CHAPTER-IV
ART AND ARCHITECTURE-I
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The present analysis is an attempt to proceed from the earlier studies of art and architecture of rock-cut Buddhist caves to broader concerns like growth of pictorial tradition in each historical region, the possible options which the artisans tried to develop within the existing tradition, and how they employed their visual skill in articulating the sculptural and architectural language. It has already been explained that the earlier studies were predominantly related to the chronology of caves. Undoubtedly, chronology helps in understanding the growth of pictorial language. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate a possible criterion to ascertain the chronology of caves. The proposed chronological criterion has been applied in the present analysis with the broad concern for understanding varied nature of growth of pictorial language in every historical region. Thus, sculptural and architectural language has been analysed according to historical regions in order to study the possible nature of architectural pattern in each historical region. The first section deals with the criterion for the reconstruction of chronology, and later the monuments in each historical region are discussed. Only the Hinayana caves are discussed in this section. The Mahayana caves are discussed separately. It may also be observed that the Mahayana caves came to be excavated after the second century AD. However, a distinct change towards the Mahayana imagery is noticed in the Hinayana caves also. This aspect will be dealt with in detail the next chapter.

RECONSTRUCTION OF CHRONOLOGY: TOWARDS POSSIBLE CRITERIA

As has been explained earlier, the issue of chronology of the caves in western Deccan has been resolved in relation to political chronology of the rulers. The issue of chronology of the western Indian caves is complex and needs to be studied through various source material. Inscriptions represent the major source material. Earlier Dehejia and Nagraju worked out the question of chronology with the help of palaeography of the inscriptions together with the chronology of the Satatavahanas. Both relied heavily on the
political chronology of the Sātavāhanas as the only possible criterion to date the cave monuments. For the study of later caves i.e. the Mahāyāna caves in western Deccan, political chronology has been used as a yard-stick for assigning dates. Though evidence of palaeography is used extensively, its application remained within the realm of political chronology of the Sātavāhanas, Traikuṭakas, and Vākāṭakas. As stated in the previous chapter diverse views exist on the Sātavāhana chronology. Dehejia rejecting the earlier approaches, tried to evolve a criterion that is highly workable but largely depends on the Puranic genealogical list. Similarly Nagaraju too evolved a similar approach but adopted the larger span of the chronology of the Sātavāhanas. According to him, the art-historical methodology is inadequate to arrive at a plausible chronology and, in reality, he heavily relied on the evidence of architectural style together with palaeography. Indeed, palaeography serves as an important tool to date the monument in lieu of the dated inscriptions, but its application should not be narrowed down to arrive at an exact political chronology. It is not our aim here to suggest another set of dates but to consider the previous studies that were carried out by Dehejia, Nagaraju and Gunindro Singh make use of their studies wherever applicable in the case of early western Deccan Buddhist caves.

In the case of later caves i.e. the Mahāyāna caves, political chronology is heavily relied upon. There is total disregard for the development of conventions in the formal language of art. The formal language too has a growth, which depends on the artisan's conventions, skill and the expectations of the beholder. The category of beholders includes first the artisans as they are the first spectators of their visual product, the Sangha, and the public. But in all the previous studies, the growth of the visual language is seen in the context of the political chronology. This has resulted in the reductionist approach towards the understanding of the visual language and complete disregard for the visual skill, which is displayed by the artisans. Therefore while studying western Deccan, one has to see the dynamics of the visual language within the region itself and then try to find other possible sources in the concerned region that contribute to the growth of the formal language. While ascertaining the possible criteria, all the factors need to be considered with a fresh mind without preconceived notions. The chronological study of
the art and architectural monument, is often approached either through the dated inscriptional evidence or the evidence of palaeography and the formal qualities of work of art. It is also not necessary that the evidence of palaeography and the formal qualities at work invariably agree with each other all the time. Hence it is important to establish certain common reference points based on political chronology, formal language, palaeography as well as relation between patronage and techniques so as to arrive at some basis on which the relative chronology of the monument can be ascertained. In order to do so, some common reference points have to be considered.

A) Evidence of formal language together with evidence of palaeography- for example the inscriptions at Bhaja are easily datable to second century BC on palaeographic grounds and at the same time, the sculptural language too bears the qualities like low volume, frontal postures and images sticking to the picture plane, the qualities which are datable to second century BC when compared to the images of Barhut and Pauni. Thus a progression in the sculptural language have to be observed wherever it is applicable.

B) The second common reference point can be ascertained on the Sātavāhana and Kṣatrapa chronology:

Following are the caves where the inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas and Kṣatrapas are found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kānha</th>
<th>Nasik cave no. 19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi</td>
<td>Nasik cave no 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puḷumāvi</td>
<td>Karla caitya</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nasik cave no 25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nasik cave no 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Karle caitya &amp; cave no 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vasisthīputra Sātakarṇi</td>
<td>Nasik cave no 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yajña Śri</td>
<td>Kanheri cave no 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kanheri cave no 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kanheri cave no 21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nasik cave no. 20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Usavadatta, son-in-law of Nahapāṇa  
Nasik cave no. 10  
Karla caitya

In addition to the above, the Sanchi inscription too should be considered as an important reference point. As discussed earlier, no precise chronology of the Sātavāhanas can be made out, only probable time brackets can be considered. The Sātakarṇi of Sanchi inscription should be identified with the Sātakarṇi I of Naneghat inscription as well as the first Sātakarṇi of the Puranic list, the proposed date being the last decades of first century BC. Similarly the Bhāravāhaka i.e. load-bearer image of the south-gate Torana has close resemblance with the Yakṣa image of Pitalkhora. It signifies that rock-cut cave activity was going on in the first century BC at Pitalkhora. The other inscription at Pitalkhora cave 4’s plinth mentions the name of a sculptor Kapa from Dhenukakata. Another inscription at Kondane, which is engraved near the sculpture on the caitya wall, mentions that the image has been made by Balaka a disciple of Kapha. The name of Kapha is identified with Kaṇha of Pitalkhora cave 4 (for detail discussion see page-145-6, 207-8). Thus, a tradition can be marked out in a chronological order. If the Sanchi inscription is dated in the last decades of first century BC then Kanha has to be dated earlier than Satakarni-I. Thus Nasik cave 18 is earlier than that of Sanchi and Pitalkhora. If the stylistic criterion is taken into consideration, then, the sculpture at Bhaja, Thanala-Nadsur would indicate an earlier date than Pitalkhora Yakṣa image.

C) The next common reference point is Gautamiputra Sātakaṇṭi was contemporary of Kṣatrapa king Nahapāṇa. As discussed earlier, Nahapāṇ's date in Nasik is prior to Gautamiputra Sātakaṇṭi, so the time bracket proposed is that Gautamiputra Sātakaṇṭi ruled in the mid-first century AD onwards. Hence cave No. 3 of Nasik was excavated in the last quarter of first century AD whereas cave No. 10 was excavated some time in mid first century AD. Inscriptional record of Karle caitya indicates that the cave had already been excavated prior to the visit of Usavadatta, a son-in-law of the Nahapāṇa. At the same time the capital figures of this cave have close resemblance to Karle-capital figures, but definitely progressed from Karla capital figures. Thus by the early first century AD Karla caitya cave was excavated and if we compare Karla capital figures with that of Bedsa
then Bedsa appears much earlier than Karla. Thus there is a progression from Bhaja, Bedsa, Karla to Nasik.

The inscriptions of Pułumāvi in cave no 2 and 25 of Nasik would indicate a date later than cave no 3. As noted earlier, Pułumāvi ruled in the first quarter of the second century AD whereas Kanheri cave no. 5 is a simple cave and does not bear any special features but may be dated in the mid-second century AD. Cave no. 20 of Nasik has simple facade having pot-based-pot capital pillars with the vertical strips at its lower plinth. This decorative format has been widely used at Kanheri, Mahad and Kuda. The cave has an inscription of Yajiśa Śri Sātakarṇi who ruled in the late second century AD.

D) Architectural style: Architectural development from one cave to another cave can be applied as a possible frame of reference to see the progression of style. The Lomas Rishi cave at Barabara hill has a hall with an apsidal plan and vaulted roof, without pillars and a separate circular stūpa chamber inside. The entrance has a semicircular caitya arch. The cave is dated to the Mauryan period (i.e. third century BC). At Guntapalle, circular rock-cut caityas have been excavated. One of them also has a facade with the semicircular caitya-arch. Circular caityaghṛha with domical roof has also been excavated at Rampa Erampallem without front facade. Both the latter sites are in Andhra Pradesh and are dated to the second century BC. Architectural features of these caves can be compared and related to the caves in the western Deccan by which a possible architectural style can be set forth. Further, within the region itself some of the regular formats have been improvised and new architectural language established. This possibility can be pursued keeping in mind every aspect of visual language and its possible relation with the availability of resources. Thus by evolving possible date brackets and then moving backwards and forwards, chronological sequence can be established. However, the mode of articulation and development of pictorial vocabulary are the significant factors to determine sequential growth in the architectural and sculptural language.

However, in case of the Kanheri cave no. 3, the most important evidences are the Buddha images on the front pillars of the caitya.\(^{11}\) It is therefore evident that the Buddha image in western Deccan appeared in the late second century AD or early third century
AD., thus providing a reference point for the progression of the Buddha image in the western Deccan.

E) The next common reference point can be determined with help of the Traikūṭaka copper plate dated 245. The date originally considered to be the Kalachuri era will have to be reconsidered and assigned to the Saka era. Thus the dates obtained are 323 AD. So by the 323 AD, Kanheri has numerous Buddha images getting excavated. Even the designs of stūpas in relief have large bases as may be noticed in cave no. 3 of Kanheri. Besides the small Buddha images on the pillar of cave no. 3 of Kanheri have both kinds of drapery i.e. covering of left shoulder and keeping the other shoulder bare, and the other type of drapery covering both the shoulders but transparent. So far transparent drapery has always been associated with the northern Indian images, especially the Sarnath variety, which is dated to late fifth century AD. However, Kanheri cave no. 3 Buddha image is earlier and was executed in late second century AD or early third century AD. Thus for the first time the transparent drapery on the Buddha image is used in western Deccan.

