. It is a natural characteristic of all Buddhas that one Buddha only should arise in the world at a given period.

The mention of other Buddhas along with the Gotama Buddha, and the paintings and carvings of them with the Buddha seem to suggest that other Buddhas were also given important place as the Buddha was and that the Buddha was just one among many Buddhas. But this does not distort the supremacy of the Buddha as he is the Buddha of the present world in the present aeon. For the present world he is the most supreme of all. But five thousand
years after the parinirvana of Gotama Buddha, in the fifth world, Maitreya will appear as the Manushi Buddha. At that time, he will be the most supreme Buddha and not Gotama Buddha.

The regular representation of six, seven or eight Buddhas in the same attitude in a row must have some special significance. But there is no mention of the specific purpose for which the Buddhas are aligned. Therefore, it is not possible to say the exact purpose for the alignment of the Buddhas in a row. It may be suggested that since they are regarded as Manushi Buddhas or Buddhas incarnate it is possible that they are regarded as historical personages just as the Gotama was. The Chinese pilgrim Fahian refers to Tadwa as Kasyapa's birth place, Napika as Kakusanda's and Sodhawati as Kanakamuni's. Ywan Chwang also refers to Kakusanda and Kanakamuni and he says that he saw the stupas at the latter's birth place and also at the spot where he met his father after the Enlightenment. Moreover, it is believed that Kasyapa is buried under Mount Nukkutapada, in northern India, near Buddhagaya.

As these Buddhas appear to the believers as literal and historical figures, the believers (painters, sculptors and the donors) must have felt it right and necessary to depict them with the Gotama Buddha so that when a believer visits the site he or she would have access to beholding and praying to them. The importance of beholding at the Buddhas is given in Sikshāsamuccaya (277-8) as follows: "Fetter to roast in three states of suffering, most cruel, for a million ages, than not to see the Teacher, who put an end to all existence....because the sight of the royal Conqueror increases knowledge. All pains are annulled
when one sees the Conqueror, monarch of the world, and there is
an entrance into wisdom, the field of the Supreme Buddha. One
destroyed all hindrances by seeing the Buddha, nobles of men".
"If a young man or woman should give day by day food of a hundred
flavours to the Pratyeka Buddhas, as many as the dust of all the
universe, and bright vestments and thus giving for as many as the
sands of Ganges; and if another young man or woman should see the
Buddha, whether in painting or in a manuscript (idol); this pro-
duces merit infinitely greater than that".

The Buddha figures are installed together in a panel so that
when a believer sees them he or she would remember them and start
uttering their praises as recorded in the Rashtrapala Sutra: "I
praise thee, like the colour of gold, with choice marks, with
face like the bright moon, I praise thee full of unequalled wisdom,
there is none like thee in the world stainless..." (Ibid. 285-7)

4. Bodhisattva

Only the inscription in Ajanta cave XXVI mentions the word
Bodhisattva. It says," Why should the Bodhisattvas who are desi-
rinous of worldly happiness as well as of final release and possessed
of prosperity, not previously have acquired fame". No answer to
this question like statement is given in the inscription. The word
Bodhisattva is made up of two words: "bodhi" meaning enlightenment
and "sattva" meaning essence. A Bodhisattva is, therefore, in a
strict sense, one who has become enlightened and acquired bodhi
knowledge. The term, originally, referred to those who took the
vows of subjugating evil practices, passions and of teaching truth,
in order to lead all beings to Buddhahood. In earlier Mahâyâna
Sutras, in a loose sense, Bodhisattva is used to refer to one who
has abandoned the household life and adopted the Buddhist monastic or ascetic life.

It will not be out of place here to see a Bodhisattva's duty, resolve, qualities and the stages through which he has to pass through in order to attain the Buddhahood. He seeks for enlightenment by means of a vast accumulation of knowledge and merit, innumerable heroic deeds. This enlightenment is the only means for arriving at deliverance. Through this enlightenment, he wants to pull others out of the great flood of suffering. Therefore, he sets out, out of pity, for the benefit and ease of the world. He resolves to worship, praise and make offerings to the Buddha, he resolves to confess past sins and rejoice in the virtue of others, to study and preach the law, to benefit all beings, to turn over the stock of one's merit to others and to free others from the bondage of ignorance.

A Bodhisattva, in order to emancipate sentient beings from misery, is inspired with great spiritual energy and mingle himself in the filth of birth and death, yet his heart is free from sins and attachments. He is endowed with many eminent and intellectual qualities. His most striking characteristic is compassionateness. He has ten perfect virtues, viz., almsgiving, morality, renunciation of the world, wisdom, energy, forbearance, truthfulness, resolution, charity and equanimity. There are ten bhumis or stages through which a Bodhisattva has to go. They are:

The Mahāvastu reveals that a Bodhisattva is equal to the Buddhhas from the eighth bhumi. For after that he does not lapse. He is a master of the profound meditations and his knowledge is purified (I, 105-8). After the tenth bhumi, a Bodhisattva becomes a Tathāgata, and so this stage is called Tathāgata-bhumi.

The mention of the term Bodhisattva in the Ajanta inscription seems to suggest that the concept of Bodhisattva was very much well grounded in the Mahāyāna doctrine by the sixth century AD. Although there is no mention of any Bodhisattva by name in the inscriptions, sculptural representations of some of them like Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Manjushri, etc. can be seen in Kanheri, Nasik, Ajanta, Aurangabad and Ellora caves. The Ajanta caves I, II, XI and XVII have the painted figures of Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Maitreya and Avalokitesvara as Padmapani. These representations seem to suggest that Bodhisattva worship was in vogue. Yuan Chwang (629 AD) found men of Mahāyāna making offerings to Tārā-paramita, Manjushri and Avalokitesvara at Mathura. The most popular and well-known Bodhisattva, whose sculptural representations in the maximum number, is Avalokitesvara. He is also known as Padmapani. In Kanheri caves II and XC, he is depicted as saving people from elephant, from lion, from cobra, from fire and from disaster boat. Then in Aurangabad and Ellora, there are some 110 representations of him, while there are only 32 of Manjushri, 29 of Vajrapani and 26 of Maitreya.

Why was Avalokitesvara more popular than the other Bodhisattvas? It may be because he is the Bodhisattva of the present Kalpa and rules during the interval between the passing away of the Sakyamuni and the advent of the future Buddha, Maitreya.
is the lord that looks down from on high. He is the spiritual son of Amitabha, and, as the personification of Power, the All-pitying One, he is the most popular divinity in the Mahayana. His worship became popular in the third century and reached its climax in the seventh century. In the Amitayur-Gyana Sutra, it is said that those who practice the meditation on Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara will not suffer any calamity, they will utterly remove the obstacle that is raised by Karma, and will expiate the sins which would involve them in births and deaths for numberless ages. Even the hearing of the name of Avalokitesvara will enable one to obtain immeasurable happiness. In the Saddharma-pundarika, it says, "... humbly I bow to Avalokitesvara who destroys all fear, sorrow and suffering." Then in the Avalokitesvara-vimoksha, the Bodhisattva is addressed as one who expels and disperses fear, danger, etc.

5. Jātakas

Although there is no narrative description of the jātakas in the inscriptions, there certainly occur two jātaka titles, viz., the Kshantivadi jātaka and Sibi jātaka. Both these jātakas are just mentioned by name in the Ajanta inscriptions. In the paintings, besides these two jātakas, there are scenes from other jātakas such as Samkhapala, Mahājanaka, Mahāhamsa, Vidhura Pandita, Furnavada, Shyama, etc. These are in Ajanta caves I, II, X, XVI and XVII.

a. Kshantivadi

The word Kshantivadi occurs only once in the inscription and that is in Ajanta cave II. The inscription is written on the stool seat of a man. The word "Kshantivadi", according to the
scripture (Mt. III, 354-8), is derived from the name of a seer called Kshāntivāda. Kshāntivāda later came to mean "forbearance" because Kshāntivāda was a preacher of forbearance. The Buddha in one of his previous births, as the story goes, was born as Kshāntivāda and one day, on the request of the women of the King of Kasi, he taught them a discourse on charity, morality, heaven and merit, and the peril, degradation and defilement of sensual pleasures and the benefit and purification that comes from renouncing the world. He explained to them the path of the ten moralities. But when the king knew about it he came and asked who he was. The seer replied that he was a preacher of forbearance. By this, the king became more enraged so he cut off the seer's nose, ears, fingers, hands, and legs and from these parts milk began to flow. The seer then told the king that even if he be cut in a hundred pieces still he would not give up his forbearance. True to his words, even when he was slain he was not angry with the slayer nor others. But the king of Kasi was burnt with fire and he was reborn in the great hell of Avīci, reaping the fruit of his wicked deeds.

In the Jātakamala, the Bodhisattva's preaching of forbearance is recorded. He says, "as a fire however fiercely burning if it meets a great river it becomes extinguished, so does the fire which blazes within the mind of a man, if he relies on forbearance that will serve him both in this world and in the next. So forbearance is of great benefit. He who practices this virtue avoids wickedness but cultivates cherishing, friendliness. For this reason, he will be a person beloved and honoured and accordingly enjoy a happy life."
Great importance was given to forbearance that it became one of the ten perfections. The ten perfections are: almsgiving, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, forbearance, truthfulness, resolution, all-embracing and equanimity. Mahāvastu (III, 368) says that forbearance at its strongest is when a man bears with the speech of an inferior and when a strong man forbears with one who is weak.

b. King Sibi

The words "King Sibi" occur three times in Ajanta cave XVII. The inscriptions are on some painted figures. Sibi was the founder of a republican tribe. The Sibis probably occupied the present Swat valley.

A question can be raised as to why the words "King Sibi" occur in the inscriptions? The reason may be obtained from the jatakas. According to the story, the Bodhisattva was once born as Prince Sibi, the son of the King of Arishtapura. On the demise of his father, he became king himself, and forsaking the ways of evil, he kept the Ten Royal Virtues and ruled in righteousness. He built six alm-halls, and visited them personally, on certain days of each month, to see to the distribution made. He gave much in alms, but one day he thought to give something that was truly himself—his heart or flesh or his eyes. The Bodhisattva resolved to give away his eyes should anyone demand them. Then Sakra, the god, resolved to try him and he came as a blind beggar and asked first one eye, then for the other, and the Great Being gave them, suffering great agony, surrounded by his weeping and wailing ministers and the ladies of the palace. After making the gift, the prince remain in the palace for a few days, but finally decided
to hand over his kingdom to the courtiers and become an ascetic. The courtiers were grieved by his decision, but finding him firm in his resolve, they took him to the side of a lake. Sakra was touched by the noble sacrifice made by the prince, and gave him the eye of Truth, Absolute and Perfect, uttering praise as follows:

'O fostering King of Sivi land, these holy hymns of thine,
Have gained for thee as bounty free this pair of eyes divine,
Through rock and wall, o'er hill and dale, what'er it be,
A hundred leagues on every side those eyes thine shall see!

The news that the Prince had got his eyes again spread quickly and vast crowds assembled to greet him and offer suitable presents to him. To the assembled people he said, 'O people of Sivi, now you have beheld these divine eyes, never eat food without giving something away'. He further declared the law to them by dwelling on the virtue of self-sacrifice.

There is another Sibi Jataka in which Indra and Agni, to test the fidelity of Prince Sibi to the laws of righteousness, assumed the forms of hawk and pigeon. The latter (Agni), pursued by the former (Indra), sought and received Prince Sibi's protection. The hawk demanded the pigeon as his lawful prey, but the Prince replied, 'He that giveth up an affrighted creature seeking protection, unto its foe, doth not obtain protection when he is in need of it himself. O Hawk, let the people of Sivi place before thee, a bull cooked with rice instead of this pigeon'. The hawk declared that it is not the law of his nature to eat such things. The Prince then said that he would not give up the pigeon, but he would give anything else in his power which the hawk may demand. The hawk replied that he can only accept a quantity of the Prince's
own flesh, equal in weight to the pigeon's body. The Prince gladly acceded to this substitution. Balances were produced, and the pigeon was placed in one scale. Though the Prince cut his flesh again and again the pigeon still outweighed him, so finally he got into the scale himself. The two gods then assumed their divine shape and announced to the Prince that for the sacrifice that he had made, he would be glorified in all the worlds throughout eternity.

Why does the Jātaka "King Sibi" occur three times in the inscriptions? There is no answer to this question. But probably two of them might have referred the two Sibi Jātakas mentioned above. The former is represented in painting in Ajanta cave XVII and the latter in cave I. The significance for the third one is not known to us. Probably there might have been another heroic deed of King Sibi which was then known but not recorded anywhere.

Taking the two Jātakas Kshantivadi and King Sibi together, their occurrences in the inscriptions would seem to suggest that they were popular and widely known elements from the Buddhist repertoire and their contents must have been common knowledge at that time. It must have been the donors' intent to convey the messages, which these Jātakas contain, through paintings and the inscriptions so that when the believers would see them they would immediately remember the stories and thereby obtain the spiritual blessing from them. And then they would look unto the Buddha as their example in their spiritual life and would praise the Buddha for his many wonderful works.
The word dharma (dhammo or dhammam in Pali) is one of the most commonly used words in the Buddhist literatures. It is one of the three gems (ratnatraya) of Buddhism. The three gems are the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. There can be no Buddhism in the absence of one of these. There is no exact meaning or equivalence of this word in English. It may best be translated as moral laws or morality. But this meaning does not seem to carry its full significance and weight, so wherever the word occurs in the scriptures or literatures, the original term has been maintained.

The word "dharma" distinctly occurs in three different inscriptions. In the Ghatotkacha inscription, a praise to Dharma is uttered, "Glory to the Dharma which has been promulgated by him who knows the dharma". Then Varahadeva's inscription in Ajanta cave XVI mentions "Dharma as (Varahadeva's) helper for gaining the other world". At this point, it will be very appropriate to cite one of the edicts of Asoka which goes in parallel to that of Varahadeva's. It says, "Whatever effort I am making (proclamation of the dharma), it is made in order that I may discharge the debt which I owe to living beings, that I may make them happy in this world, and that they may attain heaven in the other world". The third occurrence of the word dharma is in Kanheri cave III, where it reads: "Ye dhamma hetuprabhava tesha" meaning "the beginning of Buddhist doctrine". Here dharma means doctrines and tenets and the teachings of the Buddha.

A mention of the inscriptions of Asoka, though not included in the present study, should be made here. They are, in fact, the most authentic records of the long past, still retaining the ori-
ginal wordings and hand-writings of the king and the scribes respectively. The word "dharma" occurs almost in all the inscriptions of Asoka and he paid so much attention to the dharma aspect of life that the proclamations or rescripts on morality which he made are now known as Asoka's dharma. It should be noted that Asoka's dharma is not something which is different from the dharma of Buddhism. Dr. Hultsch has shown the parallels between the inscriptions of Asoka and the Buddhist sacred texts particularly the Dhammapada. This itself is a testimony that Asoka's dharma is the same as that of the Buddhist religion. After all, Asoka was a devout Buddhist himself.

Dharma, as defined in the second portion of the Brahmagiri record, is: "Moreover, Devanampriya speaks thus, 'Obedience must be rendered to mother and father, likewise to elders; firmness of compassion must be shown towards animals; the truth must be spoken; these same moral virtue must be practised. In the same way, the pupil must show reverence to the master, and one must behave in a suitable manner towards relatives. This is an ancient rule, and this conduces to long life. Thus one must act'."

The rock-edicts amplify the same injunctions: 'Meritorious is obedience to mother and father. Liberality to friends, acquaintances, and relatives, to Brahmanas and Sramanas is meritorious. Moderation in expenditure and possession are meritorious'. 'Obedience to those who receive high pay, obedience to mother and father, to elders, proper courtesy to friends, acquaintances, companions, and relatives, to slaves and servants, and firm devotion'. 'Noble deeds of morality and the practice of morality consist in this, viz., compassion, liberality, truthfulness,
purity, gentleness, and goodness, will thus be promoted among men.\footnote{116}

The inscriptions may be the only authentic sources where the word "dharma" is properly defined. Even in the Buddhist scriptures, one does not find a proper definition for the word dharma. According to the Suttavibhanga (Vinaya Pitaka 1,191-2), dharma means those words or things spoken by the Enlightened One, by the disciples, by the holy men and by the devatas. By this, it may be understood that dharma, in its widest sense, means religion or religious discourses, the whole of Buddhist texts.\footnote{117}

Mentioning the importance of dharma, the Sutta Nikāya (54-59) declares that the highest good is to make the dharma one's pleasure, delight, stand and knowledge. And those who delight in the dharma are unsurpassed in speech, mind and work, they are established in peace, tenderness and meditation, and have gone to the essence of learning and understanding.

Now we have got the clear definition of what dharma is and it is through this dharma that the beliefs and practices of Buddhism, as shown or hinted in the inscriptions, will be dealt with. Since the inscriptions are not intended for recording religious discourses or expositions but donations, there is not much evidence to be obtained from them as far as the doctrines and practices of the Buddhist religion is concerned. Nevertheless, certain portion of the beliefs and traditions can be derived from the mentions of certain words which have religious significance. Buddhism is treated as a whole and no attempt is made to separately deal with the two main divisions, i.e., Hinayana and Mahāyāna.
1. Beliefs

The worship of the Buddha, honouring of a saint, attainment of Supreme Knowledge, the expectation to become a Buddha, the accumulation and sharing of merits, the final goal of Nirvana, the bliss of heaven, the miseries and torments of hell, the concept of sin and purification, the transmigration of the soul, etc. are some of the major doctrines of Buddhism. Fortunately, though scanty and patchy, the inscriptions have yielded us with these features. And it is important to note that what the inscriptions have provided us with the various beliefs and practices of Buddhism are in perfect harmony with the sacred literatures.

a. Salutation or adoration

The importance of making adoration and praise to the Buddha is stressed by a Mahayana inscription in Ajanta cave XXVI. It says, "Saluting the Buddha and reciting his virtues is fruitful and of great and abundant advantage." Apparently, this inscription begins with a description of the Buddha's superior qualities. Cave XVI and XVII of the same site have inscriptions in them both of which record about the respective donors' first adoration to the Buddha before describing their donations.

Why does one adore the Buddha? The answer to this question is found in the scriptures. In the Dhammapada (p.52) it is said that whoever pays homage to those who deserve homage, whether the Buddha or his disciples, those who have overcome the host of evils and crossed the flood of sorrow, finds deliverance and knows no fear, his merit can never be measured by any body. And in the Sthirā-samuccaya (p.270), it is said that he who does obeisance to the Buddhas again and again becomes fair, beautiful, wealthy,
invincible and full of merit, a hero, a righteous king, monarch and lord of the four continents and ruler of all the earth.