Similarly, it is generally considered that the Buddha images in the Western Deccan borrowed the posture and holding of a drapery in one hand from the Krishna valley sculptures which are dated to the third century AD. Considering the date of Krishna Valley Buddha images and the Traikūṭaka copper plate inscription together with the criterion of style of cave no. 3 Buddha images on pillars, it is certain that in the fourth century AD the Buddha images are sculpted in the western Deccan. Kanheri has numerous Buddha images, which are carved in fourth century AD. Moreover, the motif of caitya arches on lintel being supported by two pillars and the makara toraṇa motif on the entrance of the hall or the shrine-cell mark the development of new facade design as well as the door-frame designs. This aspect of development will be discussed in the next chapter.

F) Painted Buddha images at Ajanta, Pitalkhora and Karla are stylistically different from the later painted images of fifth century images. In fact all these painted Buddha images do not fall in the general genre of the painted Buddha images of Ajanta. Therefore, they are earlier than fifth century AD images and may be dated to third century AD. Besides, the palaeography of epigraphic records if compared with the letter styles of Kanheri
Traikuta copper plate and Munda Putra inscriptions, indicate a third century AD date as most likely possibility. In case of the later caves of Ajanta, stylistic criterion is the most reliable proposition in the absence of dated inscriptive records or even in the absence of inscriptions themselves. A comparison will have to be drawn from the images of Kanheri especially with reference to the cave no.3 pillar Buddha images. Though the Ajanta Buddha images are mostly of seated variety, nevertheless their pictorial qualities have a significance in relation to their development. Similarly the door-frames and adoption of certain peculiar façade design would indicate a very different set of application of visual skill by the artisans, which will be evaluated by its sheer visual powers.

G) Further more, when the excavation of a cave site is under progress, it is likely that there may be an adoption of certain qualities in their visual format, thus assimilating different genres in the sculptural language. It may happen at any stage of excavation. At Ajanta, in some of the late caves, a marked influence of Vidarbha Sculptural tradition is observed. This is an important factor for the reconstruction of chronology. Apart from considering the formalistic criterion together with other related historical evidences, certain iconographic peculiarities too may be observed in certain chronological perspective. For example in the later caves of Ajanta, the throne of Buddha images exhibits certain iconographic peculiarities along with the attendant figures of the Buddha.

The above proposed criterion will be applied while discussing the western Deccan Buddhist caves in chronological perspective. However, in case of earlier Hinayana caves, the proposed order in the previous works of Dehejia, Nagaraju and Dhavalikar will be taken into account. In case of later caves, earlier notions of chronology will be examined in the context of above criterion and accordingly solutions will be offered. It may also be kept in mind that while applying the framework of formal qualities of work of art, the notion of evolution from simple to complex is discarded completely because in the later caves of Ajanta, the door frames are altogether different and may be taken as a growth in the pictorial vocabulary than simple to complex progression of form, because motifs keep appearing and disappearing but the handling of the pictorial form is the most precise index to assess the skill and achievements of the artisans within the set conventions.
Notes:

5. Deshpande M.N. 1959 *Ancient India Vol. XV* p. 82.
6. LL 1071.
7. Kramrisch Stella *The Sacred Art of India, selected writings of Stella Kramrisch* (Ed) by Barabara Miller Stoler p- 185
9. All most all writers have attributed those images to fifth century AD right from Burgess.
ANALYSIS OF CAVE MONUMENTS:

The analysis of the early western Deccan Buddhist caves in the following pages has been done according to the historical regions and even according to the possible chronological order based on the earlier studies; whenever there is a difference, reasons are adequately explained. The analysis of each cave has been made keeping in mind the process of cave excavation, which is generally followed from top to the bottom. It may also be observed that in the caitya cave designs, many plans have been evolved, mainly the vault roof apsidal pillared hall, vault roof apsidal pillarless hall, vault roof rectangular halls, flat-roof quadrangular hall, flat roof apsidal hall and circular cave with domical roof. In the case of the vihāra plans, a hall with cells around was the most preferred design. The other plans which were used in the vihāra cave excavations are apsidal and non-symmetrically carved single or multiple cells with a veranda. The motif of the caitya arch and the vedikā design were the most predominant motifs used for the decoration of the caityas and vihāras. Their organisation in varied format could make the exterior embellishment unique in each historical region. The present analysis is an attempt to elucidate artisans’ sense of order. Not every cave has been described here, only a few important caves which are significant in contributing to the growth of architectural language have been discussed.

MULAKA REGION : (present Aurangabad district)

In this historical region Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Aurangabad, Ghatotkacha and Ellora caves are located. Except Ellora and Ghatotkacha, all have the early Hinayāna cave excavations. Ellora and Ghatotkacha caves are outside the purview of the present study. The Mahāyāna cave development at Ajanta has been dealt with separately in the next chapter. Ajanta, Aurangabad and Pitalkhora are the early cave sites where the Hinayāna caitya and vihāra caves have been excavated. Ajanta and Pitalkhora caves have big caitya halls. At Pitalkhora the cave excavation was done on a grand scale, and the caitya and vihara caves were planned together. The caitya cave at Ajanta are of two varieties-1) apsidal vault-roof pillared hall, 2) rectangular vault-roof having apsidal arrangement of pillars in a hall. The second variety is also found at Aurangabad. In the case of Pitalkhora,
the caitya caves are of apsidal vault-roof variety having pillars and without pillars. The vihāra cave in this complex is the most beautifully decorated cave in the entire region. Pitaalkhora is also the only cave site where the Hinayāna caitya caves of vault-roof apsidal plans were excavated. As will be explained below, Mulaka is the only historical region where no flat-roof quadrangular Hinayāna caitya caves were excavated. The vihāra caves are of usual plans i.e. hall and cells around. However, at Pitaalkhora, the vihāra design is the best and has sculptural embellishments. Pitaalkhora is the only cave site in the region of Mulaka where the largest number of the Hinayāna caves have been excavated, and no Mahāyāna cave excavation was made.

AJANTA

Ajanta is located near the Vaghora stream- a tributary of the river Tapi. The place is located in the Aurangabad district and is approached by bus from Aurangabad as well as Jalgaon and Bhusaval. This cave site has as many as 29 caves. The earliest Hinayāna cave group is located almost in the centre of the cave complex. Cave no.9, 10, 12, 13, and 15A are the earlier Hinayāna excavations. Others are Mahāyāna excavations, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The caves are carved on the hill, which has a horseshoe shape (fig.1). Cave no. 9 and 10 are the caitya caves whereas cave no. 12 & 13 are vihara caves. It is also interesting to note that Ajanta is the only cave-site in western Deccan which has apsidal caitya-caves of Hinayāna as well as the Mahāyāna. Cave no. 19 & 26 are the Mahāyāna caitya-caves where as others are of caitya-vihara types. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Cave No.10 is the earliest caitya cave in the complex having an apsidal pillared hall with vaulted roof. It is large in dimensions (fig. 2, 3). The façade is monumental. The carving began from top and ended at the bottom. The semi-circular arch dominates the front space. The arch is simple with due projection, which ends below the middle level at both the ends of the facade. It is significant to note that there is no any other decoration over the façade. A series of small projected beams are carved on the inner side of the caitya window. Though the arch has less projection over the surface, due to the thickness of façade wall the inner side of the caitya window gained good dimension, thus making the
caitya arch window impressive. The area below the caitya window is completely open. There are enough indications that the cave had several wooden fixtures. Undoubtedly the façade of the cave was of wood. The hall is apsidal with vaulted roof (fig. 3 & 4). It is divided by a row of pillars along with the apsidal plan. The pillars are arranged in such a way that the aisle is of uniform width throughout the depth of the hall including that of the apsidal portion. The Pillars are simple with octagonal shaft without base or capital, and have a forward thrust. They support a horizontal band that runs along the apsidal hall, over which the wooden ribs of the vaulted roof are fixed. The aisle of the ceiling is in curved shape with stone ribs. The stūpa at the back is carved out in the form of two layers of drum, over which, an anda (hemispherical dome) is carved. The upper level of the stūpa drum is decorated with stepped bands at regular interval. A harmikā is cut in stone above the anda, on a base embellished with the vedikā design. Three arch motifs in relief are carved on the horizontal rectangular space which lies above the vedikā design. The top portion has three-stepped inverted pyramid, over which a wooden cchatra was fixed.

During clearance work in the previous century, several bricks were reported from the lower side of the façade. Its exact use is difficult to determine but it is suggested that the brick structure might have been used to fix the wooden structure whereas Nagaraju observed that it was a part of an elliptical structure. However, this appears a speculation because considering the nature of excavation, if the artisans wanted to have elliptical structure then they could have done it in the rock-cut excavation itself as the carving of the cave suggests considerable mastery over the rock-cutting skill. Besides in all other caves such as at Bhaja, Thanala-Nadsur and Kondivite the wooden façade is used and no elliptical structures are attempted.

The artisans employed their skill according to the set plan. Every thing in the excavation appears to be an outcome of meticulous planning. Even the walls and pillars are smooth. The patrons of this cave were Vasiṣṭhiputa, Kanhaka and Dhamadeva. Vasithiputta contributed to the façade excavation whereas Kanhaka contributed to the excavation of the interior wall. Kanhaka came from Bahal. It is significant to note that earlier only Vasiṣṭhiputa was known as the patron of this cave but when a ceiling plaster of left aisle fell, the other two patrons could also have been known. Thus it is also evident
that the plastering of the cave was a later addition. Considering the palaeography of the inscription and the style of architectural language, the cave is dated to second century BC. The later additions in this cave are mainly paintings. Important among them are \textit{Chaddanta Jātaka} and \textit{Śām Jātaka}. These paintings are badly damaged. \textit{Chaddanta Jātaka} follows aptly the Pali text whereas the \textit{Śām Jātaka} follows the Sanskrit version of the story.\textsuperscript{7} Both were painted at the same time. There are painted Buddha images on the pillars of the cave, which are later in date (to be discussed later).