How could the three donors of Ajanta caves XVI, XVII and XXVI make their adorations to the Buddha when he died about one thousand years before? The Mahāvastu (II, 329-331) gives an answer to this question. According to this, the Exalted One is said to have uttered that he who reverently salutes the stūpa of the Saviour of the world, becomes virtuous and assured. He becomes honoured of devas, nagas, yaksas, and raksasas. He becomes endowed with beauty, adorned with marks of excellence, rich, and prosperous in all his deeds. So it is clear that the Buddha has ordained the worship of stūpa and image in his absence.

How does one adore or salute the Buddha (stūpa or image)? In the Sukhavati, it is recorded that when the bhikshus approached to the place where the Lord was sitting, they saluted his feet with their heads and turned three times round him to the right, and sat down on one side. When they departed, they rose from their seats, having put the cloak on one shoulder, and knelt on the earth with their right knees, making obeisance with folded hands in the direction of the Bhagavat, and spoke to him. This mode of salutation was continued even at his death. According to the Mahā-pārinibhāna Sutta (p. 129), at the death of the Buddha, just before the cremation, Mahā Kassapa and his company paid him a respect by bowing down with clasped hands, they thrice walked reverently round the pile. Since then, the mode of paying respect or worship remained more or less the same. During worship, according to I-Tsung, no one should put on sandals before teachers or images and he must always have his right shoulder
bare and the left covered with his cloak, wearing no cap. 122

What is the object, then, of circumambulating the Buddha or the stūpa or the image? According to Padmā Sudhi, the purpose is to ward off sinful influence or to abstract propitious influences in the interest of those who perform it or of the person or the thing placed in the centre. The purpose is purely to observe the Buddha or stūpa or image in his/its totality. When it is viewed from the front only, the sight of his or its back is lacking. Therefore, when one circumambulates, one can clearly see the back-side as well as the front. 123 The three circumambulations, in Buddhism, may signify the three gems, viz., the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha.

Adoring the Buddha is right and it is accepted by one and all that the Buddha deserves adoration. But what about the monks? Is it right to worship them also? In cave XVII of Ajanta, the minister Achintya is said to have worshipped those (monks) who possessed great learning, liberality, mercy, contentment, wisdom, friendship, patience and heroism. 124 I-Tsing, the Chinese pilgrim, is known to have quoted the scripture which says, 'There are two kinds of men who are worthy of worship: first, the Tathāgata and then the elder Bhikshus'. 125 In addition to this, Sikṣā-samuccaya (p.89) says, 'When one neglects to honour a single Bodhisattva (monk), all the Buddhas are thereby left unhonoured, and when one has honoured a Bodhisattva, all the Buddhas are honoured thereby. Thus he who would show the highest honour to all the Buddhas, must needs honour the Bodhisattvas (monks)'.

Among the Buddhist communities, the senior monks receive the highest honour due to man. For example, in a Buddhist country
like Burma, the senior monks are highly respected, honoured and esteemed so much so that they are addressed as "phaya" meaning "god" and "kūdaw" meaning "lord". This is my personal experience. The Burmese monks do not like to be addressed them by other terms than the two mentioned above. Therefore, the inscription is very significant by enlightening us with the information that the Buddhist monks from very early time down through this day enjoy the respect, honour and even worship of the believers.

b. Supreme Knowledge

The words "Supreme Knowledge" should be taken as a compound word. Its Prakrit form "anuttarajñā" occurs twelve times in the inscriptions. It is a very significant word in Buddhism. The inscriptions which refer to this word are distributed in seven caves of which one cave is in Kuda and the rest are in Ajanta. The context in which the word occurs is the same for all, i.e. in connection with the meritorious gifts of Buddha images.

Out of the seven inscriptions in Kuda cave VI, five of them are related to the donations of Buddha images of which three have specifically mentioned that each Buddha image was gifted by the donor for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge, first by mother, father and then by the whole sentient creatures.126 There are nine inscriptions in Ajanta caves IV, IX, X, XVI, XXII and XXVI where the donation of Buddha image is recorded as a condition for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge.127

What, then, is the Supreme Knowledge that one can attain by donating a Buddha image? According to Samuel Beal, it is the condition of complete enlightenment to which a Buddha arrives. It consists in the entire destruction of every evil desire, and
the acquisition of Supreme Knowledge by which one knows the exact circumstances of all the beings who have ever existed in the endless and infinite worlds, and all the causes, from their beginning to their end. In the Questions of King Milinda (II, 56-57), it is said that whether he be a layman or a monk, the man who has reached the Supreme Knowledge shall overcome all the difficulties inherent therein, shall win his way even to the excellent condition of Arahatship. But there are seven kinds of knowledge which a person has to master before attaining the Supreme Knowledge. They are: recollection, investigation of scripture, energy, joy, contemplation, repose and equanimity. These scriptural references show that Supreme Knowledge cannot be just attained by mere donation of an image. Why did, then, the inscriptions mention so? The inscriptions mentioned it so with the intention to convey to us the truth that one does not actually attains Supreme Knowledge immediately by donating a Buddha image but certainly accumulates great merit through which the donor would get better births in the future and eventually, he would be born as a Buddha. The primary purpose was to encourage people to make more images. It was a way of religious propagation for we read in Ajanta cave XXII, "Whoever makes an image of Jina (Buddha) becomes complete in beatitude, auspiciousness, and good qualities, and his splendour is brilliant through virtues, and physical organs, and is delightsome to the eyes".

Making Buddha images and causing others to make, encouraging people to worship the Buddha images are some of the monk's good qualities mentioned in the Sīkṣā-samuccaya (p. 276). The same book continues to say that a monk can attain association
with the Buddhas through the following qualities, viz.,
1. by instigating people to look on the image of Buddha,
2. by doing service to the Tathāgata,
3. by constantly speaking the Tathāgata's praises,
4. by making a likeness of the Tathāgata, and
5. by instigating all to look on the Tathāgata.

The above scriptural passage makes it clear as to why most of the monks made their donations in the form of a Buddha image and made mention of the gift as a means for attaining Supreme Knowledge.

c. The hope to become a Buddha

One of the Mahāyāna principal doctrines that any human being can strive and become a Buddha is also noticed in the inscription of Kanheri cave III. It says, "May all living beings thereby become Buddhas".131 This statement is corroborated by the above inscriptive references to the Supreme Knowledge. The very fact that one can accumulate merits for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge by gifting a Buddha image is an indication that one can attain Buddhahood because the very compound word Supreme Knowledge means attainment of Buddhahood.

When one reads the Mahāyāna Sutras, one is sure to come across direct or indirect references to a person attaining or on the way to attaining Buddhahood by various meritorious deeds. In the Avalokana Sutra, one reads: "He becomes Buddha, notable beyond all others, with no like, to be worshipped by men and gods, he becomes adorned and pure in body, who takes away withered flowers from a shrine" (Sūkṣha-samuccaya, 274-5). In another Sutra, one again reads a passage which says, "It is from the monks that
the venerable Buddhas come" (Ibid., 88). Besides these, there are other passages from where one can definitely infer that the Buddhahood can be attained by some good deeds (Ibid., 270-276). Another passage in the same book reads: "By placing a banner on the Blessed One's shrine and making the prayer, 'May I become a Buddha in the world', he becomes worthy of honour by the people, walking noble in the Jina's course. He becomes golden coloured...." (Ibid., 272,95).

It has been seen in the foregoing paragraphs that the inscriptions are in perfect harmony with the scriptures. Therefore, one can certainly say that the epigraphic records are the reflections from the sacred texts and that they contain the current religious beliefs and thoughts of the time when they were engraved. This is why they are regarded as important monuments as well as documents.

d. Sharing of one's merits

There are numerous instances in the inscriptions whereby one may draw a conclusion that there was the idea or belief in sharing one's merits with other people. One's meritorious act could benefit another whether dead or alive or even unborn. The inscriptions which yield us with this fact may broadly be divided into two groups: one is dealing with the donations which are obtained in the form of Buddha images and the other is dealing with the gifts in the forms of caves and cisterns. While the first group is obtained from Ajanta and Iuda, the second group is obtained from Junnar, Kanheri and Nasik. The two groups of inscriptions are shown in charts in the following page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor's name</th>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>Merits meant for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathura</td>
<td>Image in Ajan. IV</td>
<td>Supreme knowledge for Parents, and all beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopiputra</td>
<td>do I</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmadeva</td>
<td>do X</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dapuka</td>
<td>do XVI</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmadata</td>
<td>do XVI</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmadeva</td>
<td>do XXII</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayatá</td>
<td>do XXII</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masharsaila</td>
<td>do XXII</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunakara</td>
<td>do XXVI</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vyaghrakā</td>
<td>Image in Kuda VI</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhasingha</td>
<td>do VI</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>do VI</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor's name</th>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>Merits meant for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virasenaka</td>
<td>Junn.siv. XLIII</td>
<td>Welfare, happiness of all the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gajasena</td>
<td>Kan. III, cistern</td>
<td>Happiness for parents, and all beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aparānuka</td>
<td>Kan. XXI, kochi</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhamma</td>
<td>Kan. XXXII, cist.</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kan. L, cistern</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponakiasana</td>
<td>Kan. LIV, do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanha</td>
<td>Kan. LIX, do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapā</td>
<td>Kan. LXV, do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagārulanikā</td>
<td>Kan. LXVI, do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kan. 98, do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishnudata</td>
<td>Nasik, Money</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **One's merit for parents**

It is specifically mentioned in the inscriptions that merits accrued from the donation should first go to the parents (mother and father = matapitroh). This is a clear indication of the donor's respect and regard, and well wish for his/her parents. The donor's deep concern even for the deceased parents is noticed in the inscriptions in Kanheri caves III and L. Parents are remembered, honoured and paid deep and profound respect even after their death and donations were made in their names.

2. **Merits for deceased, living and unborn**

The inscription in Kanheri cave L clearly mentions that "the merits (gained) thereby (shall belong) to ....the deceased, the living and the unborn." Here, the merits to be accrued from the donation cover three periods: the past (the deceased), the present (the living) and the future (the unborn). This inscription shows how important and meritorious it is to donate something to the Buddhist Sangha and also how beneficent it is to accrue merits by doing good deeds.

3. **One's merits for relatives**

Merits can be accrued not only to one's parents but also to relatives as well. There are three inscriptions which make this matter very plain and clear. The first is in Kanheri cave III. It says, "....after securing a most excellent share (of the merit) for their (Gajasena and Gajamitra) wives, sons, daughters, step-brother, the crowd of their sisters' sons, and the multitude of their blood relations..." The second inscription is in cave L of the same site and it says, "a share of merit shall belong to (my) sons Je...., to (my) nephew Aryaghosa, to (my) daughter
Sanghdevanikā...to (my) grandsons, granddaughters, great-grandsons, great-granddaughters, daughter-in-laws, and to (my) whole family (line). The third inscription comes from Ajanta cave IV. It says, "...for the attainment of Supreme knowledge by all beings including my parents, father's mother, step-mother, the prominent friends of my family and myself". In the whole of our inscriptions only this and that of Kanheri cave LXXXVIII135 include the donors among the people for whom the merits should be accrued. The donors in all the rest of the inscriptions exclude themselves. They only mention that merits should be accrued to their parents and loved ones and also to all sentient beings.

4. One's merits for non-relatives

Besides friends and relatives there are some particular people mentioned in the inscriptions to whom the religious merits should also be accrued. A Kanheri inscription of Gomin Avighnaka states that "merits from his donation will accrue to the adviser and witnesses". The witnesses in this inscription are Pattiyanaka Yoga and Ācharya of Chikhyallapallika. In connection with this, a Kuda inscription is also noteworthy as it says that the donation there was meant for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge first by mother, father, and Bhatarka (temple-priest), and then all the sentient creatures.137

From all these inscriptions it becomes crystal clear and amply evident that the donors were really good hearted people as instead of wishing first to themselves, they wished that the merits should go to their parents, close relatives, then friends and witnesses, temple-priest and adviser, and then all the living beings. They included themselves among the "all living beings".
Therefore, what these inscriptions reveal to us is exactly in conformity to the Mahāyāna idea of Bodhisattva whose primary concern is not his salvation but others. So, he does his best, tirelessly without any grumbling and murmuring, to rescue all living beings from the mire of ceaseless births and deaths. Only when all the living beings are safely transported to the other shore of transmigrations, he will think about his own salvation.

e. Nirvāṇa

As nirvāṇa is the final goal in Buddhism, it is obviously used very commonly in Buddhism that when one reads or hears about nirvāṇa, one is reminded of Buddhism only. The word becomes associated with Buddhism so much so that one can not be understood in the absence of the other. Fortunately, there is a single occurrence of the word Nirvāṇa in the inscription of Ajanta cave IV. It says, ".....the attainment of Supreme Knowledge leads to Nirvāṇa." Although the exact word nirvana does not occur anywhere else besides the above reference, some of its characteristics can be obtained from two more inscriptions, at least, at Ajanta. In the second line of a long inscription in cave XXVI, nirvāṇa is represented as the place where the Buddha "obtained eternal youth and immortality, .....and the happy, fearless and houseless city of emancipation". Then in the 32nd line of another long inscription in cave XVI, nirvāṇa is described as "a state which is free from sorrow and pain, that is tranquil and worthy. And in this state, only those who renounce all their sins can enter in". Nirvāṇa, as described in the inscriptions, is the ultimate goal where one remains always youthful, immortal, free
from sorrow, pain and suffering. It is a happy, fearless and houseless state and is tranquil and worthy.

The inscriptions have made it very clear about the characteristics of nirvana but it becomes even clearer when one opens the Buddhist scriptures and finds out the exact meaning and nature of it. In the Dhammapada, nirvana is described as unconditioned freedom, the highest happiness, freedom from all worldly desires, the place where the righteous people go, unchangeable place where there is no suffering, a quiet place and cessation of all natural desires. In the Sutta Nipata, nirvana is characterized as supreme good, destruction of desires, tranquil state, unchangeable state, immortal peace and the end of birth and destruction. It is called Nirvana because of the getting rid of craving, the stopping of becoming, the extinction of passion, of aversion and confusion.

To the question of king Milinda, Nagasena's answers about nirvana are as follows: As the lotus is untarnished by the water, so is nirvana untarnished by any evil dispositions. As water is cool and assuages heat, so also is nirvana cool and assuages the fever arising from all evil dispositions. As water allays the thirst of men and beasts when they are exhausted and anxious, so does nirvana allay the thirst of the craving after lusts, after future life, and after worldly prosperity. As medicine puts an end to diseases, so does nirvana put an end to griefs. As the ocean is the abode of mighty creatures, so is nirvana the abode of great men-Arahats. Just as space, nirvana is not born, nor grow old, nor dies, nor passes away, nor have rebirth. As impossible as it is to tell the form or figure or the size of the
gods called "Formless Ones", though they are beings that exist, so impossible is to explain the form of Nirvāṇa. It is perceiveable to the mind. It is like wind without colour, form, length or breadth but it exists all the same.

It appears that those people, who were responsible for the engraving of the above inscriptions, well knew about the various aspects and characteristics of nirvāṇa. It has been seen and observed that what the inscriptions provide us with the information about the characteristics of nirvāṇa is also in total agreement with the sacred texts. No contradictory point is noticed. Since most of the texts have been written down by this time, it may not be wrong to say that believers in Western India had a good and deep knowledge of the scriptures and that is evidently reflected in the inscriptions quoted above.

f. Heaven

The term "svargga" meaning "heaven" in Buddhism is not that popular as nirvāṇa is. But in Christianity, heaven is as popular and commonly used as nirvana is in Buddhism. The occurrence of svargga in the inscriptions is noticed for three times: twice in Ajanta and once in Kanheri. In the third line of a long inscription in Ajanta cave XXVI, heaven is described as "the reward of one who offers even one flower to the Buddha". The same inscription in its eighth line further speaks of heaven as the place where "a corporeal being rejoices as long as his fame (remains) among men". The last inscriptionsal reference to heaven is in Kanheri cave X, in connection with a prayer offered to the Buddha. It says, "O Buddha who is in heaven, never will fortune attend him who wrongs living beings...". Thus, the Buddhist heaven, as
revealed in the inscriptions, is a place where the Buddha abides, the reward of one who does meritorious deeds and it is a place where the righteous ones live.

The concept of heaven in Buddhism is not different from that of the world. The two terms namely heaven and world are synonymously used in the scriptures. For instance, the three heavens are spoken of as the same with the three worlds. Therefore, more references to the world or the three worlds are found in the scriptures than that of heaven or heavens. When the Buddha is mentioned as the lord of the three worlds, both in the scriptures and in the inscriptions, it means that he is the lord of a sphere in the universe. There are, it is believed, innumerable spheres in the universe. And each of these spheres is consisted of three regions, which are also spoken of as the three worlds. The three regions are: 1. Kāma (sensual), the lowest region; 2. Rūpa (form), the middle region; and 3. Arūpa (formless), the highest region. These three regions are also reckoned by the Buddhists as the three systems of heavens.

The Kāma region/heaven is consisted of six heavens:

1. Catummahārājika heaven, life span is 9 million years
2. Tāvatimśa heaven, do 36 do
3. Yama heaven, do 144 do
4. Tusita heaven, do 576 do
5. Nīrmanarati heaven, do 2304 do
6. Paranīmitavasavatti, do 9216 do

The Rūpa heaven consists of sixteen layers of heavens:

1. Brahmaparāsajjā, life span is 1/3 kappa
2. Brahmapūruṣohita, do 1/2 kappa
The Arūpa heaven is consisted of four upper most heavens:

1. Akaśanañcayatana  
   Life span is 20,000 do

2. Viññānañcayatana  
   Life span is 40,000 do

3. Akiñcayatana  
   Life span is 60,000 do

4. Nevasaññanasaññayatana  
   Life span is 80,000 do

These are the heavens or worlds to which the righteous people are entitled to go and live. After having lived for the prescribed years in a certain heaven, the righteous saint goes to the next higher heaven and live there so long as the prescribed years. In the Mahāvastu (I,233,247), it is said that "those who give gifts and perform good deeds which are meritorious, whether they contribute with words of praise or participate in the communal offering, all go to a heavenly abode". But the text does not specify as to which particular heaven should a saint go.
The concept of hell in Buddhism appears to be very clear as it is reflected in the inscriptions of Kanheri caves X and LXXVIII. In both the records, certain hells are mentioned in connection with the emphasis upon the preservation and appropriation of the donated money, i.e. a hundred drammases each. The first record specifically mentions the Avichi, Faritāpa, Kumbhipaka and other hells as the places where the person, who would misappropriate the gift, would be reborn and have for his food cow-flesh vomited by dogs. The second record warns that "he who would not preserve the gift will be guilty of the five sins which result in immediate retribution and shall suffer great pain in the Avichi and other hells".

The reference to certain hells by name suggests that the people, who were responsible for incising the epigraphic records, must have had a very clear idea or concept of hells, and the various aspects and nature of hells. To them, the hells appear as loathsome, full of miseries and the place where one continuously suffer great pain. The inscriptions have shown that there are more than three hells. But they do not tell us how many there are. Therefore, one has to go back to the scriptures for the answer. The Mahāvastu (I,6-8) and Sikṣā-samuccaya (75-88) informs us that there are eight principal hells, each with sixteen secondary hells and that makes \((8 \times 16) = 128\) hells altogether.

The main characteristic features of the eight principal hells are described as follows:

1. Sañjiva.... In this hell, people have their feet upwards and heads downwards, while they are destroyed with hatchets...
and knives. Others instigated by malevolence, assailed one another with claws of iron, and in their hands appeared sharp sword-blades with which they rent one another. Yet they do not die as long as their evil karmas are not exhausted.

2. Kālasūtra. In this hell, beings with their limbs lashed with black wire, beaten and maimed and cut piece-meal with saws and hatchets.

3. Sanghāta. In this hell, beings are tormented by the mountains that are afire, ablaze and aflame, while the rivers run blood.

4. Raurava. In this hell, beings suffer thousand of torments being enclosed by solid masses of copper which was afire, and ablaze, amid dense smoke.

5. Mahā-Raurava. In this hell, beings are hurled into the fire.

6. Tapana. In this hell, beings are ground from heel to neck by iron grinders and other torments.

7. Pratāpa. This hell may be identified with the Paritapa hell mentioned in the inscription of Kanheri cave X. In this hell, there are numerous mountains which are afire, ablaze and aflame. Beings are driven to run over these mountains by hellish creatures armed with pikes.

8. Avichi. This hell is mentioned by both the inscriptions in Kanheri caves X and LXVIII. This hell appears to be the most well-known hell because it is the most fearful of all the hells. In this hell, flames from each direction beat against the opposite direction. The whole of this hell is beset with flames and the many thousand denizens of it burn fiercely like firewood. In this state, they suffer painful,
violent, severe and bitter agonies, but they do not die until their evil karma is worked out to the end. Beings are reborn there to reap the fruit of yet other sinful and wicked deeds. It is so called because there is no cessation of either the fire or the pain. The fire of Avīchi is so powerful that it flames up one hundred yojanas. Those who are guilty of the five sins are reborn in Avīchi in order to suffer ceaselessly for their wrong deeds.

One of the secondary hells mentioned in the inscription is Yutthhipāka. This hell may be identified with the kumbha hell described in the Mahāvastu. This hell is so called because there are leaves which are like swords. And these swords strike at all the parts of the body that there remain not a needle hole which is not stabbed.

h. sin

There are no less than six references to sin(s) in the inscriptions of which two distinctively refer to the five great sins. In Kuda cave VI, it is recorded that "whoever cut off the gift (Buddha image) will be guilty of the five great sins". But it does not mention what the five great sins are. Another inscription, engraved about five centuries after the Kuda inscription, is the Kanheri inscription of Veva in cave LXXVIII. This record also says that "whoever will not preserve the gift (100 drammas) shall be guilty of the five sins...". This, too, does not give what the five sins are.

The concept of the five great sins in Buddhism is different from that of Brahmanism. While in Buddhism, the five great sins involve matricide, patricide, killing an Arhat, shedding the
blood of a Buddha and causing division among the Sangha; in Brahmanism, it is listed as follows: slaying a Brahman, drinking intoxicating liquors, theft (of the gold belonging to a Brahman), adultery with the wife of a spiritual guru and associating with anyone guilty of these crimes. In Buddhism, it is believed that people who are guilty of the above mentioned five great sins are accursed to go to the great Avīcchi hell and have their rebirths there in order to suffer great pain for all such wrong courses of conduct (Mahāvastu I,21).

The first and last lines of the inscription in Ajanta cave XVI contain some references to sins. The first line describes the Buddha as the extinguisher of the increasing fire of the sins of the three worlds. Here, sin is compared to fire which spreads easily and speedily and burns anything. And there is no one who can put an end to that fire like sins but only the Buddha. The last line mentions renouncing of sins as a condition for entering nirvāṇa.

What are the sins that increase like a fire and the sins which are to be renounced? The Buddhist Suttas enumerated ten sins to be avoided, namely: killing, stealing, adultery, lying, slander, abuse (swearing), vain conversation, covetousness, malice and scepticism. And the Sikṣa-saṅcaya (70-71) summarizes the root sins as follows: stealing, rejection of the Good Law, smiting a monc or stealing his robes, or casting him into prison, or causing him to leave the order, committing the five sins, or adopting false views, or causing division in village or other community, publishing abroad one's own good qualities while one is attacking others, or injures a neighbour, moved by greed and
aggrandisement or self-glorification, and envy and greed, wrath and violence to one's fellow-creatures.

In Buddhism, there are two kinds of sins: one is a breach of the ordinary moral law which includes the sins enumerated above and the other is a breach of the rules of the Order. For example, eating after sunset, doing injury to trees and shrubs, sporting in water, etc. are wrong with the monks but are right in the world. This means that those who enter the monastic life have more moral obligations, rules and regulations to be observed and kept than those who do not.

The Ghatotkacha inscription plainly reveals that committing a murder is a sin. It says, "...even those who have sinned by committing murder become exalted when they enter into the Order". The sin committed by killing seems to be the most heinous crime in Buddhism. We have seen that the so called five great sins are also related to killing, i.e. killing of mother, father and an Arahant, and the fourth one is causing injury or bleeding to a Buddha, which can also be taken in the same weight as killing. Killing is so atrocious or odious that its immediate retribution is described as Avichi hell, the deepest and most miserable hell of all.

Our second last epigraphic record which is in Kanheri cave X makes a good praise to a good or virtuous conduct. It says that sin is not noticed in him who is of good conduct. What is good conduct and who is of good conduct then? The same Sutta quoted above (ref. no. 157) declares that one who abstains from those sins enumerated above is of good conduct and sin is not found in him.
11. "Purification from sins"

There is no direct inscriptive evidence to show the means adopted for the purification from sin. However, a certain inference can be made from the sixteenth line of the inscription in Ajanta cave XXVI. It says, "...he purified his heart by abstinences and by moral conduct". This statement must have meant a purification from sins. What, then, are the abstinences and moral conduct by which sins are purified? There are ten paths of evil from which one should abstain. They, as given in the Sikṣā-samuccaya (p. 168) are: murder, theft, lust and deceit, lie, calumny, harshness, idle talk, meditating unpardonable sins, covetousness, and false doctrine. Moral conduct or virtuous life means performing good deeds to counteract the evils that have been committed.

j. Transmigrations

One of the principal doctrines of Buddhism is rebirth or transmigration of the soul. Rebirth is a belief that when a person dies, his body gets decayed but his soul is reborn into another being (human or animal). And the state in which he should be reborn is decided by his present deeds either good or evil. If a person continues to be good and virtuous for many lives (births) and has accumulated much merits he will be born in heaven again and again till he becomes a Buddha. On the contrary, if a person is continuously wicked for many births, he will, at last, be born in hell to suffer great pains and all conceivable miseries and torments and reborn there again and again until the effects of his evil karmas are worked out to the end. This is what is known as rebirth.
There are a few inscritional references from which one can glean the epigraphic evidence for the support of the belief in the transmigration of souls. Three of them are obtained from the long inscription of Buddhahadra in Ajanta cave XXVI. In line no. 2, the Buddha is praised as one who completely conquered repeated deaths and the like (i.e. the repetition of births, sickness and old age). Then in line no. 9, the concept becomes explicitly clear. It reads: "...the minister of the high minded Asmaka king, who was bound to him by friendship during many births." Then again in line no. 17, it is mentioned that no happiness is obtained in the circle of births. Then the twelfth line of the inscription in cave XVII of the same site reads: "...whose dread strength is produced by deeds done in former existences". The last phrase shows the enormous vitality of karma, whether it is for good or bad. In describing the working of karma, D.T. Suzuki says that any act, good or evil, once committed and conceived never vanishes like a bubble in water, but lives in the world of minds and deeds. This mysterious moral energy is embodied in and emanates from every act and thought, for it does not matter whether it is actually performed or merely conceived in the mind. It is even immortal. However remote the time of their commission might have been the karma of one's deeds never dies. Whatever is suffered or enjoyed morally now is due to the karma, accumulated since the beginning of life on earth.

What the scriptures say about the wickeds being reborn in the hells is strongly corroborated by the inscription in kanheri cave X, where it is recorded that "he who misappropriates the gift will be born in the Avīchi, Parsīpa, Kumbhīpāka and other
hells'.

Why are there so many births? The Buddha gives a short answer to this question. He says, "It is through not understanding and grasping the four truths that one has had to run so long, to wander so long in this weary path of transmigration". The four truths are: the noble conduct of life, the noble earnestness in meditation, the noble kind of wisdom and the noble salvation of freedom.

2. Practices

Except for the mention of vassavasa in a number of inscriptions at Karle, Kanheri and Nasik, there is no direct reference to any other practices of Buddhism. However, the uposatha ceremony, erection of stupa and worship of relics can be inferred from certain inscriptions.

a. Vassavasa

The original word, vassavasa, is used here so that one may not lose its full meaning and significance. It means retreat during the rainy season, and in short it is known as rain-retreat. It lasts for three months during which the monks stay at one place and do not move away from it. The earliest occurrence of the term is in Karle Chaitya Hall, dated the 42nd year of Nahapana, i.e. 120 AD. The inscription mentions that the karajika village was donated by Usavadata, son-in-law of Nahapana, for the support of the monks who would keep the vassavasa at Karle caves. About 150 years later, a merchant named Ramanaka donated a cave, i.e. Nasik cave XII and 100 karshapanas as cloth-money to those monks who would keep the vassavasa there in the cave.

Switching over to the Kanheri Buddhist establishment, one
notices three inscriptions which made note of the vassāvāsa being practised over there. In cave XXXII, a merchant named Dharma is recorded to have donated a cave, a water-cistern, benches, a chair and a flight of stairs and a permanent endowment out of which 16 karshapanas were to be given for cloth-money to the monks who resided in the cave during the rainy season. There is one more inscription of the same period, i.e., about 180 AD, in cave LIV. In this a theri named Ponakiasana is recorded to have given a cave (i.e. LIV), and a water-cistern and also a perpetual endowment out of which a piece of 16 karshapanas were to be given to those monks who would keep the vassāvāsa in the cave.

Our last epigraphic record for vassavasa is found in Kanheri cave LXXIII. The inscription belongs to the early part of third century AD. In this, a merchant named Ishipala is recorded to have donated a cave (i.e. LXXIII), a cistern and a permanent endowment in the form of a field, the rent of which was to be given for clothes to those monks who would keep the vassāvāsa there.

It becomes explicitly clear from the above references that vassāvāsa was in practice in Western India during the Hinayana phase. All the inscriptions quoted above are Hinayāna records. There is no a single Mahayana record which mentions the practice of vassāvāsa. But it does not mean that vassavasa was not practised in the Mahāyāna phase. Nothing is known about this from the light of inscriptions.

The above inscriptions only tell us that the vassāvāsa was practised in Western India during the early centuries of Christian era. A question arises as to when and how the vassāvāsa began? This tradition, according to C.S. Upasak, was earlier
followed by the mendicants of other sects. The Buddha also
followed this practice and later enjoined the monks to observe
it. According to A.K. Warder, the exact prescription of the
period (i.e. starting from the first day after the full-moon
day of Asalha to the full-moon day of the third month) was made
twenty years after the enlightenment.

How did the vassāvāsa begin in the Buddhist Sangha? It was
when the Buddha was living at Rajagriha that the monks went on
their travels in winter, summer and rainy season. People, then,
began to take offence of it saying, 'How is it that the disciples
of the Sakya Prince go on their travels in the rainy season also
crushing the tender plants and destroying innumerable insects'.
To obviate this evil, and silence the gossip of unbelievers,
Gotama then instituted the vassāvāsa. During their enforced re-
treat the monks devoted themselves to the spiritual welfare and
instruction of the people, who flocked to them in great number
and who supplied them with their daily food and with robes suffi-
cient to last during the year.

During the three months of vassāvāsa, the monks are not al-
lowed to go out even for one night. If anybody goes out, he com-
mits the offence of Dukkata (Mv.144). But if there is some emer-
gent business and going out is essential, the monk may go out but
only for a period not exceeding seven nights. He must return
within seven nights and then no offence is committed. But it is
still regarded as vassāccheda, vassa broken (Mv. 155-8). He will,
therefore, be deprived of the kaṭhina-civaradana. He is also not
permitted to perform the Pavarana but allowed to remain present
in the Pavārasana ceremony. He should perform only Uposatha in
place of Pavarana because the Pavarana is possible only by those who have spent the vassavasa "untouched" (Ibid., 167).

A monk should spend his vassavasa at a proper residence fit for the monks, such as a vihara, Addhayoga, Pasada, Hammiya or Guha (Ibid., 159). Besides these places, he may take up the vassavasa even in a Vaja (coboy residence), or with a caravan or on a boat. In these places he must remain there for full three months even if he has reached the termination of the journey (Ibid.).

b. Pavarana

Though there is no mention of this word in the inscriptions this has to be dealt with as it is a ceremony held at the end of the vassavasa by the Buddhist monks on the full-moon day of the month of Asvina or Kattika (as the case may be). On this occasion every monk is expected to invite his fellow-monks of the Sangha to point out his wrongs, if any, seen, heard or suspected. For holding the Pavarana the Sangha assembles at one place, and the ceremony is proclaimed by a formal declaration. After this proclamation, each monk, beginning from the eldest to the youngest in respect of upasampada (not of age), makes himself present before the Sangha and after saluting the Sangha sits in the squatting posture and then invited (Ibid., 167).

After the Pavarana ceremony the monks are free to wander about and go round the country-side and the vassavasa is then formally over (Ibid., 197). The Bhikshunisangha holds its Pavarana ceremony separately. After the ceremony, the nuns must take a long journey of at least five to six yojanas.

c. Kathina

It is an ecclesiastical ceremony held after the end of the
first vassāvāsa in which a robe (civara) is offered to a monk who is found poor in respect of his robes and also has lived righteously during the vassāvāsa. The word Kathina does not occur in any of the inscriptions but the practice of it in Western India may be implied from the inscriptions which made references to "robes for those monks who keep or would keep the vassāvāsa here". It has been mentioned already that the inscriptions in Nasik cave XII, Kanheri caves XXXII, LIV and LXIII made the observance of vassāvāsa in the respective caves as the condition by which the monks were to receive their clothes. The specific mention of this condition must have meant that a monk would be deprived of the cloth if he breaks the vassāvāsa. In the text (Mv. 155-8), it is laid down that if a monk should go out of his residence during the vassāvāsa, even on the account of certain unavoidable circumstances, the vassāvāsa is regarded as broken. Though no offence is committed, he will however be deprived of the cloth, distributed at the Kathina ceremony. This shows the importance of the strict observance of the vassāvāsa. If the Kathina ceremony had not been observed in Western India, the donors of chivarika-kahapana (cloth-money) would not have made the keeping of vassāvāsa as the condition for obtaining a cloth.

The Kathina was the name formerly given to hard cotton cloth alone, but gradually as the rules regarding the dress of the monk relaxed, even silk and other finer fabrics came to be known as Kathina. Consequently it came to be the designation of the common clothing of the monks in the Sangha. This Kathina was usually distributed on the Pavarana day and it formed a ceremony by itself. Thus, the Kathina ceremony became part of the Pavarana.
ceremony. On this day, the laity offered unsewn cloth to the Sangha. The main function of this ceremony was to entrust certain monks (the recipient monks who needed most) with the cutting sewing and dyeing of the robes, and all this was to be finished in one day. The recipient monks are required to prepare one of the three robes (uttarāsangā, saṅghāti or antaravāsaka) which they need most on that day (Mv.266-7). Detail account on kaṭhina-robe is given in Jun Chang’s kaṭhinavastu. According to this, the kaṭhina-robe should be sewn in back-stitches. After the material had been made into a robe, the spreading monk took the robe to show all the monks and to ask the Sangha to receive it as Kaṭhina. Then he announced in a loud voice that the Sangha had obtained this Kaṭhina-material and it had been washed, dyed, pounded and sewn, and made into a robe and was ready to be received. The monks individually expressed their approval. Then the kaṭhina-robe was distributed equally among the monks who have kept the vassaṇṇa.

In the same book (pp.20-21), certain privileges connected with Kaṭhina are mentioned. The privileges are for the comfort of the monks and for the encouragement of the donors to make more gifts. They are:

1. Monks can retain an extra robe over ten days,
2. They can accept and keep for more than one month the kaṭhina-cloth,
3. They can part with anyone of the three robes,
4. They can travel with the inner and upper robes,
5. They can keep as many extra as they obtain,
6. They in a group of four or five can receive a meal,
7. They can receive meal in sequence, and
8. They can go to the laity's house for a meal without invitation.

These privileges remain in force for five months, i.e. up to the full-moon day of Phagguna (March). Normally, no monk is allowed to do what has been listed above but with the Kathina-privilege he is allowed to do so. The granting of these special privileges must have been with the intention to encourage a very strict observance of vassavāsā because the breaking of it, even for a day, means a deprivation of the Kathina-cloth and its associated privileges.

d. Uposatha

The practice of Uposatha can be implied from two architectural terms which occur at Kanheri and Junnar. The term "upathānasāla" occurs in a Kanheri inscription in cave III. The cave is not the upathānasāla that is referred to, but the one which was in the Ambalikavihara situated at Kalyan. If the Uposatha meetings were held at Kalyan, where the Buddhist monks might not have been as much as it was at Kanheri (if the architectural remains are taken as the indication), then one is far from wrong to say that the Kanheri Buddhist Sangha must have also had their own Uposatha services within their own premises. Although the term "upathānasāla" would surely indicate that the hall was used for holding Uposatha ceremony, one should not forget that the said ceremony was also held in other buildings such as a vihara, an addhayoga, a pāsāda, a hāmmiya and a guhā (IV.109-110).

One of the caves in Kanheri, i.e. cave XI, appears to have been made purposely for holding the Uposatha ceremony. Though
there is no inscription in it referring to it as an Uposatha hall, the nature of the hall clearly indicates that it must have been used for holding the Uposatha ceremony. It has ten cells on its three sides and two rows of benches which run parallelly across the hall in lengthwise and are about sixty feet long. It must have been the biggest of its kind in Western India. It could have easily accommodated not less than 150 monks at a time for holding the Uposatha ceremony.

The second "upathānasālā" mentioned in the inscription is Junnar cave XVIII of the Sivneri group. It should be made plain here that upathānasālā is an assembly hall or a meeting place or a reflectory. As a reflectory, its use was first enjoined by the Buddha when he noticed that the monks were put to great inconveniences due to heat or cold during the meal-times as they used to take their meals in open air (Cv.246). As an assembly hall, on the Uposatha day, the Patimokkha (i.e. a collection of various monastic rules as contained in the Vinayapitaka) was recited together in it. In the earlier stages, this recitation was held in the cells of the monks in succession, but in course of time the space proved to be very inadequate and the recitation in succession also proved to be time consuming. Hence, the service began to be held temporarily in the vihara hall which was called Uposathagara. But the need for a separate hall for the purpose was badly felt and hence the upathānasālā came to be used for the Uposatha ceremony.