\textbf{Cave no. 13} is contemporary to the above cave excavation, which is a small \textit{vihara} cave. The cave has seven cells around the hall, three are carved on the left, two each on the right and rear wall. The simple nature of carving of these cells along with the slanting/inward door-jambs indicate that it is contemporary with cave 10. It is evident from this cave that the Buddhist order at Ajanta started with a few monks and later expanded. These two excavations go back to the second century BC.

\textbf{Cave no. 15A} : In the subsequent period, cave no. 15 A was excavated. The cave is small with three cells on each side. The hall is decorated with \textit{caitya} arches in relief over the cell doors and two miniature \textit{caitya} arches between them. There are two benches in the cells. It is for the first time that the \textit{caitya} arch as a decorative motif in relief is employed in the \textit{vihara} cave at Ajanta (fig.5).

\textbf{Cave no. 9} is the next stage of excavation, a \textit{caityagriha} (fig. 4, 6 A&B, 7) a very well organised excavation. It consists of front stone-screen facade, a rectangular hall with apsidal pillar arrangement and vaulted roof. The stone-screen facade was an addition in the earlier plan of the \textit{caitya}-cave. It also offered space for decoration. The facade is decorated in a novel way. The entire facade carving has been made within stone-beams on upper and two side levels. As usual, the excavation began from the top and the surface of the hill is utilised to its full advantage like cave No.10. This cave is located near cave No.10 and is relatively at a lower level. The top level of the cave is at the end level of the \textit{caitya} arch window of the cave 10. Initially deep cutting is made over the surface and then the carving of the façade began. As has been stated above the façade is framed by
beams on three sides i.e. upper and side levels, which restrict the carving within the specified area. These beams have relatively high projection. Further deep cutting is made to carve out the actual surface level of façade. Space between specified frame has two levels- upper and lower. The upper level beam has a series of caitya arches placed over the horizontal bands. Relief pillars are carved under the horizontal band. Below it, a vedikā design is carved. Upper level has a relief caitya arch in semi-circular shape whose top middle portion almost touches the upper beam, thus dividing the space very symmetrically. Area around the arch has the decoration of the relief caitya arches and their relief level is the same as the main caitya arch’s projection. These caitya arches are placed either over the small horizontal beam or inverted steps. The area under the caitya arches is filled up by the semi-circular bands along with the vertical bands, thus, creating the effect of deep recession. The main arch is placed over the horizontal beam. The area under the caitya arch at the lower level and above the horizontal beam is decorated by the vedikā design. There are five caitya arches over the beams with similar design as found at the upper level arches. These caitya arches are again placed over the vedikā design. Another important feature in this cave is provision of a door in the centre along with two windows on its either side. There are front projections over the upper level of the door and windows with the carving of bracket and pillar motifs of different design. These pillars have base and capital in the form of a squarish block and the middle portion has vertical bands, making these pillars different in design. The upper most level of the projections over the doors and windows is the same as that of the outer vertical beams. This shows how the carvers anticipated the uppermost level of the surface and made the negative space more carefully while carving out the recession in the façade design.

Interior of the cave is rectangular in plan but the pillars are carved in apsidal row (see fig. 4,7). While carving out the interior, the excavators appear to have made use of the caitya window to carve out the interior in order to determine the height. The inner boundary of the caitya arch-band on the façade has been marked as an area space for the vault roof till the rear end. The vault had been fitted with curved wooden beams, these are no more extant, but their position can be made out from the small mortise remaining on the triforium. The vault roof and a horizontal band running aspidal over the pillars
remains the same as in cave No.10. The Pillars are octagonal and have inward slant. The stūpa is large and well proportioned according to the provision of the interior space. The harmikā is enlarged here. A square block having the vedikā design is carved, on which a stepped pyramidal design is employed, which is relatively large. In the previous excavation of cave No.10, stepped inward horizontal bands are fewer, besides space between the base of harmikā and horizontal bands is decorated with the caitya arches. In cave 9 this device is completely abandoned. There is a hole over the surface of the harmikā where a wooden cchatra must have been placed. The entire cave was painted but very few paintings have survived. The paintings in this cave are stylistically later than the cave 10 paintings. Besides there are painted Buddha images which are later additions. The importance of this caitya-griha lies in the fact that it has stone screen wall as a façade whereas the earlier cave had a wooden façade. This is a significant change from the earlier tradition. This particular excavation may be placed in the first century BC. It is significant to observe that the artisan commanded control over rock-cut excavation method with meticulous calculations. At other site too the stone screen wall is employed such as at Bedsa and Nasik. But the façade design is adopted from the previous excavation of cave 10. In cave 10 there is no decoration on the façade. The area around the caitya arch window is left blank whereas in cave 9 it is exactly this area where the decorative devices are employed to fill up the space. Besides the lower portion itself being in stone, provided further space to activate with visual motifs. Though the vocabulary is restricted to the caitya arches, grid design and semi-circular bands, it provided good visual effect. Apart from this, the interior ceiling of the aisle is flat instead of semi-circular as in cave no. 10. Such an excavation requires pre-planning and considerable command over the rock excavation. Further more, carving on the upper most beam would indicate that the architect had visualised the entire façade design to make it visually impressive.

Cave no.12 is contemporary to the excavation of cave 9 at Ajanta and is located away from cave No.10 and relatively less high (figs. 8, 9). It consists of an interior hall and cells around. The façade of this cave is completely broken and nothing can be made out. However, there seem to have existed pillars in the front. The hall is big and is surrounded
by 12 cells, four each on every side. Except one cell in the right corner, all of them have two beds like cave No.13 and 15. The rectangular doorways are plain and have projections in the middle at the back of the doorway to fix the door (fig.13). The cave has an interior decoration confined to the upper level of the hall. Each cell has a caitiya arch over it (figs. 10, 11, 12). The first cell on the right side is pushed a little deep and therefore there is a little difference between the surface level of this part and rest of the wall. The right side decoration has small caitiya arches carved between the two caitiya arches of the cell door's and are placed over the vedikā design which is supported by the pillars (fig.12). The main caitiya arches above the cell doors are connected with the vedikā design. The back-wall and left side wall too are decorated with the caitiya arches in relief but only one caitiya arch is carved between the two cell doors (fig.8). The cave is an outcome of a donation by the merchant Ghanamadadasa. This inscription begins with Thanako deyadhamam ............ The word Thanako has been considered as the place name Thana near Mumbai by Nagaraju whereas Luders translated it as shrine. As the cave is indeed for the residing purpose and the last word in the inscription reads as Upa..... which is suggested as Upasatho by Burgess is likely to be a upasaya i.e. house or a hall (as the separate word uvarako for cells is used separately in the inscription). Hence the word Thanako for shrine as suggested by Luders is not applicable in this case.

It is very likely that the patron came from Thanaka, a place identical with Thana near Mumbai as suggested by Nagaraju. It appears that there is a considerable gap till the next phase of excavation and its subsequent development at Ajanta. This will be discussed later.

AURANGABAD

Aurangabad is located on the ancient route from Paithan to Bahal, and Mahishmati. There are numerous caves at Aurangabad but the early excavation is noticed only at the western group of the caves. The other caves are dated to late fifth century AD onwards.
Cave No.4 is a caitya cave in this complex, which is rectangular in plan with the row of pillars in apsidal shape (fig.14). Many pillars have collapsed. The front has collapsed completely but close observation of the floor level reveals the possible existence of a stone screen wall. The pillars are octagonal. The hall has a vaulted roof. The aisle ceilings are flat and do not display any evidence of wooden or stone rafters there. The earlier semi-circular wooden ribs on the vault roof are replaced by stone ribs. This is a significant change in the excavation. The excavation appears to have progressed with meticulous planning. In the previous excavations at Ajanta caves 9 & 10, a horizontal band above the pillars that runs across the hall, is undecorated but here, this space is activated with the decorations of caitya arches placed over the vedikā which is being held by the vertical pillars. The interior stūpa's dimension is very proportionate to the height of the hall. The dimension of the interior-stūpa being moderate, it provides adequate surrounding space in the vaulted roof hall to create the effect of monumental inner space. The stūpa in this case has a simple cylindrical drum with the anda and a harmikā, which too is carved out of a single stone. The base portion of the harmikā is raised considerably and further three vertical pillars are carved in relief supporting the inverted steps. The top portion of the cchatra is missing. The carving of the stone ribs and the series of caitya arches over the horizontal apsidal band indicate how the artisans mastered over the carving technique. Though wooden ribs in the vault roof caitya are not preferred here to break the plane space of the vault roof, stone ribs are adopted as a better solution. Besides it is likely that the use of wooden ribs is a more time consuming process than carving the stone ribs as ultimately the function of these devices, be it in stone or wood, is confined to create the optical effect. No early vihāra is found along with this cave but it is likely that a vihāra was excavated and later expanded during the Mahāyāna excavation. The cave may be dated in the first century BC but after Ajanta cave 9.

PITALKHORA

Pitalkhora is a grand cave complex in the Ajanta-Satamālā ranges. It is located at the end of the Deccan upland region like Ajanta. The ancient name of the site was
Pitangalya. The caves are at present located in Kannad Taluka of Aurangabad district of Maharashtra State. There are altogether 13 caves in two groups (fig.15). Their location is in the picturesque valley of the Deccan upland. The site has 4 caityas, 8 vihāras and one stūpa chamber. Caves no.3 & 4 are the biggest excavations in this complex. Cave no. 3 is an apsidal vault-roof pillared caitya hall whereas caves no. 10 & 12 are the vault-roof apsidal pillarless caitya caves in small dimensions. The earliest group faces west. The early excavations at Pitalkhora are simple. But the subsequent caves are highly elaborated and executed on a grand scale. The early excavations are numbered from cave number one to seven.

Cave No. 1 is located near a waterfall (fig.16) and is much damaged, now appearing almost like a huge natural cave but the existing ruins like the cells with beds and doorways with a small common room in the centre indicates that it was a vihāra. The cave has three subsections. The first sub-section has two cells at the back wall, and the three along the south wall. A few of the cell doors are still visible.