What is Uposatha? It is a sort of ecclesiastical congregation of the Buddhist Order held fortnightly with a view to expounding the Dharma and to reciting the ecclesiastical rules
laid down in the Patimokkha. It was a pre-Buddhist tradition prevalent amongst the other religious sects who used to assemble on the eve of every week. The Buddha adopted this practice with certain modification suiting to his Dharma and Vinaya. He reduced the Uposatha days from four to two in a month (Mv. 105). The recitation the Patimokkha on the Uposatha day must be done collectively by the Sangha. There are two Patimokkhas, namely, Bhikkhu-Patimokkha which consists of 227 rules and Bhikkhuni-Patimokkha consisting of 311 rules. The recitation must be made in full. It should also be made only in the assembly of pure monks and no objectionable person should be present in the assembly. If it is so, a notification should be held to announce this situation and then the recitation should be postponed (Mv. 114, 117, 141-142). No monk is permitted to absent himself unless he has committed some offence which he has not yet expiated (Mv. 126-7).

It would be wrong to say that the Uposatha services were held only at Kanheri and Junnar because only these two sites have yielded us with the evidence of it. Considering the nature and importance of the Uposatha service, it is highly likely that it was held in most of the major Buddhist Establishments, if not all, in Western India, especially sites which are far away from each other. In those sites where there are no upathanasalas, chaityagrihas were used for the meeting. In some other sites mandapas were used as uposathagaras. For instance, there are about 17 mandapas at Junnar which were most likely used for the Uposatha services. Besides serving as an assembly-room, the upathanasalā also serves as a place where monks and laymen can stay for a night. Here the benefactors and the monks meet. It is like the dānasalā of the present day in Ceylon.
e. Erection of stupas

The various terms used in the inscriptions to denote the stūpa are: thubha, thūbha, thūbhām, thūbham, thūpa, thupo and stūpa. There are altogether about nineteen references to stūpas of which one is in Ajanta, six are in Bhaja, one in Bedsa and eleven in Kanheri. The records have specifically mentioned that each of these stūpas had been erected in honour of some senior members of the Buddhist Sangha. Almost all the monks, in whose honour the stūpas were erected, were of very high standings in the Sangha. In Bhaja cave XVII, out of fourteen stūpas, six of them have inscriptions on them of which five have distinctly mentioned that the stūpas had been erected in honour of five Thera Bhadantas. In Bedsa, too, a donor named Asalamita Bhata made a stūpa in honour of Gobhuti, who was an Arañka.

The discovery of some well-cut stone slabs lying in the valley in front of the burial-gallery at Kanheri in 1975 by Mrs. S. Gokhale is very significant for determining a definite conclusion regarding the purpose for the erection of more than a hundred brick stūpas there. The inscriptions tell us that those brick stūpas were erected in honour of those monks who had attained the sainthood during their lives. Besides these, two more stūpas are referred to in the inscriptions. One is a rock-cut stūpa in Kanheri cave IV, made in honour of Thera Bhadanta Dhammapala and the other is a brick-stūpa, in front of the mazin Chaityagriha (cave III), and it is specifically known as chaitya-stūpa.

The last reference to stūpa is in Ajanta cave XVII where it occurs as stūpavihara. In this, Achintya is recorded to have
adorned the earth with stūpas and viharas.\textsuperscript{188}

What are stūpas and what is their significance in Buddhism? From the word stupa is derived the root word stup meaning to heap. Originally, it had a funerary association, being mound containing the ashes and charred remains of the dead collected from the funeral pyre.\textsuperscript{189} This practice of erecting stūpa over corporeal relics had its origin from the vedic times. Buddhism in India only helped in the continuous process of assimilation, adaptation and evolution of earlier structural traditions leading to the stūpa architecture.\textsuperscript{190} It is true that the practice was pre-Buddhist because in the sacred texts the Buddha is said to have ordered the erection of stūpas over his relics. In the Mahāvastu (III, 297-8; II, 333), it is recorded that when the Buddha was asked for a relic for worshipping by some traders he cut off some of his hair with his own hand and gave to them, saying, "Have a stūpa made for this hair". He then cut his nails and gave them the parings, saying, "Have a stūpa made for my nails". Then in the Mahā-parinibbana-sutta (93-4), the Buddha is said to have commanded that a dagoba should be erected at the four cross roads to the Tathāgata as that of a king of kings and that it should be garlanded or perfumed or painted or saluted with calmness in the heart for a profit and joy.

1. Worship of the stūpas

The Buddha himself commanded for the worship of stūpas. In the Mahāvastu (II, 329-331), he is recorded as saying, "He, who reverently salutes the stupa of the Saviour of the world, becomes virtuous and assured, beautiful, fair, rich, wealthy and free from envy". Then in the Silṣā-samuccaya (p. 95), it says, "All
the manifold worship done to relics, be it even a title to the relics (stūpas) of Sugatas, or if one have sounded no more than a single musical instrument, or done worship with but one flower, they shall behold myriads of Buddhas according to their works".

Before the emergence of the Mahāyānists with their Buddha images, during the Hinayāna phase, stupa was taken as the symbol of the Master's presence and so it was worshipped with great reverence as it were the Master himself. This continued for a long time even after the emergence of Buddha images.

2. Why are there so many stupas?

In the same Sīkṣā-samuccaya (p.94), making stupas to the Jina of brick or clay piled up or to erect even heaps of dust in forests is recorded as partaking of enlightenment. The piling up of mounds of sands as stupas by the children is also regarded as partaking of enlightenment. Therefore, this type of religious declarations must have made the earnest devotees more jealous, enthusiastic and fervent for the making of more stūpas. As a result, there came into existence so many stupas, especially rock-cut stūpas, in Western India. There might have been numerous structural stūpas other than the rock-cut ones but only the latter forms still survived with their original shapes.

All the stūpas that have been mentioned in the inscriptions are erected in honour of the Buddhist saints. The question is, Is it really right to erect stūpas for the saints? The answer is "yes". Then why? Because the Buddha said so. The Buddhist saint are one of the four groups who deserve stūpas (Mahaparinibbana-Sutta, 93-94). In the Sīkṣā-samuccaya, the Buddha is said to have commanded that one should honour a monk with the highest honour due to the Buddhas (88-89).
C. Sangha

Of the three gems, viz., Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the last gem has the maximum number of occurrence in the inscriptions. It has to be so, because it is the believers, particularly those who enter the monastic life, who constituted the Sangha. It was to the Sangha that the donations were made and that is the reason why the word Sangha occurs the most. But it will be so monotonous to list down here all the inscriptions where the word occurs. Therefore, the Sangha shall rather be dealt with through its elements.

Sangha means comprising, an assembly, a community, a congregation. The word was current in India long before the Buddha accepted it and chose it as a designation for his institution. It originally derived from the root 'sam + han' (to hold together), and hence it meant a corporation. The idea of corporate life was current in India in pre-Buddhistic time and the political corporations known as Sangha in the Paninian times evolved into religious corporations in the time of the Buddha. After the Buddha, however, the connotation of the word 'Sangha' was so fixed that it rarely conveyed any other idea than the Buddhist community of monks and nuns.

Now it is clear that Sangha in Buddhism means the assembly of monks and nuns. But how many monks or nuns make a Sangha? The minimum number of monks for a Sangha is four but there is no limit for the maximum number. As the number of monks increases in the Sangha the authority of the Sangha also increases. For example, an assembly of four monks is competent to perform all types of Sangha-kammas except the Upasampadā, Pavāranā and
And the assembly of five monks is competent to perform all the Sangha-kammās except the Upasampadā and Abhāna. Then the assembly of ten monks can perform all the Sangha-kammās except Abhāna. At last, the assembly of twenty or more monks is fully eligible to perform all the Sangha-kammās. This difference in the authority of the Sangha shows the importance of a monk as a member of the Sangha.

**Chatudisabhikshusangha**

While the term bhikshusangha occurs elsewhere in the inscriptions, the word 'chatudisabhikshusangha' occurs only in those of Nasik, Karle and Kanheri and that too, within the period between 120 and 300 AD. It should be noted that the sites where this word occurs are also the sites from where, at least, six Buddhist sects are reported to have flourished during the same period. Therefore, the intentional mentioning of this word, which means universal or four directions, by the donors may indicate the donors' desire to please and serve every monk regardless of their sects or origins.

The gifts which were specifically donated for the use of all monks at Nasik are: caves VI, VII, X, XVII, XX, two cisterns, part of 300 Karshapanas in 123 AD and part of 3500 Karshapanas in 257 AD. The meritorious gifts donated at Karle for the use of chatudisabhikshusangha are: the Karajika village and the Madapo Navagabha (cave XV). Then at Kanheri, caves XXI, LIV, LXXV, a kōdhī (hall), a bathing tank and two water-cisterns were gifted for the use of chatudisabhikshusangha.

In the scriptures too, there are instances where certain gifts were donated for the use of monks and nuns from the four
quarters. For example, a great merchant at Rajagriha is said to have established sixty dwelling places for the use of the Order from the four quarters (Cv. 206). In the same way, the householder Anathapindika also had Jeta Grove prepared for the use of the Order from the four horizons (Cv. 230).

1. **Importance of the Sangha**

The importance of the Sangha is also emphasized in the inscriptions. For instance, the Ghatotkacha inscription makes a praise to the Sangha, saying, "Glory to the Sangha of the monks, the best of all the sanghas (communities)". Then in cave LXXVIII of Kanheri, Vishnugupta is recorded to have made obeisance to the Holy Sangha before he made a declaration of his donation. In the same cave, but after 34 years in 878 AD, the Sangha of Ācharyas is recorded to have made its approval and confirmation for Veva's gift of a hundred drāmas. Similarly, Gomin Avighnakara's gift of a hundred drāmas was approved and confirmed by the Venerable Sangha, after which only the inscriptions was caused to be written. All these references show that one cannot just give his gift and go away. His gift has to be accepted, approved and confirmed by the Sangha, then only he can cause an inscription about his donation be engraved.

2. **Order of ranks in the Sangha**

It is interesting to note that the Buddhist Sangha enjoyed local autonomy and the Buddha acted as the central authority. The Sangha was run on democratic principles. Though the Buddha was in command of the Sangha, he did never like to exercise that power. He advised his disciples to depend on themselves and on the dharma and on nothing else. Every member of the Sangha had
equal rights and the state of affairs was managed in a purely
democratic way. Each local body of monks was run by the re-
presentatives who carried on their respective duties, such as:
distribution of foods and dress, receiving of robes, keeping
stores, regulating the lodging and keeping almsbowls and superv-
ising the gardens. So, there were about a score of responsible
monks in the Sangha. They were men of upright character and
endowed with various qualifications. However, there is no men-
tion of these monks with specific responsibilities in the ins-
criptions.

The inscriptions, nevertheless, yield us with much evidence
for the various categories of monks in the Sangha. The follow-
ing order of ranks have been provided by the inscriptions:
upāsaka, pava[jita, samanera, bhikṣu, bhadanta, thera bhadanta,
ācharya thera bhadanta and aryā Arahanta.

a. Upāsaka (Lay-devotee)

When a householder is initiated to take the three refuges
based on his faith and when he makes a pledge that he will abstain
from killing, stealing, leading an immoral life, telling lies and
drinking intoxicating drinks, he becomes an "upāsaka" (Mahāvastu
III, 256-7). After becoming an upāsaka, it is also expected
that he would abstain from earning his livelihood by sinful
trades such as trade in arms, in living beings, in meat, in
liquor and in poison.202

The lay-devotees are, indeed, the backbone of the Sangha
as far as its economic life is concerned. It is they, who
supply the daily needs of the Sangha, both primary and secon-
dary needs. The inscriptions do witness that the lay-devotees
did really make provisions for the monks: the caves are for
their shelters, the cisterns for their water, the fields for
their food, the money for their medicines and the Buddha images
for their spiritual satisfaction.

A number of names, as many as twenty upāsakas (male lay-devotees) and five upāsikas (female lay-devotees) have been
referred to in the inscriptions. All of them have been mentioned
in connection with some donations. The gifts that had been
meritoriously donated by the upāsakas, their sons, daughters,
and by the upāsikas themselves include: a pillar in Karle Chaitya
hall and Karle cave XV; caves XIV, XXVI of Ganesh Leni group,
cave LXVI of Siveneri group and 29 rivartanas of lanō and cave
II of Manmödi group in Junnar; caves XXI, LX, :XV, five cis-
terns, two cells, a small hall and a field in kanheri; cave
XX, a cell, a field and the interest of 3500 karshapanas for
buying medicines at Nasik; Kuda cave VII, cave no. IV at
Kol, two Buddha images at Ajanta and a Buddha image at Kuda.

For the upāsaka, the most obvious and easy method of acqui­
ring merit is to honour and support the monks, to provide them
with food, clothes and lodging and with everything which they
might lawfully possess. He should be thankful for getting a
privilege of doing a good deed because if his bowl is turned
down or his gift is not accepted by the Sangha, he has no other
way for accumulating merits.

Lay-devottes' support for the Sangha is also very much clear
in the scriptures. In the Suttavibhanga, a brahmin of Verañja
is recorded to have invited the Buddha and his followers for a
meal and clothed the Buddha with the threefold robes and each
monk with a set of garments. In another occasion, Visakha the upāsika is noted to have supported the Sangha by eight means: cloths for the monks for rains, food for those coming in and those going out, food for the sick, food for those who nurse the sick, medicine for the sick, a constant supply of conjey and bathing cloths for the nuns.\textsuperscript{211}

It should be noted that an upasaka is not a member of the Sangha because he is not ordained. He is not allowed to be present in the Sangha-kamma of any kind. But he is a Buddhist by religion. He is different from the monks in that he lives with his family, he pursues trades and business and the like. For example, Virabhuti of Junnar,\textsuperscript{212} Samika and Apanābaka of Kanheri\textsuperscript{213} were Buddhist upāsakas who were also merchants by profession. Thus, the inscriptions make it clear that the lay-devotees are not restricted to religious activities only but they can pursue any lawful (from Buddhist point) occupation.

b. Pavajita and Samanera

The term "pavajita", derived from the Pali word "pabbajja", occurs about thirteen times in the inscriptions: one each in Karle and Ajanta, two times in Nasik, five times in Kanheri and four in Kuda. But there is no reference to the pabbajja ceremony, yet the practice of this ceremony can be clearly inferred from the mentions of Pavajita. The term pavajita denotes the adoption of the monastic life by abandoning the household life and putting on the yellow robe. When a person desires to get himself admitted into the Buddhist Sangha as a Samanera, the ceremony of pabaja is held. For this purpose the desired person approaches the Sangha having his head and moustaches shaved and by putting
on the yellow robes. He undergoes the three refuges viz., the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. He is then required to observe the following ten precepts, five of which are also required to be observed by the upāsakas. The precepts are: abstentions from killing; stealing; adultery; lying; drinking liquors; taking meals after mid-day; seeing shows of dancing, singing, music, etc.; using garlands, scents, unguents and wearing finery; using high beds, etc. and from accepting gold, silver, etc. (Mv. 86-7). After this formal undergoing to the ten precepts the pabbajja is regarded as conferred upon. Hereafter, a person is either known as a pavajita or samanera. Both mean the same thing, i.e. a person who has taken the pabbajja ceremony and is awaiting for the upasampadā ceremony.

There are three references to pavajita (male novice) and nine pavayiṭhikaya (female novice) in the inscriptions. Of the three pavajitas mentioned, only Ananda made a donation, i.e. 215 cave XXXIX of Kanheri. The other two from Karle and Nasik did not make any gift.

It appears that cave X of Ajanta was specifically donated for the use of the pavajitas in c. 150 BC. This seems to suggest that, at Ajanta, the incoming new monks were stationed in cave X until they were nominated for the upasampadā by the upajjhāya or spiritual teacher who acted as a preceptor. The new monks, who were unordained, had to stay separately from the ordained monks. It is laid down in the Vinaya Pitaka (II, 195) that an ordained monk should not lie down with unordained person. For this reason, the pavajitas were stationed in a separate room so that they would not mix themselves with the ordained
monks. How long a person has to live as a pavajita is not known exactly. It may be long or short depending upon the age of the candidate at the time of initiation. If a boy enters into the monastic life quite early, as early as permissible, then he may have to remain as a pavajita or samanera for a long time till he is found qualified and fit to be a fullfledged monk, i.e., a bhikshu. The usual age for admission into the Sangha as a samanera was 15, but later on the Buddha allowed to anyone who can manage his affairs by himself and also who can observe the ten precepts (Mv. 82). A pavajita is not permitted to attend the recitation of the Patimokkha nor can he take part in any Sangha-kamma as he is not yet a fullfledged bhikshu (Mv. 141).

Of the nine pavajitikayas mentioned in the inscriptions, seven had made a cave each as their gift and of this, five had added a cistern each to their credits. Thus the gifts presented by the pavajitikayas include: Kanheri caves XXII, LIV, LXV, XCVIII, Nasik cave VII, Kuda caves V, XVI and five cisterns.

No inscription refers to the male novice as samanera whereas there are two references to female novice as samaneri. Unfortunately, both the names are effaced. While one donated a vedika at Karle the other gifted a pillar in cave XXVI of Manmodi group in Junnar. The latter is said to have hailed from Aparanta.

Unlike a samanera who can get his Upasampadā without undergoing to any probationary period, a samaneri has to undergo a training of two full years after her samaneri stage. This is known as sikkhamānā. During this period, she has to observe all the precepts mentioned above. When she completes her two full years as a sikkhamānā only the upasampadā can be conferred upon
her. The age of a samaneri should not be less than 18 years of age before undergoing the training. Thus, her age at the upasāmpadā is twenty years. So, it may be computed that most of the pavajitas and pavajitikayas mentioned in the inscriptions must have been at their teens when the inscriptions were engraved.

c. Bhikshu

The Mahāvagga has clearly and simply explained the process of making oneself a fullfledged monk. After spending some years as a samanera under an Upajjhāya, at the age of twenty, a person is allowed to have his upasāmpadā or higher ordination. Upasāmpadā is an initiation into Bhikshuhood, the higher ordination or instituting a samanera or sikkhamāna to the fullfledged stage of a monk or nun. It is one of the most important ceremonies of the Buddhist Order. In this, a samanera is presented before the Sangha where he sits down on his legs in Ukkutika (squatting) posture and begs the Sangha for his upasāmpadā. This he does for three times. The Sangha then puts certain questions with a view to find out whether he is an eligible person or not for his higher ordination. After the interrogation a competent and able Bhikshu proclaims his higher ordination for three times. Immediately after the upasāmpadā, the newly ordained monk is apprised of the four Nissayas, i.e. four resources upon which he should depend. These are: living on alms, using rags as his robe, living under trees and using filthy urine as his medicine. He is expected to keep these Nissayas in mind throughout his whole life (Mv. 53, 54, 100). For the purpose of holding an upasāmpadā ceremony, an assembly of at least ten fully ordained monks, is needed. No upasāmpadā should be conferred upon any person without an upaj-
jhāya (Mv. 92). Only those monks who have completed ten years since their upasaṅpadā are competent and able to ordain.²²⁵

After his upasaṅpadā, the ordained person attains the fullfledged monkhood. He is now known as a bhikṣu. He is expected to observe all the monastic rules laid down in the Patimokkha and in other Vinaya texts. He also becomes eligible for attending all the Sangha-kammās and other deliberations of the Sangha as he is now a member of the bhikkhusangha.