Cave no.2 is excavated adjacent to the above, similar in plan and feature, consisting of at least six cells, three along the back and three along the right walls. Simple doorways and beds still remain (fig 17). The third also has a plan like the second one except the cells have been carved on the north wall. This cave is an indication of the fact that, the rock-cut cave activity at Pitalkhora began with the simple excavation of a cave having a rectangular squarish room along with the cells around it. Besides, feature like provision of niches in wall insides the cells resembles Ajanta 12, Kondane 3 etc.

The next stage of excavation is observed in caves No. 3 and 4. Cave no. 3 is a big caitya cave with an open facade whereas cave no. 4 is a magnificent vihāra cave and cave no.2 is a small vihāra cave. The vihāra cave no.4 has unique features. The cave has been excavated at a higher level and its lower ends are carved with elephants. Perhaps for the first time in western Deccan a highly ambitious rock-cut cave was planned in the Mulaka region. Though caves No.2, 3, 4 are carved at one level, an attempt to make the surface of the hillock more decorative is observed by the carving of motifs above the caves No.3 & 4 (fig.18). What appears to have happened is that the artisans wanted to make use of the nature of hillock and its monumental character but had to change their ideas of execution.
The top portion over cave No.4 is carved with a series of big caitya arches, above which a vedikā pattern in relatively miniature scale is carved. The caitya arches are placed over the big lintel whose lower portion is convex. This lower portion's surface is decorated by a series of small relief caitya arches. Much of the area below the lintel is eroded. However, the upper most level of the carving above cave No.4 is also seen to have continued over the cave No.3. On the west-end of the surface above cave No.4, some deep cutting in the hillock appears like a natural cave. Therefore, the excavation at such a high level was abandoned. Thus their high ambition of making a monumental façade could not succeed. Nevertheless, the artisans did not give up their efforts to create a unique cave site in terms of its visual appearance. The artisans started carving the façade from below the natural ditch. Again a series of caitya arches are carved but most of the decoration is eroded due to heavy rain during the monsoon.

Cave no.3 is an apsidal vault-roofed pillared hall with an open façade. The series of caitya arches over the large semi-circular caitya of cave No.3 (fig. 19) are indeed conspicuous, which indicates how the façade design is planned. Though the decoration of relief caitya arches on both the caves i.e. 3 as well as 4 are drawn from the common pictorial vocabulary, the façade of cave No.3 is different from that of the earlier cave No.10 of Ajanta. The large area around the semi-circular caitya arch appears to have been filled up by the small relief caitya arches as indicated on the western side. Thus the carving came downwards where the huge caitya arch window dominates the entrance of the cave. An open caitya arch window provides a big area for the smooth interior carving, thereby creating considerable amount of space. Consequently the process of interior carving begins simultaneously. This rock-cut excavation method is adopted almost at all the early sites. The façade appears to have been of wood at this caitya cave. The hall is an apsidal vault roof with (originally) 37 octagonal rock-cut pillars separating the aisle from the hall. The front pillars are missing at present. All the pillars have slight inward rakes and are similar to Bhaja cave No.12 and Ajanta cave No.10 (figs. 20 & 21). The vault roof ceiling of the hall is being supported by a horizontal band, which is supported by the interior pillars. Provision of grooves at the vault roof indicates that there were wooden rafters. The stūpa at the back of the hall is big in dimension and is much
damaged now. Only the lower portion of the drum is left and the anda is completely destroyed. The stūpa is partly rock-cut and partly structural.\textsuperscript{21} The crystal reliquaries in oblong sockets specially chiselled in the back side of the drum of the stūpa and plugged by close-fitting stone slabs after the deposit of the relics inside, were kept in the sockets of the drum.\textsuperscript{22} There are four such sockets.\textsuperscript{23} Similar sockets are also observed at Bhaja cave No.12 stūpa.\textsuperscript{24}

The entrance hall of the caitya has a high floor level, which is approached by a flight of steps. A significant feature is the presence of three sets of steps, one in the middle and two on either side. Middle steps have relief sculptural carving on both sides. The images of dwarf load bearers in relief are carved with a lot of minute observations. There are two such figures and the third is that of a flying horse (figs. 22, 23). The images give an impression that the entire weight of the stairs is being carried on their hands. Though the volume of the images is not highly pronounced, their masculine and super human nature is aptly signified by fine details that are chiselled out in the relief carving. Their existence in the given plane is defined by strong linear treatment of the contours. Movement is another important part of the sculptural volume, which is signified by their posture. The eye sockets, protrusion of nose, cheeks and lips are carved with linear precision keeping in mind how a sculptural mass can be intertwined with a relatively flat treatment. An image of Yakṣa (?) is found from the debris in the forecourt of cave no.3 (fig.24). The image is in the round, highly three dimensional, and is a dwarf. An inscription carved on the outer right palm in clearly engraved letters of the second century BC, reads Kaṇhadāsena a hirmanakārena katā, ‘made by Kaṇhadāsa a goldsmith.\textsuperscript{25} It shows that the artist who carved this image was a goldsmith who took up stone carving. The clarity and love for details in ornaments, and suggestive planes and roundity in the image signifies the adoption of carving techniques and effect from gold carving. When there is a change of material, the artist carries the conventions, which he followed in his earlier material. This image is a good example in this regard. Facial contours are given special attention. Eye sockets and eyelids are large with definite lines. The smile on the face is done by horizontal stretch of the lips along with the protrusion of the cheeks. Sculpture here is treated as a body of mass having firm gravity. The ornaments and the
drapery are treated with separate volume which indicates how skilled hands could create such dimensions out of large mass of stone and could observe very clearly the positions of muscles and folds that are created by the postural necessities. This image has great bearings on chronological position. As mentioned earlier, paleographically the inscription on the hand is dated to second century BC by M.N. Deshpande. The west gateway of Sanchi stūpa-I has dwarf load bearers modelled on the lines of Pitalkhora image (fig. 25). Besides, the south gateway of stūpa-I at Sanchi has an inscription mentioning the donation of the foreman of the artisans of Sri Sātakarṇī.26 Sanchi Stūpa-I is dated to mid first century BC on stylistic features of the sculptures as well as on paleographical grounds. Thus the date of 2nd century BC to the Pitalkhora sculpture as well as to the cave appears more appropriate. Further comparison of the relief of cave No. 3 with Bhaja relief sculpture of cave No 22 would indicate the date later than Bhaja. Among the known patrons of cave No. 3 are Mitadeva who belonged to Gadhika family (i.e. the family of perfumers) and Sanghaka’s son (whose name is lost)28 Both were from Paithan.

Cave no. 4 is a grand vihāra in its conception and execution. It has huge front facade, a hall with cells, which are carved on a high plinth with elephant and dvārapāla sculptures. While the work at cave No. 3 was in progress, simultaneously excavation of cave No. 4 started. One can almost observe the possible upper level of the facade of cave No. 4, which is joined to adjoining cave No. 3’s upper level. A series of caitya arches are carved as a part of decorative vocabulary as employed over the adjoining cave also. Though much of the upper part of the façade is now broken, a feeling of monumentality has not disappeared. The task of making the façade design on such a big scale remains a noteworthy achievement in the whole of the western Deccan cave tradition. This is an example of commendable maturity in the handling of the material i.e. solid rock. Ultimately it creates negative space out of the solid rock. In order to do so, the artisans had everything pre-planned, marking out every detail making provision for some novel element. The outer rock surface of the facade of this vihāra cave is the same as the outer surface of cave No.3, thus making it possible of further deep cutting. To hold such a monumental façade, pillars have found as an appropriate measure to decorate the front of the cave (fig.26). Eight pillars are carved in the front. At present, the pillars are broken.
The varanda roof is carved with beams. Though it appears as a copy of wooden architecture, here the function is purely decorative. The hall has seven cells. Each cell contains a series of relief caitya arches (figs. 27, 28, 29, 30). The decoration of caitya arches extended on other walls but in small dimensions (fig. 34). Further, to the veranda wall surface between each cell doors, pillars are carved in relief with a design consisting of inverted stepped pyramidal strips which are crowned by animal heads as winged-sphinxes, horses, lions, elephants & bulls (figs. 29, 30). These pillars are carved in high relief signifying greater sense of carving details of body parts. The area below the caitya arches is not left untouched (fig. 28). Semi-circular vertical bands are carved keeping in mind the possible visual effect of these elements remaining in low relief. The large caitya arch relief over the entire area. In addition to the semi-circular and vertical bands, a design of semi-circular area is used to strengthen the effect of recession under the relief caitya arch (fig. 28). The cell doors are not exactly placed below the caitya arches but are adjusted towards the southern side to accommodate a window with the projected mass of the rock mass at the lower and upper end is provided at the backside of the entrance. This is observed in the cell doors of the Ajanta Hinayâna and Mahâyâna caves. The roof of these caves is confined to the Mulaka region in western Deccan. The roof of these caves, which is a unique feature (figs. 31, 32, 33). In the other caves, this is observed. Roofs of the cells have always been flat. The deviation from the tradition may be accepted as a point of departure from the on-going tradition. There are present of the existence of five or six cells on the south wall of the level of the hall of the veranda is so high that it extends into the open court of the veranda, which is considerably higher than that of the cave No. 3 caitya. vide ample scope for sculptural decoration in the front portion (fig. 26). The plinth in front is carved with a nine-row of life size elephants (fig. 36). visualise the over-all effect of this magnificent sculpting of elephants and the movement is confined to the head and two front legs. The effect achieved in these is that of sudden stopping of their movement. It is aptly captured by
modelling all possible muscles of the front legs. Their shape is much aggrandised by a well-defined line. Even their paws have firm gravity. Mahaouts are no more intact. During the clearance work, M.N. Deshpande traced a couple of Mahaut's figures, which broke away from these impressive elephants. On the left side of the row is a doorway that leads to the cave by a flight of steps.

The entrance doorway is guarded by two armed images (fig.35). Above the door is an image of Gajalakṣmi. The door guardians stand before us in an impressive manner, holding a spear in one hand while the other hand holds a horizontal shield. Volume is highly pronounced over the given surface. There is a sense of movement in their body posture. Their head-gears are drawn from the existing traditions. They are observed at Bhaja, Barhut etc. Their ear-rings are considerably bigger than the face itself. A well built body is draped in a warrior's outfit having heaviness, which is subdued by reducing its quantum of relief. The dhoti that covers the body below the waist covers both legs. The effect achieved by the sculpture is that of transparency creating the effect of the draped body with due care. Their faces are in the round, the surface is highly smoothened. The masculine nature of cheeks is effectively shown under the smoothened surface with the expression of a smile. Every surface plane is carved to achieve roundish effect of the body. These images display an advance over the images of Bhaja. The doorframe is adorned with vegetative motifs. While the images at Bhaja are an outcome of schematic lines with low relief, these images at Patalkhora may be seen as an adoption from Bhaja images but with considerable progression made in the delineation of the human body. The facial expression is quite convincing, the sculptors not confining themselves to mere use of schematic line as is the case in the other sculptures from the site such as the image made by Kapha (fig.25).

The other end of the plinth has a sculptured panel, which is broken now. Only a moving horse can be observed (fig.37). The rear legs show the nature of observation with which the sculptor worked on the muscles of the horse's leg. A seated female figure whose legs are visible is seen to the right of the horse panel on the plinth. The articulation of the human body in this panel would indicate its close resemblance to the loose sculptures that are found in the forecourt of cave No.4 itself. These panels therefore are
later than the dvārapāla images as well as the image made by Kanha. The inscription mentioning the name of sculptor Kapha from Dhenukakata\textsuperscript{28} would indicate how sculptors moved from one place to another place to execute the project.

If a comparison is drawn between the image of dvārapāla of cave No.3 (fig.38) and the dvārapāla images of cave No.4 then one notices a stark difference in the style of sculpting. The former is stocky, devoid of movement and the drapery is shown by the schematic lines suggesting volume, the skin is smoothened to cover the mass of the body, whereas the latter moves freely, the drapery is aptly carved, the skin is smoothened along with the rotundity of the face. This would indicate that the dvārapāla images of cave No.4 are later than the cave No.3 images. The loose sculptured panels and the sculptured panel in continuation of the row of elephants on the plinth are of a slightly later date than that of the dvārapāla images of cave No.4.

Another noteworthy element in this cave excavation is the five-hooded cobra which is carved with holes in its mouth for a water fountain. Water passes through a chute from the right corner of the cell. M.N. Deshpande observes that ‘a feature which needs special mention is the very ingenious arrangement of diverting water that found its way into the cave through cracks, long tunnel-like opening were bored into the ceiling and the water was allowed to flow fully into the cave, in the floor of which a channel was cut to lead the water outside near the entrance. There are two such openings in the ceiling of this cave, one on the right side of the back cell and the other in the right side cell’.\textsuperscript{29}

The excavation of this cave was patronised by the members of royal physician’s family together with others. Magila, a son of Vacchi was the royal physician.\textsuperscript{30} His daughters Datta, Dataka, too, are mentioned as patrons of this cave. The other patron who financed the pillar was a Buddhist nun.\textsuperscript{31} It is the earliest period mentioning a donation by a Buddhist nun in western Deccan. Such elaborate excavations must have required considerable amount of resources.

The depiction of Gajalakṣmi at Pitalkhora is not an isolated example as there are other sites too that have depictions of Gajalakshmi, like the contemporary site Thanala-Nadsur and the later one at Junnar Manmodi. For the first time in Western Deccan, the sculptors’ names are inscribed in the inscription. This is a significant evidence as another
inscription of Kondane *cāitya* caves records that the image was made by Balaka, a disciple of Kaṇha.\textsuperscript{32} It is likely that the Kaṇha mentioned in this inscription is the same person who is also mentioned in a Kondane inscription (which will be discussed later).

**Cave No.5** is contemporary with cave No 4. It is located adjacent to cave No.4. At present it is a damaged cave, nevertheless one can easily make out that this *vihāra* cave has five cells on either side, each provided with a bench. The bench is made either at the back wall or side wall of the cell. On the rear there are two cells and each cell has one sub cell inside. On the left side of the cave, an apsidal cell is excavated. It appears partly structural. The structure is possibly that of a *stūpa*. In front of the cave is a loose boulder on which an inscription has been engraved which says- *Ya atheseniya* i.e. the gift of a guild of bankers.\textsuperscript{33} This record is assigned to 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC on paleographic grounds. The guild of bankers appears to have had a strong presence, their functioning indicates organised commerce. Considering the location of the cave it is likely that this excavation is a later addition in the existing complex.

After excavating cave no.4 on a grand scale, the creative urge of the artisans must have grown considerably. Furthermore, the loose sculptures that are unearthed during the clearance work show remarkable refinement in the handling of the stone surface to sculpt life, movement, grace in stone. Considering the nature of these loose images, it may be said that the figures in relief as well as in the round appeared with convincingly expressive elements as per the requirement. The head-gears of the male figures are of the same type as is seen on the *dvārapāla* images of cave No.4. Even several male figures share similar facial expressions (figs.39 A B C). The setting up of detached (as distinct from rock-engraved) sculptures on the façade of caves (e.g. cave *dvārapāla*), and cave 13, to make good the worn-out rock-surfaces, generally took place later than the excavation of the caves themselves.\textsuperscript{34} This phase of activity began in the first century BC.

Now, a further expansion to the existing complex was planned. Caves No.6, 7, 8, 9 are the result of expansion. No grand scale excavation was planned. Limited use of the pictorial vocabulary of decoration was preferred. The front of these caves is broken therefore no clue exists to ascertain their possible frontal appearance (fig. 40). However,
the artisans who were working in this phase of activity were aware of the previous work. There is no attempt even to match the grandeur of the earlier excavation. Perhaps it is thought that the expansion is more a necessity rather than an ambitious plan. These caves have a hall and cells around them. All are vihāras displaying general simplicity.

Cave No. 6 is a ruined vihāra consisting of a hall surrounded by cells and a small veranda. The remnants of cells are an indicator to their number. There are four cells at the back, six on the left and five on the right. Many cells have two simple benches, one at the back and another along its side. Brackets supporting the ceiling over the back bench in the back wall of the cells along with the supported architrave which has stepped vertical pyramidal design (fig.40) are the only decorative devices employed in the cave. At the same time, the lower side of the benches has ornamentation of vertical bands. Such decoration together with the caitya arches has traces of plaster and paintings.

Cave No. 6A adjacent to the above is a vihāra. It is in a ruined state. There are seven cells at the back wall with a common veranda. Few of the cells have stone benches along the side-walls. The partition walls between the cells and the entire roof are altogether missing.

Cave No. 7 is excavated adjacent to the above cave and consists of five cells at the back wall and five cells along the side. The central hall is pillar-less. There are brackets supporting the ceiling over the back-benches as is observed in one of the cells. The design is similar to that of cave No. 6. There is a big water cistern after this cave. Cave No. 8 is a small vihara with three cells at the back. The cave is badly mutilated. The next cave No. 9, is peculiar in its plan. The cave has a large hall with cells around the three walls, it also has an extension on both the sides. There are fifteen cells at the back wall of the hall and six cells along the side. Each cell has a stone bench at the back wall. The back wall has been decorated with the vedikā design at the upper end in the centre (fig.41). The extended right side has two cells along the side with a rectangular hall. The other side extension has a common veranda with the three cells. All these excavations having interior decoration with the motifs of vedikā design, stepped vertical pyramid over the architrave and brackets supporting the architrave may be dated to first century BC as such decorative vocabulary is also employed at Ajanta Cave No.12 which is dated to the
first century BC. M. N. Deshpande has assigned Pitalkhora caves no. 7, 8, 9 after caves No.4 and 5, whereas Nagaraju suggested the date of 2nd century BC for caves no. 7 & 8 and 100 BC for cave No.9, due to carving of vedikā design, as according to his observation, similar vedikā design also occurs at Kondivite 12 and Bhaja cave No.10. However, it should be noted that Kondivite 12 has not only vedikā design but also has the caitya arches on side walls along with an inscription, which would indicate earlier date than cave 9 of Pitalkhora.

The next stage of excavation at Pitalkhora was taken up at the other side of the existing cave complex i.e. on the opposite face of the hillock. By the time cave No.13 began (figs.42 & 15) numerous changes are already incorporated in the traditions of caitya excavations and design elsewhere. So such changes too are implemented here. Even at other sites such as at Bedsa and Karla the practice of using wood for the vault roof is a dominant element in the interior design of the caityas. But while working on this excavation, such use of wood is discarded. It is a task of utilising the stone surface itself by cutting the stone ribs and cross beams, a very distinct achievement at the site. The cave has an apsidal hall. Two rows of pillars are carved parallel to the wall all along the hall. It divides the hall into a central nave and side aisle. All the pillars in the hall are damaged but the remains at the base indicate that there were ten pillars in two rows in the front portion and four pillars in the apsidal end. The façade of this cave though damaged considerably was carved out of stone. The stone screen wall, which acts as façade, is developed at Ajanta cave No.9 and at Bedsa and Karla in Mamala regions. The façade of this cave appears to have had a central door, which is also observed at Nasik cave No.19. The remains of the pillar indicate an octagonal shape tapering towards the top. Thus considering the possible nature of the façade and the pillar types and vault-roof stone ribs, this excavation was made in the beginning of first century AD and later than Ajanta cave No. 9, Bedsa and Nasik.