The whole concept of the Buddhist bhikṣu, both in moral and spiritual aspects, is epitomised in the BhikkhuVagga of the Dhammapada (vv 360-382). The emphasis is undoubtedly on self-discipline, without which progress and release are impossible. A true bhikṣu always keeps his sense-doors well-guarded, and it is he who wins release from suffering as his destiny. Ever engaged in spiritual exercises, he is contented. Knowing the Dhamma well, he always speak words that are wise and pleasant. His joy is the Dhamma, he finds delights in it, and he is ever mindful of it, and as such he never falls away from it. As he lives in complete contentment and without envying others and in perfect purity, he is praised even by the gods. Understanding existence merely as an assemblage of the aggregates, he gives up all ideas of a self and when it breaks up he does not grieve. Only such a one can come to the happy state which is permanent.

The Order of bhikṣus has been a group of religious men who believe that the higher life cannot be lived among household cares, and therefore relieved of care for food and raiment, where they can really take no thought for the morrow and turn the cheek to the smiter. They were not a corporation of priests and they
had no political aims.

It may rightly be presumed that the monks and nuns whose names have been mentioned in the inscriptions must have gone through this ordination ceremony and that they were ideal monks and nuns as described in the scriptures.

The inscriptions distinctly mention three groups of monks, viz., bhikshu, Sakyabhikshu and Sakyabhikshu Bhadanta. In the whole of the inscriptions, only four persons have been noticed to have been designated as BHIKSHU. They are Bhikshu Bhadasana at Karle, Bhikshu Buddhaghosa at Kanheri, Bhikshu Buddhabhadra and Bhikshu Dharmadatta at Ajanta. The rest are all addressed as Sakyabhikshu.

It is noteworthy that all the inscriptions which refer to the Sakyabhikshus fall within the Mahayana phase only, during which the image of Sakyamuni in paintings and carvings became very prominent in Western India. Altogether eighteen Sakyabhikshus are referred to in the inscriptions of whom one is at Kanheri, three are at Kuda, and fourteen are in the Ajanta caves. All of them are related to the donation of Buddha images. Except Sakyabhikshu Marsharsaila, who donated a row of eight seated Buddha images in painting, the rest of them have donated an image of Buddha each either in painting or in carving.

One may ask as to why some monks were just called as bhikshus while the others were addressed as Sakyabhikshus? What then is the speciality of these Sakyabhikshus? No answer to these questions is given in the inscriptions. Therefore, whatever answers have been made or are going to be made, they are only conjectures or probabilities. There are two probable
reasons why these monks were so described as Sakyabhikshus. Firstly, it is probable that they were real Sakyans by birth as the Buddha was and that they wanted to be distinguished from the other monks who were not of their clan or tribe. So they must have added "Sakya" to their title as their Master was so addressed by his contemporaries as Sakyamuni. The Sakyans were a haughty people and were very jealous of the purity of their tribe. They were proud of their tribe as it happened to be the tribe in which the Buddha was born. The scriptures show that before the emergence of the compound word "sakyabhikshu" the followers of Gotama were called as "Sakyaputtiyas" meaning sons of the Sakyans. Sakyaputtiyas was a common designation of the monastic followers of the Gotama.

How were the monastic followers of Gotama called as Sakyaputtiyas? Before the founding of the Sangha, Gotama founded a sect known as Sakyaputta sect, and its adherents were called as Sakyaputtiyas. In its beginnings, the sect was largely entered and maintained by Gotama's relations who themselves were Sakyans. In the Mahavastu (III, 170-178), it is recorded that King Suddhodana ordered the Sakyayan youths, one from each family where more than one son was, to leave home for the religious life. And as a result, there were five hundred young Sakyans who joined with Gotama and who were ordained as Gotama Buddha's followers. They were called Sakyaputtiyas.

Afterwards, when the Buddha turned his sect into an Order "Sangha", the same Sakyaputtiya was used to denote the followers of Gotama Buddha. But by this time, as the membership in the Order increased and people from other clans also joined in, the term
Sakyaputtiya no longer meant "sons of the Sakyans" but "sons" of the Sakyan leader, Sakyamuni, and of his Sakyan co-workers and co-founder. Later, this designation was replaced by another designation "Sakyabhikshu" which has a wider connotation. It means that the followers of the Buddha were not mere followers but they were monks who have joined him with a definite aim and purpose.

Secondly, it is also probable that the Sakyabhikshus mentioned in the inscriptions were bhikshus of Western Indian origin and not the Sakyans from northern India. The emergence of this designation in Western India is noticed to have come along with the emergence of the Buddha's images. As mentioned above, the gifts presented by the Sakyabhikshus constituted only of Buddha image and nothing more. This is a clear indication of their attempts and zeal to popularize the image of Sakyamuni. It should be borne in mind that to these bhikshus, the Buddha was not just the Muni of Sakya clan, but the king of sages (Muniraja), the Sage of sages (Munir Muninam), the first, best, greatest, chief, principal and highest Sage (Paramamuni) and the Teacher of the world (Lokaguru). To these monks, Sakyamuni was the most popular epithet of the Buddha. Therefore, in order to identify themselves as disciples and followers of Sakyamuni, they also adopted the designation Sakyabhikshu. Since all the Sakyabhikshus are found to have donated a Buddha image each, it may be assumed that the designation was given to or adopted by them after their donation of the Sakyamuni image. But it was not compulsory for one who desired to retain his old designation, i.e. bhikshu only.

The inscriptions are silent as regard to the places from
where these Sakyabhikshus must have hailed. On the other hand, since the inscriptions do not mention about their places, it may rather be assumed that they were from Western India itself particularly the sites where their inscriptions are. Scholar like H. Sakar (1966) is of the opinion that the Sakyabhikshus mentioned in the Western Indian cave inscriptions were Buddhist monks from Northern India who came to Western India in the wake of Mahayanism. But it sounds quite illogical because in the wake and climax of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Western India, there were no Mahayanist monks to be found at Kapilavastu from where the Sakyabhikshus are believed to have come. According to Yuan Chwang (629-645 AD), in the seventh century, while there were about 15,000 Buddhist monks in Western India, there were only 30 monks of the Sammitiya sect at Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sakyans in the Buddha's time. In fact, when Mahāyānism was strong in Western India, there was no trace of it among the Sakyans. Therefore, there is no positive evidence, at present, to show that the Sakyabhikshus of Western India were from northern India, particularly Kapilavastu. But it is probable that the forefathers of these monks might have come down to Western India from the North.

We have seen that a bhikshu is a Samanera who has taken his higher ordination (Upasampada). After this he is known as a bhikshu (full-fledged monk).

**Bhikshuni**

Bhikshuni is a female counter part of the term bhikshu. She is a nun of the Bhikshunisangha. A bhikshuni is a fully ordained nun. By the time she is ordained she must be at least twenty years of age. In *Vinaya-Pitaka* (III, 12), it is laid down that
no upasampada should be conferred on individual less than twenty years of age.

While most of the pavayitikayas mentioned above were in their teens, the bhikshunis whose names are referred to in the inscriptions must have crossed thier teens and entered into their twenties or more. Five fully ordained nuns are reported from Karle, Kanheri, Pitalkhora and Shelarwadi. Their gifts constituted two railings at Karle, cave XCVIII and a cistern at Kanheri and a pillar in cave IV at Pitalkhora. The occurrence of names of bhikshunis at these places seems to suggest that there were Bhikshunisangha established at these places. Besides these, the presence of Bhikshunisangha at Ajanta can also be inferred from an inscription in cave XII which mentions a donation of an Upassaya hall and two cells by a merchant named Ghanamadada. The inscription can be dated around 150 BC on palaeographical ground. The Upassaya hall is no other hall than a nunnery or the dwelling place for the bhikshunis. The presence of Bhikshunisangha at Junnar, too, is very clear from the inscription in cave XXXIII of Sivneri group. It mentions that there was an Upassayo (nunnery) of the Dhammutariya sect at Junnar. The inscription may be dated around the early part of third century AD.

The presence of Bhikshunisangha at various places in Western India, viz., Ajanta, Kanheri, Karle, Kuda, Nasik, Pitalkhora and Shelarwadi is evidenced by the inscriptive references to the pavayitikayas and bhikshunis, who were the junior and senior members of it respectively, and also to the upassayos which were the nunneries. It appears that though the Bhikshunisangha was flourishing in the Hinayana phase, it seems to have its decline in the
Mahāyāna phase as there is not even a single reference made to it in the Mahāyāna inscriptions.

While most of the nuns were unmarried ladies, some of them appear to have been married and had children. Two of the five bhikshunis namely, Kodi and Ghapara, and pavayitikaya Naganika have been mentioned to have had a child each when the inscriptions were engraved. This needs an explanation as some might wrongly suppose that marriage was permitted among the nuns. The children mentioned in the inscriptions were begotten by their mothers before they entered into the Order. It was not a prohibition for the married ones to enter into the Buddhist Order. The Order was open to both the married and unmarried. The first married woman to enter the Buddhist Order was Mahapajapati Gotami, the Buddha's foster-mother. Then in Vinaya-Itaka (I,23-31), Sudina is said to have left his wife and his parents and became a venerable monk. Then in the same Vinaya-Itaka (III,244), Thullananda is also said to have left her brahmin husband and three daughters and became a bhikshuni. In the same way, the nuns mentioned in the inscriptions must also have left their families and entered into the Buddhist.

Although the ladies were permitted to enter into the Buddhist Sangha and formed their own Bhikshunisangha, the Buddha laid down eight important rules which they must observe throughout their lives in subordination to the Bhikshusangha. The rules are:

1. A nun who has received her Upasampadā even a century earlier must pay respect to a monk who has just received the same.
2. A nun must not spend her rainy resort (vassāvāsa) at a residence where there is no monk.
3. A nun must ask on every fortnight the date of Uposatha and the day when she should come for her exhortation (Ovāda).

4. After the rainy resort a nun must invite Pavāranā before both the bhikshu and bhikhuni Sanghas in respect of three things as to what was seen, or heard or suspected against her character during the vassāvāsa.

5. If a nun happens to commit some offence, she should undergo a Mānatta of a fortnight (i.e. to debar her from the privileges of a nun).

6. A Sikkhamāṇā should seek Upasampadā only when she has spent two years of training-period, and that she should seek for Upasampadā from both the Sanghas.

7. A nun should never abuse or revile a monk on any account.

8. Only monks can admonish or exhort the nuns but never the nuns can admonish or exhort the monks (Cv. 354-355).

e. Bhadanta

The word "Bhadanta" means worthy of worship, venerable and reverend. Usually the lord Buddha was addressed by its contracted form "Bhante". After the Buddha's death, this was shifted to the senior monks²⁴⁸ and it continued down through the ages. Its use in Western India is noticed from the first century BC to the end of sixth or the beginning of the seventh century AD. Out of 65 monks, excluding the pavajitas, 44 of them are found to have been addressed as Bhadanta. Of the 44, exactly half of it, i.e. 22 are just Bhadantas. The Thera Bhadantas are those who have crossed ten years since their Upasampadā. Chronologically, the Bhadantas are in between 20 and 30 years of age while the Thera Bhadantas are above 30.
The 22 Bhadantas are: Satlnta at Karle, Gahala Vijayamita, Bodhika and Dhammapala at Kanheri, Agitimita at Kuda, Indrakshita at Fal, Silabhadra Sudatta, Dharmasena, Bhadrasena, Drishadharma, Kesava, Sanghagupta, Gunakara, Sanghamitra, Gopiputra, Dharmadeva, Dapuka, Dhamadatta and Buddhagupta at Ajanta. Names of the 22 Thera Bhadantas will be given later.

It is not known exactly when a monk should be addressed as a Bhadanta. Probably when he is found to be very earnestly devote godly, strictly abiding by the rules and regulations of the monastic rules and well versed in the scriptures for teaching the dharma to others. There is no specified period as such. It may be short or long depending upon the qualitative performance of a monk.

f. Thera Bhadanta

A Thera is a monk of ten years' standing from his Upasampada. And a Thera Bhadanta is a Thera monk who is also addressed as Bhadanta. A monk may acquire the privilege of enjoying the address Bhadanta before becoming a Thera or even after. Before becoming a Thera, if a monk acquires the title Bhadanta, he is addressed as Bhadanta so and so, and after becoming a Thera, he is addressed as Thera Bhadanta so and so. The designation "Thera Bhadanta" is a very reverential address and it is very significant. Those monks who were addressed as Thera Bhadanta in the inscriptions are: SamÒhadin, Ampikanaka and Dhamagiri at Bhaja; Dhammapala, Achala, Chosha, Halaka, Bodhika and Mitrabhuti at Kanheri; Vijaya, latimita and Sivadata at Kuda; Sinha at Shieldwadi and Achala at Ajanta.

Monks of this stage (Thera Bhikshus or Thera Bhadantas) are
very much respected because they are the spiritual as well as intellectual teachers. They are not only advanced in age (minimum 30 years) but also in learning. They can be the Upajjhāyas (preceptors) or Āchāriyas (teachers) of the pavajitas and pavayittikayas. Only monks of this stage and above can hold Upasampadā (Mv. 57, 67). The importance of seniority is also stressed in the texts. For example, paying references, apportionment of the best seat and water and food are done according to seniority. In no case, a place properly belonging to a senior bhikshu is to be taken by a junior. In the dinning hall, the senior eight bhikshus first take their seats according to seniority, and the rest as they happen to come in.

Of the Bhikshunisangha, the inscriptions refer to eleven Samaṇeris (two as Samaṇeri and nine as pavayittikayas), five bhikshunis but only one Therī, i.e. Therī Fonakiasana in Kanheri cave LIV.260 Just as a Thera, a Therī is a bhikshunis of ten years' standing. But unlike a Thera, who can hold the Upasampadā as soon as he becomes a Thera, a Therī has to wait for two more years in order that she may act as an Upajjhāyini for conferring the Upasampadā. Not only that she, as an Upajjhāyini, cannot perform the Upasampadā ceremony every year nor can she ordain more than one in a year.261

g. Ācariya Thera Bhadanta

It has been stated that a Thera Bhadanta can act as a preceptor or a teacher for the novice. When he acts as a teacher he is known as Ācariya Thera Bhadanta. The inscriptions mention some of the Thera Bhadantas who were also Ācariyas and some who were masters of Tripitakas. The Ācariya Thera Bhadantas are:
Seumila and (Antara) at Kanheri and Buddhasena at Ajanta.

Those who mastered the Tripitakas were known as Thera Bhadanta Tevijas (Tepitako). In the inscriptions, Dharmavatsa of Kanheri Sulasa and Chetiyasa of Junnar were recorded as Tevijas. Sulasa was not only a Thera Bhadanta Tevija but also an Ācariya of gaṇa. On this ground, it may be inferred that the second and third centuries AD must have been the peak period of Junnar so far as spiritual and intellectual standards were concerned.

Monks of this stage were superior to afore mentioned stages as they were more experienced and more learned. The tripitakas that these Theras had mastered are: Vinaya-piṭaka, Sutta-piṭaka and Abhidhamma-piṭaka.

h. Thera Āyya Arahantā

Thanks to Dr. (Mrs) S. Gokhale for her discovery of the nine short but very important inscriptions in front of the burial-galler at Kanheri. These are the only inscriptions wherein we have mentions of Arahantā, the highest stage of the path leading to nirvāṇa. The inscriptions are epitaphs which contain records of the scholastic merits and the stage of sainthood attained by the Theras for whose memorial the stupas had been erected. While eight of the nine inscriptions refer to those Theras who had attained the Arahathood, one (i.e. no. IV) refers to a Thera who had achieved up to the Anāgāmin stage which is a stage preceding the Arhathood. In these inscriptions a striking difference is noticed in the form of address between the Arhats and Anāgāmin. While the eight arhats are addressed as Thera Āyyas, the Anāgāmin is addressed only as Thera Bhadanta.

Arhat has to pass through three stages in order to attain
the arhathood. The first stage is called Srotâpanna, in which a person still has only seven births and deaths on this earth as human being. In the second stage, i.e. Sakadâgâmin, he has only one birth and death remaining. Then in the third stage, which is known as Anâgâmin, he is free from birth and death of this world but he has a birth in a Brahmâloka. Therâ Bhadanta Dama of Kanheri is said to have reached this stage. Then comes the Arhat stage in which the causes of moral infections are exhausted, the impurities washed away, the evil propensities of the mind rejected, and the four kinds of transcendent faculties are obtained.

The four transcendent faculties which an Arhat attains are grasping the meaning of a text; grasping the law of all things as taught by the Buddha; interpretation of the text and readiness in expounding and discussing. The prominent characteristic of Arhat is Wisdom. It is by Wisdom that he crosses the ocean of existence, hence he is said to be Prajñavimukta. He is the Âyya par excellence.

The Arhat is still a man, subject to temptation, physical suffering, and his life is not prolonged beyond that of other mortals yet he is a man purified and exalted. However greatly tempted he cannot sin, for his heart is purged from every taint of human passion. Freed from the trammels that bind men to earth he traverses the air and works great miracles. He scans the thoughts of others, he can recall his own past life in countless existences, he hears the sounds in distant spheres, he beholds with divine eye the beings that people the universe dying and being reborn.

Conclusion

The order of ranks as shown in the inscriptions is a very
clear reflection of the structure of the Buddhist Order. It appears that seniority in the Order (not in one's age) and advancement in learning count the most for promotion in the Buddhist Order. Considering the Buddhist Community as a whole, one can see that at the lowest level there lives a householder who does not take any vow nor shelter in the Order. He may not even be a Buddhist. Then comes a lay-devotee. He, too, leads a household life, having wife and children, but he takes the three refuges and pledges that he abstains from killing, stealing, adultery, lying and drinking intoxicating drinks. His main responsibility is to accumulate merits by means of supporting the Sangha with shelter, food, clothing and other needs. Then comes a novice, who, by his pabbajja ceremony, enters into the monastic life. He is the junior-most member of the Bhikshusangha. When he attains twenty years of age, he is ordained and becomes a bhikshu who is now a fullfledged monk, a member of the Bhikshusangha and eligible to attend Sanghakammavas. If he is found to be good, godly, spotless and well-versed in the scriptures he is addressed as Bhadanta meaning venerable or worthy of worship. When he completes ten years after his ordination he becomes a Thera Bhikshu or Thera Bhadanta. By this time, he is at least 30 years of age. After this, through advancement in learning, particularly the mastery of Tripitakas, he becomes more and more respected and thus is addressed as Acariya Thera Bhadanta or Thera Bhadanta Teviya.