Cave no. 12 is another caitya hall of small dimensions with vault roof and apsidal plan is added (adjacent to the cave 13). But this time the architect of the cave appears to be more conscious in choosing a plan of simple apsidal hall without pillars (fig.43, 44). Perhaps it was realised from the earlier experience of cave No.13 that interior pillars in a
hall of such small dimensions serve no purpose. The stūpa in the apsidal end is damaged. There is an oblong socket over the anda for fixing the harmikā, which is slipped down with the disintegration of the anda. The harmikā is well decorated with vedikā rail pattern, vertical bands, caitya arches and also the faces. The roof is vaulted and has ribs crossed by rafters which are cut in the stone. The harmikā does not seem to be of the time when the cave is excavated. The design and the handling of mass of stone would indicate a date earlier than the cave excavation. Therefore, Suresh Vasant Jadhav observed that the harmikā is likely to have been brought from the opposite side of the cave complex. Thus this development is therefore datable to the mid first century AD.

Close to the above group is another group consisting of two caves only (fig.44). Cave No.10 is an apsidal caitya-griha with a small fore court (figs.46, 47, 45). Taking a clue from the previous excavation the hall is excavated without pillars. The stūpa at the end is slightly elongated (fig.47). The façade of this cave is very different. The semi-circular caitya arch, though it dominates the facade, has no relief arch (fig.46). A deep cutting is made and instead of removing the whole mass of rock, only a rectangular window is cut out of it. The semi-circular window however rests on the lintel decorated with a series of caitya arches. Entrance to the hall is provided in the centre. Therefore, this excavation may be dated to the end of first century AD.

But the question which arises out of the above analysis is:- how did artisans arrive at the apsidal pillarless vault roof hall? Earlier excavation such as at the Thanala Nadsur (to be discussed later) appears to have helped the artisans to arrive at such designs especially when the dimensions are relatively smaller. This must have been done keeping in mind the resources available to the artisans. Another noteworthy feature at Pitalkhora is that the sculptor Kapha came from Dhenukakata which indicates how the artisans migrated from one place to another to execute the work, while at the same time his disciple Balaka went to Kondane in the Aparāṇta to exhibit his skill. The ambitious excavations of caves 3&4 could have been possible due to availability of resources at collective level, of which some were associated with royalty. On the other hand, the later cave excavations like caves 10 & 12 were likely to be an outcome of individual
patronage. Besides there are no further new caves excavated at this site, which shows that the patronage extended to this site was limited to certain period. However, at Ajanta the rock-cut cave excavations went on further till fifth century AD. It also shows how a particular site received importance at a certain point of time only.

**Cave No.11** is a memorial gallery stūpa made at different points of time (fig.48). The memorial gallery is also carved at Bhaja, Thanala-Nadsur and Kanheri. The chronology of these memorial stupas is discussed in great detail by Nagaraju.

NOTES:
1. Nagaraju 1981 Buddhist Architecture Western India pp.100
2. Burgess 1883 Cave Temples of India pp 45
4. LL 1197
5. Dhavlikar M. K. 1968, *Ars Orientalis* pp-
6. Ibid.
7. The topic has been studied in detail by me in M. A. dissertation 'Narrative structural Analysis of Some Jatakas' M.S. University of Baroda-1988.
8. Nagaraju op.cit pp 99
9. LL 1198
10. Nagaraju op.cit pp103
11. LL 1198
12. Dhavlikar 1968 Ars Orientalist pp 147
13. LL 1909
14. LL 1087
15. Burgess 1883, op cit. p- 116
16. Nagaraju op.cit p-297 foot Note No.16
17. Nagaraju Ibid.
18. Nagaraju op.cit p-106
19. Deshpande M.N. 1959 (Ancient India volume 15 p-
20. Nagaraju op cit. p-284
21. Deshpande M.N. op. Cit. p-72
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid. p-73
25. Ibid. p-82
26. LL
27. See Kramrisch Stella 1933, Indian Sculpture p-
28. Dehpande M.N. op.cit. p-76
29. Deshpande M.N. op.cit. p-74
30. LL
31. Deshpande op cit. p-76
32. LL
33. Deshpande M.N. op cit. p-70
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Nagaraju op cit. p-284
37. Deshpande M.N. op.cit p-79
38. Personal communication.
39. opcit.
GOVARDHANA REGION: (present Nasik district)

Nasik is the only cave site located in this historical region. This is the cave site where a direct royal patronage was provided. Though the site has both Hinayāṇa and the Mahāyāṇa excavations, only the Hinayāṇa caves are discussed here. The remarkable achievements at Nasik are the magnificent facade designs of the vihāra caves. The caitya cave is of the usual apsidal vault roof pillared hall. Nasik is also important for its inscriptional records.

NASIK

There are a total of 24 caves excavated at Nasik. As the details have been discussed elsewhere, in the present analysis a brief account is given, which is confined to a few caves mainly cave Nos. 3, 10, 17, 18, and 19. The cave site is locally known as 'Pāṇḍu leṇa' and is six km away from the ancient site of Nasik. The caves generally face north. The Nasik inscription mentions the name of the hill as Tiraḷhu. Among the 24 caves, 2 caves are Mahāyāna caves. One early Hinayāṇa cave was altered by the Mahayānist probably in the fourth-fifth century AD. The others are Hinayāṇa caves. 8 caves are either left unfinished or ruined. All of them are vihāras except cave 19 which is a caitya cave with the usual apsidal plan. This is the only place in which the largest number of donations by the royal families are recorded in the early Hinayāṇa caves.

The early phase of rock-cut activity at Nasik began with caves 18 and 19. Cave 19 (fig.410) is a vihāra cave with a hall and a small veranda. Two cells are carved in the veranda and six cells are carved in the interior hall. The front has four small pillars. Two are carved in the middle and two are carved in the side walls. The pillars are simple in design. The entrance is in the centre with two windows with jāli design carved on either side. The interior hall is decorated with vedikā design. A vedikā railing pattern is carved on the three interior side walls of the cave. Each doorway of the cell is decorated with a caitya arch above it. The width of the arch is harmonious with the upper-brand of the railing pattern and therefore visually the railing pattern appears well balanced.
caitya arch of each doorway, the railing pattern becomes a little zigzag, which creates a rhythmic movement over the cell doorway. The cave has an inscription engraved on the top of the right window, which says that the officer in charge of the śramanas at Nasik made the cave during the reign of Kṛṣṇa of Satavahana family. The inscriptive evidence indicates that the date is first century BC. There is a general simplicity in the design and execution of this vihāra in which the interior decoration is emphasised.

The next excavation is at cave 19 (figs. 411/12), which is a caitya cave and is contemporary to cave 19. It is an apsidal pillared hall with vaulted roof. The facade is very impressive and symmetry in its design is maintained. Each panel on the facade is treated differently. The caitya arches and the vedikā design are the dominant components. The upper tier is decorated with the caitya arches. A big caitya arch window dominates the facade. The space around this caitya window is filled with the motifs of relief pillar design with animal capital figures, small caitya arches and various other motifs. Below the main caitya arch, another caitya arch is carved, which is above the entrance door. The door-frame is decorated and an image of dvārpāla is carved standing on the left. The interior hall has pillars having octagonal shafts with pot bases. The stūpa inside the hall is elongated and harmonious with the interior design. The excavation of this cave went under two phases as can be made out through inscriptions engraved at the entrance and on the interior pillar of the hall. Collective and individual donations were made to excavate this caitya hall. A collective donation was made by the people of Nasik by donating Dhambika village. Nadasiri financed the excavation of the image at the door. The interior was financed by the grand daughter of the Mahāhākusiri and daughter of the royal officer Arahailya from Chaliesthana, wife of the royal officer Agivatana of the treasury office made donations to complete the excavation.

The next phase of excavation is at cave 10 (figs. 412, 413), which was an outcome of Uṣavadatta's donation in the mid first-century AD. The cave has a pillared veranda and an interior hall with the cells around. The facade of the cave is carved deep inside the rock to protect it from sun and rain. The facade consists of a vedikā pattern and six pillars with the capital figures of animals. The pillars have the motif of ghataśat the base and capital. The pillar design may be compared with Bedsa. The Bedsa capital figures are
refined and an attempt has been made to project the figures out of space. The Nasik cave 10 figures in high relief and clings to the surface in spite of having a forward thrust. The riders look down and a very conscious attempt has been made to give them a fixed viewpoint. These capital figures of Nasik cave 10 carry the tradition of Bedsa in their physiognomic treatment. The entrance is carved on the back wall of veranda along with two windows on either side. Two cells are also excavated on each side of the veranda. In the interior hall there are five cells on either side of the hall and six cells at the back, thus making a total of 16.

When Gautamiputra Śātakarṇi regained this territory from Nahapāṇa, the Sātavāhanas also actively made donations to excavate cave No. 3 in the late first century AD. Cave No. 3 is important in this context (figs. 413, 415). The plan of the cave resembles the plan and design of cave No. 10. The cave consists of a pillared veranda and an interior hall. The front of the cave is profusely decorated with the vedikā design, which is supported by the pillars having riders-capitals. The lower portion also has been decorated with the vedikā design and load bearer figures.

Inside the veranda, the benches are provided in alignment with the pillars. The veranda wall is well finished and has two windows on both sides of the entrance which is decorated with a low relief toraṇa along with two guardians. There are 19 cells in the cave, six cells on the right and seven on the left and six at the back, while the veranda has one cell on the left. The hall also has benches in alignment with the three walls. On the back wall a votive stūpa has been excavated. This is the first vihāra cave in western Deccan, which introduced a magnificent facade design. The execution of such a design did not come at once. Initial experiments were done on the side wall, which enabled the artisans to arrive at logical proportions. The left wall in the front is decorated whereas the right one is left untouched. The available tradition and the earlier excavations such as at cave 10 and the caitya cave 19 made it possible for the artisans to explore new possibilities in the architectural language. Another notable element is the door way of the hall, which is decorated with the toraṇa design. It imbibes the tradition of central India such as Barhut and Sanchi. The toraṇa here is a non-functional unit. From the nature of carving it appears that the entire design of the toraṇa was not formally conceived when
the cave was being planned. This is evident from a similarity in the surface level of relief carving of the torana and of veranda wall. The votive stūpa in the interior wall of the hall resembles cave 10 votive stūpa. Cave 10 votive stūpa too has similar features except the absence of chakra and the seated lion. This cave shows a mature stage of cave excavation. The cave was excavated during the reign of Gautamiputra Satakarni.

Cave 17 (figs. 417, 414) is at a higher level and adjacent to the facade decoration of cave 19. It is superior to the carvings of cave 4 because of the proportionate height and length of the veranda. However, cave 4 was excavated after cave 3. The nature of design and the placement of four pillars are exactly the same as in cave 4. Yet the upward pyramidal steps are seen below the ghatā base of the capital. Capital figures of this cave followed the conventions and compositional structures of cave 4. Their backside is also carved with animal figures. The total handling of the sculptural surface is advanced and much more developed than cave 4 with sharpness in rendering the volume. The pillars are slim and follow the tradition of cave 10. The cave is left unfinished.

Inside the hall, four cells are excavated on the left side wall. The right wall has only one cell and the back wall has a cell made for the caitya. The rear wall of the interior has four pillars in front of the stūpa cell enriched with capital figures. It follows the same order of the veranda capital figures but is left unfinished.

The cave records the donation of one yavana Indragnidatta who was the son of Dhammadева. When the work began, the veranda was completed and the epigraphical record was inscribed. It was perhaps realised that the hall would have been too narrow. Hence the width of the veranda was extended eastward. That is why the entrance doorway is not in alignment with the flight of steps. The cells of the cave on the right side wall, i.e. the first three are the part of the integrated design and on the left there is only one cell. The hall was extended and a cell in the antarāl is a later addition, which was done while the excavation was in progress. The sculptural analysis shows that the cave was excavated after cave 4. The separate stūpa chamber was conceived as an advance over the earlier designs like caves No. 10 and 3. On stylistic ground, this cave may be assigned to the first half of the second century AD.

Nasik is remarkable for its sculptural decoration and the facade design of cave 19
shows how the artisans employed their pictorial decorative vocabulary. The cave site is also significant as far as patronage is concerned. As Nahapāṇ’s son-in-law donated for the cave excavation, the Sātavāhanas after regaining control over Nasik also made donations for the excavation of the cave. The rock-cut cave activity began in the first century BC and then continued in first and second centuries AD. The facade designs of vihāra cave at Nasik shows a phase of development of high perfection from the previous traditions at Bhaja, Thanala-Nadsur, and Junnar.

Notes:


3. Ibid. no. 22.

4. Ibid. no. 20

5. Ibid. no. 21.

6. Ibid. no. 19.

7. Ibid. no 10, 11, 12.

8. Ibid. no. 4, 5, 2.

9. Ibid. no. 18.

10. Dhavalikar M. K. Late Hinayana Caves of Western India, pp-

11. Ibid.
MĀMALA REGION: (present Pune district)

In the Māmala region, the caves of Bhaja, Karle (or Karla), Shelarvadi, Bedsa, Junnar are located. Bhaja, Karle, Bedsa and Junnar are early cave sites. Bhaja is the earliest cave site in this region. The caitya and vihāra caves at Bhaja were an outcome of integral planning. The biggest caitya cave was excavated at Karla and has good exterior and interior decoration. The caitya caves in this region are of several varieties mainly-- 1) the normal apsidal vault-roof pillared hall such as at Bhaja, Bedsa, and Karla; 2) circular caitya caves at Junnar only; 3) circular caitya cave with rectangular hall with cells at Karla, 4) blind caitya window with apsidal and rectangular hall especially at Junnar, and 5) the flat-roof quadrangular caitya halls with veranda and a hall at Junnar and Shelarwadi. Thus the Māmala region has the maximum varieties of the caitya grihas in western Deccan. Similarly, the plan of the apsidal vihāra cave used at Bedsa is unique in western Deccan. The maximum donations have been recorded at Karla and Junnar. Junnar is the only cave site where more than two hundred caves have been excavated. They are scattered around the three hills of Junnar town. The largest Hinayāna vihāra cave was also excavated at Junnar.

BHJAVA

Bhaja is among the early cave site in western Deccan. It is located near Malavali Railway station of Central Railway. Malavali is situated on Mumbai-Lonavala-Pune line in Pune district. Bhaja has as many as 26 excavations. Many of the excavations are of early date i.e. second-first centuries BC. The early rock-cut cave activity is seen in the excavations of caves No.9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20 and 22. Cave no. 12 is the only caitya cave with profuse decoration of facade in this cave complex, rest are vihāra caves. Vihāra cave nos. 6, 11, 15, and 22 are specifically noteworthy for their interior decoration. Such interior decoration is common to many of the early caves. The following analysis is confined to a few important caves which are significant in the context of architectural development in the region.
Cave No. 18 (figs. 50, 51) is one of the earliest vihāras at the site. The front of the cave is much broken but nevertheless the interior portion is intact. The cave consists of a hall surrounded by three cells at the back and two on the right. A recessed bench is provided on the left side of the hall. The cave has no decorations. The cells are excavated without benches. The door-jambs show an inward rake. The cell doorways are provided with mortises on the top of lintel where as the central doorway has a hole made in the joints for fastening the door. The inscription in the cave denotes early paleography, datable to 100-80 BC. Shobhana Gokhale observes that the inscription has close affinity with the Mauryan script and is therefore to be dated immediately after the Mauryas. The donor’s name is Nadasava Naya who was from Bhogavata. Bhogavata may be a place near present day Lonavala. It may be noted that the cave is simple with five cells, thus the rock-cut cave activity of the Buddhist Sangha appears to have started with the cave having a capacity to accommodate five monks. The next phase of excavation is taken up a little away from this cave i.e. cave No. 22.

Cave no. 22 is a small excavation. It consists of a pillared veranda in the front and an interior hall with cells. The veranda in the front has a vault roof with the decoration of stone ribs and the walls of the veranda have sculptural decoration. The interior hall also is decorated by the caitya arches and relief sculptures. The conception of the cave is unique in the tradition of western Indian caves. Much care has been bestowed on pre-planning of this cave. Though the dimensions of this cave are small, some outstanding features are seen in the relief sculptures (figs. 52 to 67). The façade is simple, for the rock surface appears without any embellishment. The carvers did not bother to pay much attention to symmetry. The entrance to the veranda is on the left end whereas entrance to the main hall is in the middle. The original pillars are broken. The present pillars are reconstructed from the right end pilaster where the original pillar design still exists. The Pillars are thin octagonal shafts and are broader at the top as well as at the bottom. The cave consists of a veranda and a hall. When the carving reached the veranda, the artisan’s first task was to carve the ceiling of the veranda. While carving the ceiling, the artisans tried to re-create the structural buildings in solid rock. Thus in order to get the possible effects, the ceiling is given the shape of vault with stone ribs as if they hold the ceiling. Till carving of the
ceiling, width is consistently maintained (figs. 53, 54). But after the ceiling carving downwards, the excavation process took a different course. The right end area is cut more than the left one, which resulted in oblong veranda. In the veranda there is a cell with stone bench on the right. The left wall has a chamber. Between the upper beam of the ceiling and the beam over the entrance of the hall, deep cutting has been made to carve the stūpas and the load bearers. For the first time in the western Indian cave the motif of stūpa appears as a load bearing motif together with the human figures (figs.53, 54). Some of the stūpas have carving of the vedikā motif over the top portion of the drum whereas some are devoid of decoration. It is interesting to note that even the harmikā part is carved with suggestive relief caitya arches. It shows the meticulous observation of the artisans in the carving of minute details. Human figures of load bearers are rendered with considerable heaviness keeping in mind their appearance as load bearers. Their drapery is minimal. The veranda wall is so meticulously carved that care is taken to dress the stone for carrying out further decoration over its surface. The entire veranda walls have relief sculptures. The images of dvārpalas attract the viewer’s attention at once. Frontality overpowers the images. The figures are elongated. Elongation is done to fill the rectangular space. Their turbans bear heavy ornamentation. Though the relief is not very pronounced, the artisans have shown remarkable achievement in exhibiting the details of drapery and other ornaments. Their faces are chiselled with schematic lines to separate the planes of eyebrows, eyes, nose and lips. Only an elongated triangular shape in relief forms the nose. Their expressions are static and body movement is stopped by postural frontality. Treatment of volume was not the important consideration; on the contrary, depicting every detail was the main concern. However, when it comes to the handling of the legs, there is complete disregard to proportion, but the artisans may have used such method (disproportionate legs) to keep the image firm with the gravitational force. In a low relief sculpture, the feet are not depicted in their frontal aspect; instead, they are shown sideways. Similarly, the postural needs and low relief provide a little space, therefore, the feet are invariably shown sideways. The figures are not perfect but they are modelled natural form (figs. 55, 56). The image on the left (fig.57) physiognomically is heavy. In the left corner, a relief pillar is carved. This pillar
has inverted lotus capital and with inverted steps. Images in relief, mostly female are
carved over at the upper end of the inverted steps. It is interesting to note that their bodies
are half-human and half-animal. Their upper body above the waist is in human form and
the lower part is in the form of an animal. Use of schematic lines, gives the effect of
details of the jewellery. The figures are not static. Though the space is limited, lot of care
is taken to make them free in the restricted space.

The left side wall of the veranda has a chamber. Some restoration measures have
been done by the ASI to prevent further collapse of the veranda. The lower side of the left
wall (fig.58) is not left untouched. It appears as if the artisans were bent on making use of
each and every surface to carry out the desired decoration. A frieze of relief sculptures of
human figures exhibiting various postures are carved. They remain very playful. No
systematic attempt is made to carve the expression of each figure for they generally
exhibit a kind of joyful life. Even a winged horse is represented showing precision in
carving the leg muscles. Two figures are standing in frontal postures. One horse rider
looks at the beholder. On the right end of the frieze two bulls are shown fighting with
their heads on collision. Irrespective of the size of the frieze, the artisans could achieve
movement in these figures.