The highest stage that a mortal can attain is the Arhathood, for which one has to pass through three stages, viz., Srotapanna, Sakaça-gāmin and Anāgāmin. After these three stages one becomes an Arhat. He now goes to Nirvana and there after certain period
becomes a Buddha. This is the hierarchy of the Buddhist Sangha as seen in the inscriptions. The stages or order of ranks in the Sangha is shown as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arahantā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anāgāmīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Sakadāgāmīn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Srotāpanna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thera Bhadanta Tevija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ācariya Thera Bhadanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thera Bhadanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhadanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhikshu. He takes Upasampadā ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pavajita. He takes pabbajja rite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upāsaka. He takes 3 refuges &amp; 5 vows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Householder. He may not even be a Buddhist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hierarchy of the Buddhist Sangha as revealed in inscriptions of Western Indian caves.

3. Monastic Education

The existence of monastic schools at various Buddhist establishments in Western India is evidenced by the inscriptive references to names of some pupils (antevasi) and their teachers. The dates of our inscriptions in this regard range from first century BC to the fifth century AD. But it does not mean that there were no monastic schools before first century BC and after fifth century AD. The names of the antevasis occur in connection with their teacher's names. The following chart shows the qualifications of the teachers and the status of their pupils in the Order.
The above chart is a direct evidence to show that there were monastic schools at Kanheri, Kuda, Karle, Junnar, Nasik and Shelarwadi. As all the teachers mentioned above are Bhadantas and Thera Bhadantas, the references to the same in other places may suggest that there were, too, monastic schools. For example, at Ajanta, names of 14 Bhadantas and 2 Ācariyas are mentioned. At Bhaja, at least, five Thera Bhadantas are recorded. Though there is no mention of any pupil by name, there must have been impartation of monastic education in the Buddhist settlements at Ajanta and Bhaja. A.S. Altekar has noted that from the time of Asoka onwards, the Buddhist monasteries developed into centres of education. On this light, it may well be said that most of
the major Buddhist establishments in Western India must have also been centres of monastic education.

a. Acariya

The word "Acariya" occurs in seven inscriptions, four of which are at Kanheri, two are at Ajanta and one is at Junnar. Besides these, the Thera Bhadantas referred above are also Acariyas, though the inscriptions do not say so because they were not only qualified but practically had pupils studying under them. An Acariya is a teacher or guide of a monk. A bhikshu, who has completed ten years since his Upasampadā and is able and competent is entitled to become the Acariya of a monk and may allow him to live as his Antevasika (Mv. 67). An Acariya is a guide in general, a friend and counsellor, a teacher who guides the younger members of the Order, giving them instruction in Buddhist doctrine and practice. He trains a pupil in good conduct and ethical behaviour and in transcendental virtues. He is the custodian of the traditional knowledge ensuring its safe transmission and continuity. He is the one who teaches the doctrine leading to emancipation.

It is enjoined by the Buddha that the Acariya should treat his antevasi as his son and the latter should treat him as his father. It is the duty of the Acariya to preach him the Dhamma and train him in the Vinaya and arrange for his requisites such as bowl, robe, etc., if he needs them. If the antevasi falls ill, it is the duty of the Acariya to do everything possible and serve him till he is recovered. The Acariya must take special care if the antevasi is found to have developed antipathy towards the Dhamma and Sangha and is in a mood to disrobe himself (Mv. 62-5).
b. Antevasi

An antevasi is a pupil studying under an Ācariya. The word "antevasi" occurs about 15 times in the inscriptions. It is rather surprising to note that ten of them are female-pupils and only five are males. It is also noteworthy that all the inscriptions which refer to the female-pupils are of the Hinayāna phase. There is no mention of any female-pupil in the Mahāyāna inscriptions. These facts may suggest that during the Hinayāna phase, the women-folk did not only enjoy the privilege of studying but joining the nunneries or Bhikshunisanghas also. The absence of female-pupil reference in the Mahāyāna inscriptions seems to suggest that by the beginning of the fifth century AD, the Buddhist nunneries had gone out of vogue. The Chinese pilgrims of the fifth and seventh centuries AD did not refer to any nunnery in Western India.

Of the male-pupils mentioned, four have attained bhikshuhood. How long a person has to remain as an antevasi? In the Mahāvagga (83), it is laid down that an ordained monk must remain as an antevasi till he completes his five years after his Upasampadā. He may remain under the tuleelage for a further period or even for his whole life if he is unable to accomplish himself to live without the guidance of an Ācariya. From this light it may be inferred that every monk or nun who has entered into the monastic life has to undergo this antevasihood. An antevasi may be a lay-worshipper, a pāvajita, a bhikshu, a bhadanta or even a Thera Bhadanta, each of them studying under a teacher who is more qualified and more experienced than himself. (See the above chart).

The antevasi is expected to do all kinds of services to his Ācariya. For instance, the antevasi should provide him with a
tooth-stick, water, Yagu, keep his robes and alms-bowl, arrange his seat, chair, etc. properly, wash his robes, go with him to the village if he so desires. If the Ācariya falls ill, the antevasi must attend him till he is recovered. The antevasi should take permission from the Ācariya in almost all matters. In other words, he should not do anything without the approval of his teacher. In this way, the question of keeping monastic servants does not arise. The Buddhist Order is organized in such a way that each one serves another and that no one is left idle or unattended.

c. Curriculum

No inscription make a mention of the course or courses that the antevasis were studying. But it is appropriate to mention here what the monastic-students must have studied. First of all, moral training formed the very pivot and the backbone of the educational system, and development of character was the one ideal that dominated it. The antevasis were first initiated in the study of Pali and Sanskrit and when these languages were properly mastered, a thorough study of the sacred texts (the Tripitakas) was started. Then they were led to the study of relatively recent works on Buddhist religion and philosophy. Hindu systems of religion, logic and philosophy were then carefully studied in order to meet the Hindu opponent on his own ground.

Antevasis were graded for study in the monastery. Their instruction comprised "giving of recitation, holding examination, making exhortation and explaining Dhamma". There was also specialization in different branches of Buddhist canon. The different classes were held in separate cells lest their mixing up should cause disturbance to their different studies.
The begging of the daily food has been enjoined on the ante-
vasi as a religious duty. The rule of begging was laid down for
the student in order to teach him humility and made him realize
that it was due to the sympathy and help of society that he was
learning the heritage of the race.

So far as Buddhist education in Western India is concerned,
the Kanheri Buddhist establishment seems to have been the most
flourishing educational centre both in the Hinayāna phase and
Mahāyāna phase. It seems that Kanheri, from its early occupa-
tion in second century till as late as the last quarter of the
ninth century AD, stood as one of the main Buddhist educational
centres in Western India. Its latest inscription in cave LXVIII,
dated 878 AD, reveals that even at that time there still was a
sangha known as "the Sangha of Ācariyas". Ajanta then follows.
Ajanta seems to have been more flourishing in the Mahāyāna phase
than in the Hinayāna phase. Then followed by Kuda, Junnar, Bhaja,
Nasik and Karle. Besides these, other Buddhist establishments
must also have been centres of learning even though they might
not have flourished as the ones mentioned above.

4. Buddhist Sects and their tenets

The first schism of the Buddhist Sangha took place during
the Second Council at Vesali, approximately one hundred years
after the Buddha's death, i.e. about 383 BC. The dissension
took place as the result of the efforts made by some monks for
the relaxation of the stringent rules observed by the orthodox
monks. The monks who deviated from the rules were later called
the Mahāsanghikas, who were the forerunners of Mahāyānists, while
the orthodox monks were distinguished as the Theravadins (Sk.
Sthaviravadin). The latter were known as Hinayānists. No inscription makes mention of either Hinayāna or Mahāyāna.

The first schism was followed by a series of schisms in close succession within three or four centuries after the Buddha's death. As a result, sects and sub-sects were formed till the number of sects reached the figure of eighteen, of which eleven sub-sects are ascribed to Theravada while seven issued from the Mahāsanghika.

Before we make an attempt to deal with the account of the sects mentioned in the inscriptions it may be helpful in comprehending the tenets of the sects by first dealing with the doctrinal differences and similarities between the two main divisions of Buddhism: the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. The differences and similarities as listed by H. W. Schumann are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hinayāna</th>
<th>Mahāyāna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. holds the world as a psychological realism</td>
<td>The world as an idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffering as real</td>
<td>Suffering as an illusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Denies a true being behind phenomena and avoids metaphysical statements.</td>
<td>Teaches an Eternal Absolute under a great variety of names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered dharmas as mere phenomenal entities.</td>
<td>Able to see the Absolute in their emptiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The historical Buddha Gotama is regarded as a natural man and teacher, at the most a superman.</td>
<td>He is interpreted as a projection of the Absolute. He is in essence identical with the Last Principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Liberation can only be achieved by one's own efforts.</td>
<td>Liberation through other power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinayāna</td>
<td>Mahāyāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better rebirth can be reached solely by one's own efforts.</td>
<td>Karmic merit can be transferred to other persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal extinction: nirvāna as immediate goal.</td>
<td>Bodhisattvahood as the immediate goal for leading all beings to liberation. Personal extinction and liberation are of secondary importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirvāna as victory over rebirth and the final exit from the world.</td>
<td>Nirvāna as the becoming conscious of one's own absoluteness and is a state of mental aloofness from the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intends to surmount the world: by analysing its elements and utilising the resulting knowledge for individual conduct.</td>
<td>Wants to help the world: it educates its followers to selfless efforts for others and allows them to have recourse to transcendent powers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a rational attitude.</td>
<td>Has a meta-rational attitude.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the Buddhist schools agree on the following points:

1. the evaluation of individual existence as sorrowful and consequently requiring deliverance,
2. the belief in rebirth,
3. the assumption of a moral natural law which rules the process of karma and rebirth and was neither created by a deity nor is supervised by him,
4. the view that the phenomenal world is without substance and in a constant flux.
5. the empirical person is considered as without Self and as a
complex of soulless factors, with which
6. the goal of extinction of sorrowful personality is logically
   connected,
7. the conviction that liberation is only achievable through the
   extirpation of greed, hatred and delusion and by gaining
   enlightenment and lastly,
8. faithful confidence in the Buddhas, be they regarded as human
   teachers, superman or transcendent beings.

After having considered the contrasts and similarities be­
tween the Hinayana and Mahayana divisions we shall proceed to the
accounts of the sects which find mentions in the inscriptions. Out
of the eighteen sects, viz., Theravadino, Vajjiputtaka, Channa­
garika, Mahisāsaka, Sabbathivāda, Sankantikā, Suttavāda, Dhamma­
guttika, Gokulika, Bahusutakā, Paññattivācā, Ekabyohārikā,
Dhammattarika, Bhaddhayānīka, Sammātiya, Kāssapikā, Mahāsanghiti­
karākā, and Cetiyavāda. The last six are mentioned in the inscrip­
tions. Out of the later sects in India, viz., Hemavatīka, Andhakā,
Rajagirīka, Siddhatthīka, Pubbaselika, Vadariyā and Aparaselikā,
only the last one finds a mention in a Kanheri inscription.

a. Mahāsanghikā

The Mahāsanghikā sect finds mentions in two Karle inscrip­
tions. In one, the Satavahana king Gautamiputra Satakarni is said
to have donated the Karajaka village as a monk's land (Bhikshuhala)
to the Mahāsanghikā sect in c. 124 AD. The village was once dona­
ted as bhikshuhala by Usavadatta four years earlier. At that time
it was donated for the use of monks living at Valuraka without
any distinction of sect or origin. When Satakarni reallocated it
as a monk's land, he must have meant it for monks of every sect
or origin. The land was given in the hands of the Mahāsāṅghikās but for the use of all sects regardless of their differences.

In another inscription, upāsaka Harapharana, himself a Suvastika, is said to have donated the nine-celled hall, i.e. cave XV, to the Mahāsāṅghikās for the use of monks from all directions. This donation was made thirty years after the first one. It shows that the Mahāsāṅghikās were still dominating at Karle by c. 154 AD. It seems that the Mahāsāṅghikā sect concentrated at Karle alone and made that area their territory.

The Mahāsāṅghikā sect came to existence during the Second Council at Vesali. It subsequently split up into several sects. The Mahāsāṅghikās had their centres in Magadhā and from there they migrated in two streams, one towards the north-western and the other towards the south. The north-western section includes the following subsects, viz., Ekavyavaharikas, Baukulikas, Bahu-srutiyas, Kraunaptivadins and lokitaravadins. The subsects of the southern group are: Pubbaseliyas, Aparaseliyas, Siddhatthikas, Rajagirikas and Caityakas. These are also collectively designated as Andhakas.

The oldest epigraphic evidence for the existence of the Mahāsāṅghikā sect is the inscription on the Mathura Lion Capital (120 BC), which records that a teacher named Budchila was given a gift so that he might teach the Mahāsāṅghikās. Then followed by the Karle inscriptions which have been referred to. Then from the accounts of Yuan Chwang and I-Tsing, the Mahāsāṅghikā sect is known to have existed till the end of the seventh century AD.

The Mahāsāṅghikās, like the Theravadins, accepted the cardinal principles of Buddhism. The fundamentals are the four noble truth,
the eightfold path, the non-existence of the soul, the theory of karma, the 37 Bodhikpaksya-dharmanas and the gradual stages of spiritual development. According to them everything concerning the Buddhas is transcendental. Their conception of the Buddhas contributed to the growth of the later Trikaya theory in Mahayana. They conceived of the Buddha docetically and gave rise to the conception of the Bodhisattvas. According to them, the Bodhisattvas are also supramundane and do not pass through the four embryonic stages of ordinary beings. They never experience feelings of lust, malevolence or injury. For the benefit of all classes of sentient beings, they are born of their own free will in any form of existence they choose. All these conceptions led to the deification of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

The other main beliefs of the Mahasanghikas as discussed in the Kathavatthu are as follows: One can act by or with the mind of another (303-4), mind and morals are distinct and moral growth is mechanical (249-251), acts which are not moral must be immoral (252), iddhi can confer longevity (258-260), self-restraint as an act is morally effective (264-265), Buddhas can persistently pervade any part of the firmament and that by iddhi they can suspend any natural law (353-5), the decay and death of Arahant is not that of average humanity (297), but that a residual fetter of ignorance they do not cast off (353). Some of them held that the Arahant could fall away, and one can eliminate suffering and obtain the highest bliss through knowledge. They also believe that the original nature of the mind is pure, and after death and before rebirth a being has no existence.
b. **Chaityaka**

The occurrence of this sect in the Western Indian cave-inscriptions is noticed only once. That is in Nasik cave VIII where a man named Mugudasa, a fisherman by occupation and an upasaka of the Chaityaka sect is said to have donated the cave and the cells in it. Since no mention is made of the place where he hailed from, he might have been an inhabitant of Nasik itself. This then seems to suggest that Chaityaka sect was at Nasik in the close of the third century AD.

Regarding the date of the emergence of the Chaityaka sect, P.V. Bapat and N. Dutt are of the opinion that it was towards the end of the second century after the parinirvāna of the Buddha while A.K. Warder opines the middle of the first century BC. But all the scholars agreed that a teacher named Mahādeva was responsible for the founding of this sect. Mahādeva was a learned and intelligent ascetic who received his ordination in the Mahāsanghikā Sangha. He professed the five points of the Mahāsanghikās and started a new sect. The sect is called Chaityaka because of a Chaitya situated on the mountain where Mahādeva lived, and also due to its emphasis on the erection, decoration and worship of the Chaityas. This name is also mentioned in the Amravati and Nagarjunakonda inscriptions. Its original place was Pataliputra from which it migrated to the Guntur District of A.P. in the second century BC. And during the course of four or five centuries of their residence, they gradually extended their monasteries to the neighbouring hills and spread North-west up the Godavari valley as far as Nasik and elsewhere on the edge of the plateau in that direction.
The Chaityakas believed that an arahant may commit a sin under unconscious temptation, one may be an arahant and unconscious of it, he may doubt matters of doctrine, one cannot attain arahant-hood without the help of a teacher, and the "noble way" may begin with some such exclamation as "How sad, how sad!" uttered during meditation. These are the fundamental doctrines of the original Mahasanghikas which were shared by the Chaityakas. They also believed that one can acquire great merit by making, decorating and worshipping caityas and by offering flowers, garlands and scents to them. And one can transfer such merit to one's relatives and friends for their happiness. These articles of faith, which made Buddhism popular among the laity, have been discussed at length in the previous section. The Chaityakas held that the Buddhas are free from attachment, ill-will and delusion and possessed of finer elements. They are superior to the Arhats by virtue of the acquisition of ten powers (balas). To them, nirvana is a faultless state. Perhaps, the existence of numerous stūpas, both structural and rock-cut, was due to the efforts exerted by the Chaityakas.

c. Aparaseliya

The occurrence of this sect in a Kanheri inscription was noticed by M.G. Dikshit more than four decades ago. The inscription which is in cave LXV says that pavayitikaya Sapa from Dhenu Kataika donated the cave and a water-cistern to the Aparaseliyas for the use of all monks regardless of sects or origins. This sect has been mentioned in the Alluru inscription from the Krishna district and in the Dharmacakra pillar inscription found at Dhavanikota, and also in the Nagajunikonda inscription.
Dikshit explains the occurrence of this sect in a Kanheri inscription with the shifting of the Satavahana capital from Dhenukataka to Kāithāna in which many of the Buddhists from the former place migrated to Western India and retained their sect there. Though we have only one reference to this sect in the inscriptions, it might have spread to various parts of Western India where Buddhist establishments were. Probably, though not mentioned, some of the donors at Karle might have belonged to this sect or the Chaityāka sect as they also hailed from Dhenukataka. According to Yuan Chwang's report there were about 1000 monks of Pubbaseliya and Aparaseliya at Dhenukātaka in the seventh century AD.303

It is difficult to distinguish the beliefs of the Aparaseliya from those of the other sects such as Pubbaseliya, Rajagirika and Siddhatthika. These sects are often designated together as Andhakaś. They held many things in common. Some of their important tenets, as given in the Kathavatthu, are: a unit of consciousness lasted a day (124); utterance of a Shibboleth can induce insight (257); space is visible, also the elements of matter, senses and action (193); to bring about Jhāna, sense gets perverted (175); all knowledge is analytic when popular, truth is its object no less than when it is philosophical (179); Arahantship is the realizing of a tenfold release (172) but the Arahant dies not wholly freed (358); Arahant accumulates merit (312) and dies with meritorious consciousness (358); latent bias differs in kind from open vice and that the latter happens involuntarily (287); latent bias has no mental object (234); karma produces old age and death (205); matter is a result of action, karma (309); action and its accumulating result are different things (294); the Buddhās differ
mutually in many ways (354) and choose the woes they undergo as Bodhisattvas (366), that all their powers are Ariyan and are common to their disciples and both can work wonders against nature (139-143, 353); a Buddha's daily habits are supramundane (134); the Buddha entered the Path in a previous birth (167); everything of the Buddha was fragrant (326) and so on.

d. Dhammutariya

Dhammutariya sect occurs in two inscriptions. One inscription in Karle Chaitya Hall records that Satimita, who was both a Bhadanta and Bhanaka (preacher), belonged to the Dhammutariya sect of the Sopara Buddhist Sangha. He donated a pillar. This shows that while the Mahasanghikas were occupying the Karle region the Dhammutariyas were residing at Sopara. The very fact that a Bhadanta of Dhammutariya sect made a gift to the Mahāsāṅghikā sect is an indication that there was harmony between the different sects and a willingness to support one another. The other record which mentions the Dhammutariya sect is at Junnar. It says that some amount of karshapana was endowed to the nunnery of Dhammutariya sect. The inscription can be dated around 230 AD on palaeographical ground. It may be inferred that if there was a nunnery of the Dhammutariya sect, there must also been a community of monks who belonged to this sect. Since Junnar, by this time, had the capacity to accommodate no less than three hundred monks and nuns, among them must have been the various sects of Buddhism represented. At least, three sects are noticed to have flourished there. They are Dhammutariya, Samitiya and Aparajita sects.

The origin of Dhammutariya sect is generally traced to the second century after the Buddha's death. This sect seems to have
been named after its founder Dharmottara. Very little is known about this sect. Their fundamental doctrine is "in birth is ignorance, and in the arresting of birth there is an arresting of ignorance".

**e. Bhadrayāniya**

This sect finds the maximum number of mention in the inscriptions: twice each in Kanheri and Nasik. The two Nasik inscriptions mentioning this sect are of the time of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi (149 AD) and are to be seen in the famous cave known as Mahādevi-lena. The cave, as recorded in the inscription, was made equal to the divine mansions on top of the Kailasa. The excavation of the cave took about 25 years, i.e. from the 18th regnal year of Gautamiputra Satakarni (124 AD) to the 19th regnal year of his son, Vasishthiputra Pulumavi (149 AD). Finally, the cave was rededicated to the Bhadrayāniya monks of the Nasik Buddhist establishment in 149 AD. Along with the cave, a village was also granted as a monk's land to the same sect. Thus, this sect was very fortunate to have the Satavahana royal patrons. The cave, given to them, is one of the largest and most finely executed rock-cut monuments in Western India.

The other two inscriptions which mention the Bhadrayāniya sect are in Kanheri caves III and L. The first inscription says that the great Chaitya Hall at Kanheri, "which will last until the end of the Kalpa", was donated to the monks of the Bhadrayāniya sect. This record was engraved in the time of Svami Yajña Satakarni, i.e. around 170 AD. The second inscription says that a man (name is effaced), who patronized the Bhadrayāniya sect, has meritoriously donated a cave, a water-cistern and a cell. This
Inscription can be dated c. 250 AD on palaeographical ground. Thus it becomes evidently clear that monks of the Bhadrayāniya sect inhabited Kanheri for no less than a century. Like the Bhadrayāniyas of Nasik, the Kanheri Bhadrayāniyas were fortunate indeed, as the biggest Chaitya Hall at Kanheri was given to them.

Like the Dhammutariya sect, this sect is also said to have developed in the second century of the Buddha's nirvana. Acharya Bhadrayāna is said to be its founder and that the sect is named after him. Its doctrines resembled those of the Dhammutariyas. It also held the view that corruptions are put away by slices.311

f. Sovasaka or Kāsyapiya

This sect is mentioned only once, i.e. in Karle cave XV where it is recorded that Setapharana, an adherent of the Sovasaka sect at Abulama, donated a nine-celled hall to the Mahāsanghikas at Karle.312 This inscription is the only evidence for showing the presence of the Kāsyapiya sect in Western India during the second century AD. According to Professor P.V. Bapat,313 the Kāsyapiyas were, in doctrinal points, very close to the Sthaviravadins so much so that they are also called the Sthavariyas. They believed that the past which has borne fruit ceases to exist, but that which has not yet ripened continues to exist. They also believed that karma regulates all life and the whole universe is bound by it.

g. Sammitiya

The presence of the Sammitiya sect in Western India from the second century AD, if not earlier, is evidenced from two inscriptive references in cave no. XXVI of Manmodi group in Junnar. In one, 16 nivartana of land and in the other oil for lamps are recorded to have been donated to the Sammitiya sect.314 Its presence
in Northern India is also evidenced from an inscription of second century AD at Mathura and another of fourth century AD at Sarnath. These epigraphic evidences show that by second century AD, the Sammitiya sect had already acquired Northern and Western India as its territories.

The Sammitiya sect is a division of the Vajjiputtaka. The Pali and Sanskrit traditions place its origin in the third century BC. The famous monk of Avanti, Mahākaccayana, is ascribed as the founder of the sect. Thus its alternative name is Avantaka. But in the Tibetan sources the Sammitiyas are described as disciples of a teacher named Sammata.

This sect became popular and widespread during the reign of Harsavadhan (606-647 AD), and it is said that the king's sister, Rajyasri, joined the sect as a nun (bhikshuni). It was during Harsavadhana's reign that Yuan Chwang (629-645) came to India as a Buddhist pilgrim. The Sammitiya sect must have achieved its peak period during this time as the number of Sammitiya monks counts for one fourth (43,630:182,930) of the total monks (all sects) in India. Yuan Chwang writes that he carried to China 15 treatises of Sammitiya sect while I-Tsing speaks of its separate Vinaya text. The latter tells us further that this Vinaya had rules regulating the use of undergarment girdle, medicines and beds for the members of the sect in a way peculiar to itself.

The cardinal doctrine of this school is that besides the elements composing a being, there is a puḍgala (an individuality, a personality, a self) which is undefinable and which persists through all the existences. It is neither identical with, nor
different from the skandhas, as anatman forms the keynote of Buddhist philosophy. Extensive account of the Pudgalavada of the Sammitiyas is given by Dr. N. Dutt. The summary of it is given as follows: 1. Self is designated by its support, i.e. self is sometimes given an appellation or description on the basis of its asraya or alambana as fire is named and described by its fuel, e.g. forest-fire, coal-fire, etc. In a living being, the impressions are fuel and the puggala is the fire, which derives its attributes and appellation in accordance with the impressions. A being is called a man, naga or a god in accordance with the type of body possessed by him. 2. Self passes from one existence to another. The puggala whose mind carries with it the effects of his moral observances and meditational practices is reborn in a higher sphere. On his death his five constituents after disintegration accompany the self to a sphere of excellence. 3. In the case of an Arhat the perfect, who has removed all his impurities and has attained Nirvana, self ceases and has no more rebirth.

The Sammitiyas hold that every being remains for some time in an intermediate state of existence. At that time the body takes no material form not even the skandhas. It is not an independent state of existence but just a waiting stage preliminary to its existence in one of the two lokas. The Sammitiyas add that those beings, who are destined for hells or Arupaloka, have no intermediate state of existence (Kathavatthu, 212-213). They believe that there is no higher life practised among the Devas (71-76), the converted man gives up the corruptions piecemeal (76-80), the average man renounces sensuous passions and ill-will
(80-84), physical sight and hearing may be celestial (149-150), there is lust in Rupa-heavens (289), material qualities are results of Karma (309), Karma and its accumulation are distinct things (300-302), previous Karma may cause an Arahant to fall (228-9), an Arahant can fall away from Arahanthood (64-70), merit increases with utility (200-203) and so on.

h. Aparajita

The name "Aparajita" occurs twice in Junnar inscriptions. In both the cases certain amount of nivartanas of land were donated to the Junnar Buddhist Sangha through the assembly of the Aparajitas. It is not certain whether Aparajita was a sect or not. It, certainly, is not one among the eighteen sects. Therefore, if it were a Buddhist sect, it must have been a local sub-sect located and having its influence felt in Junnar areas. Otherwise, there is no way of identifying it.

i. Adhagachhaka

Adhagachhaka is mentioned as a sect in a Kuda inscription. But it is not one among the sects known in the Buddhist literature. Therefore, it could have been, like the Aparajita, a local sect located at Kuda region.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussions make it clear that the Buddhist sects in Western India, according to the inscriptions, began their appearance in the first century BC and disappearance in the fourth century AD. It appears that the second and third centuries AD saw the growth of sectarianism in Western India and the centuries after, i.e. the Mahāyāna period, witnessed the decline of sector-wise identification. It was during this period that the Buddhist
sects, discussed above, found their proper places in the various monasteries of the region.

While the Mahāsanghikas were occupying the Karle region during the second century AD, the Bhadrayāniyas found Nasik and Kanheri as their important seats and flourished there. Meanwhile, the Sammitiyas and the Aparajitas were occupying and making their progress at Junnar. During the same period, the Adhagachhaka sect was making its foothold at the Kuda region whereas the Kāsyapiyas were propagating Buddhism from their seat at Abulama.

The analysis of the inscriptions further informs us with the following points. Firstly, Karle seems to have remained solely as the chief centre of the Mahāsanghikas for, at least, a century. Secondly, Nasik appears to have been dominated by the Bhadrayāniyas for more than a century and they were succeeded by the Chaityakas, from Andhra Pradesh, in the last part of the third century AD. Thirdly, Kanheri also remained as a Bhadrayāniya centre for a century, i.e. 150 to 250 AD, and then turned into a centre of the Aparaseliyas. Lastly, the same phenomenon is seen at Junnar. During the second century AD, it was the seat of the Sammitiyas and Aparajitas but by the early part of third century AD, it became the seat of the Dhammutariyas. No where in the inscriptions do we find reference to Nunnery except the Junnar Dhammutariya nunnery. This shows that the Dhammutariya sect was more advanced than the other sects.
A. Sitewise distribution of the Buddhist sects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>1 cent BC, AD</th>
<th>2 cent AD</th>
<th>3 cent AD</th>
<th>4th cent AD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sopara</td>
<td>Dhammutariya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junnar</td>
<td>Sammitiya</td>
<td>Dhammutariya</td>
<td>Aparajita</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karle</td>
<td>Mahasanghika</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kasyapiya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>Bhadraraniya</td>
<td>Bhadraraniya</td>
<td>Aparaseliya</td>
<td>Aparaseliya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>Bhadraraniya</td>
<td>Chaityaka</td>
<td>Chaityaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuda</td>
<td>Adhagachhaka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Sectwise analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sect</th>
<th>1 cent BC, AD</th>
<th>2 cent AD</th>
<th>3 cent AD</th>
<th>4 cent AD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhammutariya</td>
<td>Sopara</td>
<td></td>
<td>Junnar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahasanghika</td>
<td>Karle</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadraraniya</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasyapiya</td>
<td>Karle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammitiya</td>
<td>Junnar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aparaseliya</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaityaka</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhagachhaka</td>
<td>Kuda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aparajita</td>
<td>Junnar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. The welfare of Sangha

The inscriptions are the living witnesses to the material supports that the Buddhist Sangha in Western India received from time to time. The three basic needs of the Sangha, viz., shelter, food and clothing were well-provided and well-taken care of by both the royal and private patrons. Besides the three basic needs other needs such as medicine, repair works, religious books, etc., were also provided. In fact, the main object and purpose of the inscriptions was to immortalize the names of the donors for their meritorious good deeds towards the well-being of the Buddhist Order.

One of the main donors, who does not necessarily be a Buddhist is the gahapati (householder). The gifts donated by the gahapatis themselves, by their sons and by their daughters include a pillar in Karle Chaitya Hall, caves XXI, XXVIII, XXIX of Manmodi group and cave XLIII of Sivneri group in Junnar; Kanheri cave XXXVI and two cisterns, a bathing tank at Kuda, cave V at Kol, a cave and chaityagriha at Mahad and three cells in Shalarwadi cave VIII.

a. Shelter for the Sangha

The very existence of various types of rock-cut monuments in Western India is a testimony to the fact that they were once used as living quarters and apartments by the members of the Buddhist Sangha. It is very clear from the inscriptions that the chaityagrihas, the caves, the reflectories, the cells, the cisterns and other architectural pieces were donated for utilitarian purposes. These were provided for the uses and comforts of the monastic-dwellers. An inscription in Ajanta cave XVII plainly says that "the cave was donated for the comforts of the Sangha." It is a
known fact that the caves were specifically donated to the Order to serve as its shelters. Therefore, it is unnecessary to deal with this matter separately. Details regarding donations of architectural pieces can be seen in the next chapter.

b. Food for the Sangha

Although the Buddhist monastic-dwellers are known to have lived or subsisted on begging, it should be remembered that they did not depend solely on the food received by begging from the lay-devotees. They might have, on a large scale, depended on begging where they had no lands of their own and also where and when they were relatively few. But when the membership of the Sangha increased it was no longer feasible for the petty villages with less population to spoon-feed the monastic-dwellers. Therefore, an alternative was sought out whereby the monastic-dwellers could help themselves besides begging. As a result, gifts were made to the Sangha in the forms of lands, fields, villages and money. The monastic-dwellers tilled these lands and the products were given to the Sangha. Some of these lands were specifically designated for the monks, so they are known as monk's land or bhikshuhala. The monk's lands were safeguarded by certain rules which say, "it should not be entered by royal officers, it should not be touched by any of them, it should not be dug for salt and it should not be interfered by the district police but it should enjoy all kinds of immunities".333

The following chart will show the supports that the Buddhist Sangha received from time to time. What the inscriptions mention about the donations given to the Buddhist Sangha is only the tip of an iceberg. But it reveals how the Sangha managed through.
The fact that the monastic-dwellers did not depend solely on the food obtained by begging but they also prepared food in their...
monasteries is confirmed by the two references to dining hall at Junnar and Kanheri. The Junnar dining hall is known as Bhojanamatape and the dining hall at Kalyan mentioned in the Kanheri inscription is called Bhojanachatusala. The preparation of meals at the monasteries must have begun from the second century AD, if not earlier, as the increase in the Buddhist Sangha is observed from this time. Also from this time that certain lands and fields were set aside for the Sangha so that the Sangha could sow and plant whichever crop they desired. Usavadata's inscription in Nasik cave X clearly mentions that a field, bought with 4000 karshapanas, was donated to the Buddhist Sangha for the procuring of food for all the monks dwelling in the cave. This type of land donation must have continued to the seventh century or even later. Yuan Chwang reports that there were as many as 15,000 Buddhist monks in Western India. It is difficult to imagine that all these monks subsisted by begging alone. The increasing number of monks at this time must have also necessitated the possession of more bhikshuhala. The records of I-Tsing (671-695) confirm that certain lands were under the ownership of the Sangha. He says, "the tilling of land for oneself is not permissible but to do so for the Sangha is allowable. When a corn-field is cultivated by the Sangha a share in the product is to be given to the monastic servants or some other families by whom the actual tilling has been done. The Sangha has to provide the bulls as well as the ground for cultivation."

c. Clothing for the Sangha

Shelter for the Sangha had been provided in the form of rock-cut caves and food was to be procured from the donated lands and fields. For the purchase of monastic-robcs, certain amount of
money was invested to the Sangha, part of the interest of which was given. In a number of cases, the donors made the keeping of rainy resort (vassavasa) as a condition for receiving the robes. All these things will become clear at a glance from the chart given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Money donated for buying robes</th>
<th>Sangha at</th>
<th>Appen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>123 AD</td>
<td>Part of 3000 karshapanas for robes</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>10:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Of 200 karshapanas 1/16 for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>21:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Of 300 karshapanas (?) for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>75:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Some karshapanas for robes</td>
<td>Junnar</td>
<td>33:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Permanent endowment for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>39:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Of 200 karshapanas 1/16 for robes*</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>54:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>Of 100 karshapanas 1/12 for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>59:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>Of 100 karshapanas 1/12 for robes*</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>12:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290</td>
<td>A field, the produce for robes</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>8:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Permanent endowment 1/16 for robes*</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>32:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Permanent endowment 1/16 for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>65:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Permanent endowment 1/12 for robes*</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>73:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>844</td>
<td>5 drammas for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>78:33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>852</td>
<td>Part of 100 drammas for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>10:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>878</td>
<td>Part of 100 drammas for robes</td>
<td>Kanheri</td>
<td>78:34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The observance of vassavasa as a condition for receiving robes.

The above chart shows how the Buddhist Sangha must have received financial supports for the purchase of monastic-robos. The money set aside for the robes must have served as robe-fund. According to the Vinaya-Pitaka (II, 55, 60, 69), the robe-fund was used for the monks who had less robes. The fund could be collected in the form of gold or a gold coin, a pearl or jewel, a coral or
a ploughshare or a piece of cloth or thread or even cotton. I-Tsing testifies that robe-fund was collected in all the Indian monasteries. He says, "in all the Indian monasteries the clothing of a Bhikshu is supplied out of the common-funds of the resident monks. The produce of the farms and gardens, and the profit arising from trees and fruits, are distributed annually in shares to cover the cost of clothing. The Indian monasteries possess special allotments of land, from the produce of which the robes of the monks are to be supplied. A gift to the Sangha, whether a field or house or some insignificant thing, is understood to be given for the clothing and food of the monks".

d. **Other needs**

Besides the three basic needs of the Sangha, other needs were also provided to the Sangha. This further shows the deep concern for the complete well-being of the Sangha by the patrons or donors.

1. **Medicines**

The first indirect reference to medicine occurs in a Nasik inscription of Usavadata in 123 AD. The inscription mentions that the 3000 karshapanas, donated by Usavadata, was to be used for buying robes and for kusalamula. The word "kusanamula" for the correct spelling "kusalamula" occurs twice in the inscription. Dr. (Mrs) S. Gokhale has given the right interpretation of this word with the help of Buddhist literature. Kusala, according to her, stands for good and for the accumulation of four good pacchayyas. The four good pacchayyas essential for the accumulation of merit (as given in the Visuddhimagga) are:

1. chivara...offering of clothes, (CLOTHING)
2. pindapāta...offering of food, (FOOD)
3. senasana...offering of beds and seats (SHELTER) and
4. bhesajjapariskāra...providing medicines for the sick monks.

Usavadata was right and justified to employ the word "kusalamula" in his inscription for we find that before he donated this 3000 karshapanas for chivarika and kusalamula, he had already given a field for procuring food and shelters of quadrangular rest-houses at Bharukachha, Dasapura, Govardhana and Soparaga. Moreover, this 3000 karshapanas that he now donated was meant for shelter, food, clothing and medicine.

About 134 years after Usavadata's donation, in 257 AD, a Saka woman named Vishnudatta invested 3500 karshapanas to three different guilds, the interest of which was to be used for the purchase of medicines for the sick of the Sangha. Record about this is found in cave X of Nasik. The direct and proper word for medicine "gilanabhesajārtha" occurs in this inscription.

Medicine, one of the four good pacchayas, in ancient times also served as food. The Buddha, at the first instance, allowed only five kinds of medicines which may be stored by the monks for a period of seven days only. These were: Sappi (ghee), Navanīta (butter), Tela (oil), Madhu (honey) and Phañita (molasses). But in course of time the Buddha allowed the monks to use other kinds of medicines such as prepared from roots, leaves, herbs, etc. Later medicine became one of the four requisites of the monks.

As these five items (ghee, butter, oil, honey and molasses) constituted a balanced diet, they served as food and would keep monks free from many common ailments. Because of their medicinal properties they were regarded as the five standard medicines. The medicinal bitumen or glue, such as Hingu, Hingujatu, Hingu-sipātaka, Taka, Takapatti, Sajjulasā or any such glue which was
not used as food by the people, was allowed by the Buddha for the use of the monks as a medicine. The medicinal fruits, not used as food by the people, such as Vilanga, Pippali, Marica, Haritika, Vibhitaka, Amalaka, etc. were also allowed by the Buddha for the use of the monks (Mv. 219-220). Another medicine needed by the sick monks was roots: root of turmeric, ginger, orris root, tuberous roots, garlic, black hellebore, khuskhus, etc. The Buddha further permitted the use of any kind of root as medicine on condition that it does not serve as food.\textsuperscript{344}

It may be concluded that the money donated for the supply of medicines must have been used for buying the above mentioned medicinal items. In this connection, I-Tsing's account is very enriching. He says, "a pill, made up of the bark of Haritaka, dry ginger and sugar, prepared in equal quantities, is good for curing several sicknesses. In case of diarrhoea, about 20 or 30 pills are sufficient for recovery. The benefit derived from this pill is very great as it can relieve a patient from giddiness, cold and indigestion. If there be no sugar, jelly or honey will suffice. It one bites a piece of Harika every day and swallows its juice, one's whole life will be free from disease. Ghee, oil, honey or syrups relieve one from cold".\textsuperscript{345}

2. Almsbowl

An inscription in Kanheri cave XXXII is extremely important as it provides us with a series of information. In this, a donor named Dhamma seems to have set aside certain amount of money for the supply of almsbowls to the Buddhist Sangha there.\textsuperscript{346} This indicates that by c. 300 AD, the Kanheri monastic-dwellers were still going out for begging although they did not entirely depend on
begging. The almsbowl is the distinctive mark of the Buddhist monks and nuns. It must be made of earthenware or iron and not of gold, silver, copper or pewter. It must be of uniform size, either black or red. It must be held breast-high and evenly. It must not be filled higher than the rim. The monk should cover his bowl with his robe. When alm is given he should take out the bowl with two hands and covers again with his robe after the alm is given. He should not look into the face of the giver of alm. He should turn back slowly and carefully. The alm given should not be pressed down from the top. The alms consisted of cooked food and were received in bowls alone. The alms were brought to the vihara. Then the monks dined in a hall, the places occupied according to seniority. The eight senior most monks reserved the first eighth seats, others coming occupied the seats as they used to come in. The monks took only one meal a day, i.e. before noon.

Almsbowl is one of the eight requisites of the monks. The other seven are: three robes, a razor, a needle, a girdle and a water strainer.

3. Sandals

The same Kanheri inscription informs us that out of the permanent endowment, a karshapana was to be used for the purchase of sandals. A century and half before this, one of the Junnar inscriptions also recorded about the provision made for the supply of sandals to the monks. It says that half a karsha-land was donated for sandals. But the sandals have to be made of leather only. Otherwise, the Buddha does not allow to use it (Ny 207-210)
4. **Special rooms**

Donations were made for the making of some special rooms for specific purposes. A Junnar inscription mentions specifically that a dyer named Sarasavanna from Kakaputa had made a donation of four hala land, the produce of which was to be used for making a paniyasala (water-room) in the Gridhravihara at Junnar. Paniyasala is a room or hut for keeping the drinking water in a Vihara. It is a drinking-water place. It was usually constructed near the Upatthanasala or Bhojanamandapa where the monks used to take their meals. The provision of such a room was allowed by the Buddha (Cv 247). Bamboo or string may be provided for hanging robes. Erection of such drinking-water room or hut is regarded as highly meritorious. That is why Usavadata distinctly mentions about the shelters that he had erected for meeting and for the distribution of drinking water on the banks of certain rivers.

Another special room mentioned in the inscriptions is the meditation room. Both the inscriptions in Kanheri caves X and LXXVIII mention that a hundred drammas each was donated in 852 and 878 AD respectively, part of the donated money was to be used for the construction of meditation rooms in both the caves. The construction of meditation rooms was not a new thing in the ninth century AD. The provision of meditation rooms was known in Western India many centuries before this. Prof. M.K. Dhavalikar has noticed a number of small, narrow chambers with a rock-cut seat at Junnar and Shelarwadi, which he believed must have been used for meditation. There is no space for a person to sleep in such a meditation room. As meditation is believed to be the chief of all good qualities in Buddhism, it is very appropriate that rooms for
meditation should be provided.

5. Repair works

Some of the donors took a special concern for the well-being of their gifts so much so that they also made certain endowments, part of which was to be utilized for carrying out repair works. The same merchant Dhamma is also known to have set aside certain amount of money from his perpetual endowment for repairing if anything be needed for repair in cave XXXII of Kanheri. In the same way, merchant Isipala is also recorded to have given certain amount of his permanent endowment for repairing cave LXXII of Kanheri. Vishnugupta is also known to have set aside 3 drammas for repair works in cave LXXVIII of Kanheri.

6. Religious books

The same Vishnugupta made a special grant out of his gift for the purchase of religious books to be read by the monks living at Kanheri, particularly those monk living in his cave. But this time only 1 dramma was set aside for this purpose.

7. Worship

Again, the same Vishnugupta is said to have given 20 drammas for meeting the expenses that might occur for worship. But this time, the importance he gave to worship is evident as the cash set aside for this purpose is four times more than that of clothing and seven times more than that of repair works. The donated cash might have been used for buying garlands, for putting on the Buddha’s shrine, robes for clothing the Lord’s shrine, banners for placing around the Blessed One’s stupa, flags for raising to the Lord and perfume for anointing the Lord’s shrine. To do such things are very meritorious (Sikshasamuccaya 270-5).
8. Expense for lights

One of the inscriptions in cave XXVI of Manmodi group in Junnar records that some one (name not given) had donated oil for lamps. This seems to suggest that lamps were lighted in the caves and in the shrines. The use of lamps in Western India by this time, i.e. second century AD is corroborated by some references to it in the Gahasattasai. Then, one of the Mahayana inscriptions at Kuda also mentions about light. It records the gift of a field whose produce was meant for meeting the expenses of lights to the Buddha. This seems to strongly indicate that lamps or candles were lighted to the Buddha's image. The merit that one obtains by giving light to the Buddha is also recorded in Sikshasamuccaya (272). It says, "if one fixes but one light on the Buddha's shrine, his body is faultless in its proportions, he is healthy, iron-armed, undismayed, he walks in splendour through all the world".

9. Expense for decoration

One of the Nasik inscriptions tells us that the people of Dambhika village, near Nasik township, made a combined contribution for meeting the expense for the decoration of cave XVIII. In the same way, the expenses for decorating the shrines and other venerable objects must have been borne by generous donors.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussions have clearly shown that the Buddhist Sangha in Western India, from the beginning of Christian era, was no longer a homeless wanderer taking shelter in the roots and natural caves but a well organized and settled religious community living in the most durable houses and apartments of
rock-cut caves. Shelter was provided according to the growth of the Sangha.

The Sangha, as many people used to think, did not entirely depend on the cooked food obtained by begging. The begged food only served as part of the entire subsistence. The Sangha did its level best to produce the needed crops and cereals from its lands which were meritoriously donated.

The Sangha, again, was not left destitute, wretched and naked but was clothed with beautiful yellow-robes which were supplied either in the form of money or the material itself. The good hearted donors were also aware of other necessities of the Sangha. So medicines, almsbowls, sandals, meditation rooms, drinking-water rooms, religious books, funds for repair works, for lights and decorations were accordingly provided.

The Sangha continuously enjoyed a series of loyal supports from time to time. Therefore, the Sangha was very much better off than what many people used to think of it.
Notes and References

1. The Sopara rock-edict, the fragment of the VIIIth edict of Asoka, was discovered in 1882. This fragment seems to show that Sopara was the capital of Aparanta in about 250 BC and it was by this time that the Yavana Dhammarakshita, the Aparanta missionary of Asoka, came and preached the Buddhist religion at Sopara. B.C. vol. XIV, pp.319ff.

2. The Kolhapur relic casket contains an inscription which reads: "The gift of Bamha made by Dhanaguta". This inscription belongs to the third century BC, and it must have referred to the stupa in whose ruin the stone box which contain the casket has been found. JBBRAS-XIV, 1878, pp. 147-154.


4. Digha Nikaya I, p. 92; Mahavagga, p. 32.


6. Ibid., p.225.


9. Ajanta inscription (10:36), ASWI-IV, 137.


19. Ajanta inscription (10:20), CTI, 86.
23. Ajanta inscription (17:26), CTI, 75-76.
30. Kanheri Copper Plate inscription, ASWI-V, 59.
    Mahavastu, I, pp. 126-127.
33. Childers, 1875, op. cit., p. 335.
34. Ajanta inscription (26:35), ASWI-IV, 135 lines 5, 13.
38. Mahavastu, III, pp. 50, 107, 122, 176, 239, 248, 260, 134
43. Mahāvastu, I, p. 1, note
45. Ajanta inscription (17:27), CTI, 76; ASWI-IV, 131 line 19.
47. Ajanta inscription (16:26), ASWI-IV, 127 line 21.
50. Childers, 1875, op. cit., p. 431.
51. Legge, J. (Tr.) 1886, Fahien's Travels in India and Ceylon, p. 57 note.
52. Ajanta inscription (26:35), ASWI-IV, 135 line 15.
55. Ajanta inscription (16:26), CTI, 71; ASWI-IV, 126 line 1.
58. Ajanta inscription (17:27), CTI, 75 line 1.
60. Ajanta inscription (26:35), CTI, 78 lines 1 & 2.
63. Kanheri inscription (:10), ASWI-V, 77.
68. The eighteen Buddhas added to the previous list are:
   Dipankara, Kondanā, Maṅgala, Sumana, Revata, Sobhita, Anomadasi, Paduma, Nārada, Padumuttara, Sumedha, Sujata, Tiyadasi, Atthaḍasi, Dhammadasi, Siddhattha, Tissa & Rhusa.
71. Ibid., p. 95. Appendix is authored by N.P. Chakravarti.
73. Ajanta inscription (16:23), Ibid.
74. Yazdani, G., op. cit., p. 77; also plates LXIX, LXX.
76. Muller, F.M., (Ed.) 1965 (Reprint), The Sacred Books of the East (The Questions of King Mālinda), vol. XXXVI, 47-51.
82. Ajanta inscription (26:35), CTI, 78; ASWIV-IV, 135.
102. *Ajanta inscription* (17:29), CTI, 87.
105. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
108. Ghatotkacha inscription, ASWI-IV, 138-139.
111. Kanheri inscription (3:9), ASWI-V, 77.
113. Ibid., p. 178.  
114. Ibid., p. 5.
115. Ibid., p. 24.  
116. Ibid., p. 136.
118. Ajanta inscription (26:35), CTI, 78-79 line 3.
119. Ajanta inscriptions, Ibid., p.75 line 1; p.72 line 1.
120. Muller, F.M., 1894, op. cit., p. 112.
121. Ibid., p. 3.
125. I-Tsing, 1896, op. cit., p. 115; Dhammapada, p. 52.
126. kuda inscriptions, CTI, 8, 9, 10-11.
129. Mahaparinibbāna Suttanta, pp. 60-61.
131. Kanheri inscription (3:10), ASWI-V, 77.
133. Kanheri inscription (3;5), Ibid., p. 76.
134. Ajanta inscription (4:3), EI-XXIII, 259-262.
135. Kanheri inscription (68:36), ASWI-V, 84.
137. Kuda inscription (6:10), CTI, 10-11.
139. Ajanta inscription (26:35), ASWI-IV, 134.
140. Ajanta inscription (16:26), Ibid., p. 127.
142. Sutta Nipata, pp. 10, 24, 33, 34, 204.
144. The Questions of King Milinda part II, pp. 105-6, 186-193.
145. Ajanta inscription (26:35), ASWI-IV, 134, 135.
146. See reference no. 136.
151. Kanheri inscription (78:34), Ibid., p. 8.
152. Kuda inscription (6:11), ASWI-IV, 86.
153. Kanheri inscription, CII-VI, 8.
154. Chakraborti, H., 1975, India as Reflected in Gupta Period
    Inscriptions, pp. 163-4; Siksha-samuccaya, p. 165 n.
156. Ajanta inscription (16:26), CTI, 72; ASWI-IV, 127.
157. Buddhist Suttas (Tr. by Rhys Davids), pp. 189-191; Also,
    Sikṣā-samuccaya, p. 168.
159. Ghatotkacha inscription, ASWI-IV, 139.
162. Ajanta inscription (17:27), Ibid., p. 131.
164. Mahāvastu, I, pp. 6-8, 20-21; Sikṣā-samuccaya, pp. 75-88.
165. Buddhist Suttas, p. 64.
166. Karle inscription (8:13), EI-VII, 58.
170. Kanheri inscription (73:30), Ibid., p. 82.
171. Upasak, C.S., 1975, Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic
    Terms, p. 198.
177. Kanheri inscription (3:6), ASWI-V, 76.
178. Junnar inscription (Siv. 18:8), ASWI-IV, 92.
183. Bhaja inscriptions, ASWI-IV, 82-83; ARIP '69-70'
186. Kanheri inscription (4:11), ASWI-V, 78.
187. Kanheri Copper Plate inscription, Ibid., pp. 57-59.
188. Ajanta inscription (17:27), ASWI-IV, 130, 132 line 22.
193. For Upasampadā see the discussion on it in this section.
For Pavarana, see on the same topic in section B. Abbhāna is a formal calling back of a monk who has observed an ecclesiastical penance (which debar him from enjoying the usual privilege as a monk for a period of six nights), for committing the Sanghadisesa offence.
199. Kanheri inscription (78:33), CII-VI, 3.
201. Kanheri inscription (10:16), Ibid., p. 6
204. Junnar inscriptions, ASWI-IV, 94-96, LL 1172.
206. Nasik inscriptions, EI-VIII, 77-78, 89, 93.
208. Kol inscription (4:2), ASWI-IV, 89.
209. Ajanta inscription, AO-VII, 150; CTI, 77.
212. Junnar inscription (2:15), LL 1172.
   Karle inscription (2:22), EI-VII, 74.
217. Ajanta inscription (10:11), AO-VII, 149.
218. Upasak, C.S. op. cit., p. 44.
221. Kuda inscriptions, CTI, 6-7, 18.
222. Karle inscription (8:17), EI-VII, 63-64.

225. Ibid., pp. 46-48, 26, 44.


227. Karle inscriptions (8:15, 16), EI-VII, 63.


229. Ajanta inscription (26:35), CTI, 79.

230. Kanheri inscription (3:8), ASWI-V, 77.

231. Kuda inscription, CTI, 9, 11.


238. See "Muni" in section A of this chapter.


241. Karle inscriptions (8:12, 18), EI-VII, 56-57, 64.


244. Shelarwadi inscription (8:1), EI-XXVIII, 76-77.


247. Junnar inscription (Siv. 33:9), ASWI-IV, 93.
249. Karle inscription (8:8), *EI*-VII, 54.
250. Kanheri inscription (3:5), *ASWI*-V, 75-76.
253. Ajanta inscriptions, *ASWI*-IV, 137-138; *AO*-VII, 151; *CTI*, 79, 80, 86.
254. Bhaja inscriptions, *ASWI*-IV, 82, 83; *ARTE*, '69-70, c. 2875.
257. Shelarwadi inscription, *EI*-XXVIII, 76-77.
263. Ajanta inscription (10:20), *CTI*, 86.
274. Nasik inscription (7:7), EI-VIII, 76.
275. Shelarwadi inscription, EI-XXVIII, 76-77.
276. Altekar, A.S., 1975, Education in Ancient India, p. 75.
277. Kanheri inscriptions, ASWI-V, 75-76, 77, 81; CII-VI, 8.
278. Ajanta inscriptions, ASWI-IV, 137; CTI, 86.
279. Junnar inscription, ASWI-IV, 95.
287. Kanheri inscription (78:34), CII-VI, 8.
294. Ibid., pp. 101-102.
295. Nasik inscription (8:8), EI-VIII, 77-78.
296. Bapat, P.V. op. cit., pp. 103-104.
299. LL 1223, 1230, 1244, 1248, 1250, 1263, 1272; EI-XX, 17, 20.
300. Bapat, P.V. op. cit., pp. 104f.
301. Di[shit, M.G., 1942, IHQ vol. XVIII, pp. 61ff.
302. EI-XXIV, 259; EI-XX, 17, 19, 21.
304. Karle inscription (8:8), EI-VII, 54.
305. Junnar inscription (Siv. 33:9), ASWI-IV, 93.
309. Kanheri inscription (3:5), ASWI-V, 75-76.
310. Kanheri inscription (50:24), Ibid., 85.
324. Kuda inscription (15:22), CTI, 16-17.
325. Karle inscription (8:34), EI-XVIII, 328.
326. Junnar inscriptions, _ASWI-IV_, 98, 95, 93.
327. Kanheri inscriptions, _ASWI-V_, 61; _BDCRI-XLI_, 78.
328. Kuda inscription (14:21), _CTI_, 16.
329. Kol inscription (5:3), _ASWI-IV_, 89.
330. Mahad inscription (8:2), _LL_ 1073.
331. Shelarwadi inscription (8:2), _CTI_, 38.
332. Ajanta inscription (17:27), _Ibid._, 75-76.
334. Junnar inscription (Siv. 64:13), _ASWI-IV_, 94.
337. Takakusu (Tr.), 1896, _op. cit._, pp. 60-61.
342. Upasak, C.S. _op. cit._, pp. 175-176; _Vinaya-Pitaka III_, 419-23
344. _Ibid._, p. 29.
347. Beal, S. (Tr.), 1869, _Travels of Fahhian_, p. 36.
354. Kanheri inscriptions, CII-VI, 6,8.
356. The Questions of King Milinda part I, p. 60.
357. Kanheri inscription (73:30), ASWI-V, 81-82.
358. Kanheri inscription (78:33), CII-VI, 3.
361. Kuda inscription (6:12), CTI, 11.