The moment our attention goes to the right wall of the veranda, one wonders how
such magnificent sculptural relief is carved (figs. 59, 60, 61, 66). The subject matter is
controversial. In all, it represents a Buddhist theme. The right corner relief extends over
the back wall of the veranda. The reliefs are not contained in any frame, but they extend
as far as their inherent expansiveness carries them and as far as the rock allows. No
figure in the relief appears as a separate or independent figure. All figures are arranged
dramatically. Their arrangement is complex. Recession in the space is obtained by
overlapping the figures. The chariot is shown being driven by four horses. The wheel of
the other side of the chariot too is aptly carved. Outline created by the form itself
separates each and every figure in the composition. On the other hand, the panel on the
right side represents more sensitive vision in representing the human and animal body.
The space is overpowered by the large area, occupied by the principal figure of the
elephant rider. Another rider holds arrows in his hand and is sitting behind. Both the riders face the spectators. Their hedges, ornaments and garlands bear heavy volume. The sensitive eye of the sculptor even captured the position of the leg behind the ear of the elephant, while keeping the relief of the rider and elephant figures on the same level. The elephant's body is modelled so softly that the moving energy in the muscles of the elephants is clearly translated in stone. Schematic lines dominate the decorative elements in all the figures. Very small figures are carved over the bodhi tree. Such detailing is possible in the relief sculptural space if the carver has an ability of visualisation of complex postural details. The area under the feet of the elephant is more crowded with many sitting and standing figures in small dimensions. However their modelling with possible details of the muscle folds shows how the sculptor worked to carry out the carving. For the sculptor the space is always real, hence the task is often difficult to rework over the mistakes. The eye of the beholder moves gradually over the entire relief panel. The figure, which is holding the arrow on the elephant's back wears a garment which is different from the main figure. The main figure wears a dhoti like garment whereas the small figure wears a strip like garment that has pointed ends. This dress is also seen in the dvârpâla images of cave No.4 of Pitalkhora vihâra, which is later in date than this cave.

The interior hall of this cave is decorated with caitya arches. On the back and right wall, there are two cells each, two of them with stone beds. All the doors have two plain dvârsâkhas (doorjambs). Each cell door has a caitya arch over it. Incised carving of caitya arch motif is done between the cell doors. Small caitya arches too are carved as space fillers between the area of the big caitya arches. These small caitya arches rest on the vedikā design (figs. 62, 63). However, on the left wall, there is no cell. The space marked for the door has the images of warriors like those on the veranda wall (fig.64). Their pictorial quality is the same as the veranda dvârpâla image. The only difference between them is the garment and ornament, which is the minimum in these figures i.e. less than the veranda images (fig.65). An image of load bearer too is carved on the lower side of the back wall (fig.67) like the one carved over the ceiling of the veranda. But it is the only one of its kind in the interior hall. Chiselling of the surrounding area is still
incomplete. Perhaps by this time the monks might have started using this cave. But nevertheless the cave remained unique in the tradition of western Deccan cave. The sculptural decoration, its handling of space and making use of schematic lines to show the possible details also indicates its date as early second century BC. The left side of the excavation appears like an extension.

Cave 12

Rock-cut cave activity in Bhaja moved further. Now the intention was to create something more magnificent. The curve in the hillock is chosen as an ideal location to carve the caitya hall and a few more caves around it. It may also be noted that beyond cave No.18 the place was chosen for the memorial gallery (i.e. cave No.20) where many memorial stūpas have been cut (fig. 75). The curve in the hillock prior to cave No.18 is visualised for the carving of cave No.12, a caitya griha and several other caves along with it (fig. 68). Cave 12 is the biggest excavation at Bhaja. It consists of a front open facade and an apsidal vault roof hall with pillars. The front of the caitya hall is decorated with usual caitya arch motifs, vedikā designs, and few human faces. It is also interesting to observe that the space division on either side of the caitya-arch is almost symmetrical at the upper level, which would indicate that perhaps the grid method was followed. A similar method is also followed at other cave sites in the articulation of the facade design.

Carving started from the top. A vedikā design is carved on the top and then deep cutting is made to carve out rest of the details. Semi-circular caitya arch dominates the frontal design. The area around the arch is filled up with the vedikā design, which is extended further over the balcony-like projection on either end. Another small caitya arch rests on the inverted beams over the balcony. The beam-like design touched the main caitya arch.

Till this point the symmetry of the design is properly maintained. But the downward carving below these beams took a different shape; there is no uniformity in the overall use of the pattern. Its lower portion has again a vedikā design but with no symmetry. However, one phenomenal aspect is that from the lower ends of the caitya over the balcony, uniform extension is made on both the sides, which forms the façade of the adjacent caves. On the left side of the façade an image (of probably a Yakṣi) is carved.
The volume of the image is much more pronounced than the images in cave No. 22 (fig. 59). Heavy ornamentation is used to drape the body. Linearity of line clearly defines the outer boundaries of the figure. The nature of the carving is remarkably advanced over the cave No. 22, therefore, this cave must have been excavated after cave No. 22.

The interior hall has an apsidal vaulted-roof. Wooden beams are fixed over the vault-roof. Pillars are octagonal with inward slant. As in Ajanta cave No. 10 wooden beams were used over the triforium and vault-roof, the same technique too is employed here. Ceiling over the pradaksināpath is semi-circular. Stūpa in the hall is simple having a drum and a semi-circular dome. The harmikā with the vedikā design is placed over it (fig. 58). It is made separately and fixed over the stupa. It has a hole to fix the wooden cchatra. The area below the main caitya arch is open like Ajanta cave No. 10. It has wooden fixtures and holes and square-sockets are still visible to hold the wooden devices.

Nagaraju observed 'the façade of this cave was originally plain like Ajanta 10 and the sculptural and façade decoration is an afterthought.' Nagaraju further observed that 'the facade decoration on the sides was done at the date when the two lenas, cave 11 to left and cave 15 to the right were made and right in continuation to these, the central portion of the façade was also filled with decoration.' Considering the method of carving, the upper level carving where the vedikā design is carved and the projected area of the caitya arch, it was imperative that the artisans thought of employing the decorative vocabulary at the same time when the carving process began. Therefore the decoration over the façade can not be an after-thought. Besides, the recessed carving over the hillock is done in order to keep in mind the direction of monsoon showers. In addition to this, had the decoration been an after-thought the amount of relief of the main caitya arch on its exterior side would have been much higher than the present level. As far as the lack of symmetry is concerned, it may be observed that there is no symmetry in the motifs but there is symmetry in the space division. The cave has several inscriptions, one of the patron's name is Sri Dharase (na).
When the excavation of cave 12 was in progress, four vihāra caves were also planned along with the magnificent caitya hall. Two storied vihāra caves were excavated on either side of the caitya hall. At the upper level, a series of caitya arches are carved whereas at the lower level small caitya arches are carved over the vedikā design. There are only three caitya arches and the rest of the space is occupied by the vedikā design (Fig. 71). Similar design is repeated on left side of the caitya cave, but now it is badly mutilated. Caves on right side are No.13, 14, 15 and 16. Caves No. 15 and 16 are located at upper level. Both the caves consist of a hall with two cells at back wall. Cave No. 15 has semi circular niches, doorways have straight jambs whereas in cave No. 16 doorways are rectangular. Both the caves have a partition wall, and are approached by a stair case near cave No.14. Below caves No.15 & 16, cave No.13 is located. The front of this cave is ruined completely. Three cells are carved at the back and one each on its side walls. Cells at the back wall and right side wall have one stone bed each. At the back wall the vedikā design is carved with small caitya arches. Continuity of vedikā design is disrupted by a large caitya arch over the middle cell door (fig.72). All the cell doorways have inward rake. Right wall cell doorway has three dvāraśākhās whereas its latching arrangement at the back of the doorway consists of a square projection with holes on the top and in the middle. The device is meant for wooden door. It is illustrated below:

At the back-wall, cell doors with similar (as illustrated above) devices are made but with either one or two square holes.
Middle cell door of the back wall has three dvārśākhās (fig.72) whereas the other two have a single dvārśākhā. The left cell door has two dvārśākhās. The Area under the projected arch over the cell-door, is activated by employing semi-circular bands crossing the vertical bands, thus, creating the effect of recession in the space. On side walls of the hall, two benches are provided. There are square holes over the back side of the front beam, which indicates that the cave must have had wooden fixtures to close the entrance.

The distribution of the caves in the entire complex may be illustrated as follows:

Cave No.11 at the left of the caiitya cave No.12 is located at the upper level. It consists of a hall and four cells, three at the back and one on right wall. The upper part of the cell doors has a projected beam over which a vedikā design along with small caiitya arches is carved (fig.62). The delineation of railing is bold and naturalistic, which is an early feature and the caiitya arches too are somewhat with broad spanned. However, it may be observed that there is no progression in the application of the caiitya-arch and vedikā design motifs. Their size varies according to the availability of space. Cave No.8 is located below the above. It is a simple hall having four cells each on the back wall and right side wall. The cave is plain and simple. Nagaraju has assigned this cave to C-100 BC. His argument is based on the fact that the doorways are plain and the cave is bereft of any decoration. However, the positioning of the cave near the caiitya hall is a clear indication of its date close to the caiitya hall itself i.e. mid-second century BC. Besides, slanting doors or absence of decoration cannot be taken as a criterion to ascertain its later date as cave No.18 on palaeographic consideration is dated to early second century BC and this cave too has simple door cells and no decoration. As for the chronological position of this caiitya cave, it is later than cave No. 18 and No.22 and therefore may be dated after one or two decades of cave 18 & 22 in the second century BC. Subsequently,
the other caves were excavated which are adjacent to the caitya cave. Caves No.11 (fig. 73) and 8 are later than cave No.15, 16 and 13. Thus by this time monastic complex at Bhaja had expanded.

In the subsequent century, caves No.9 and 10 were added near cave No.11 whereas an independent excavation of cave No.6 was carried out by the donor Badha, wife of a ploughman (fig.74). This cave too has an interior decoration of caitya arches and the vedikā design. Cave 10 has a provision of the front pillar. It has a base of pyramidal square bands and a pot is carved over it. The base is still intact whereas the pillar capital is broken and lying in front of cave No.7. It is adorned with an animal figure. The body of the animal figure does not cling to the surface.

In the first century AD caves No.5, 14, 23 and cistern excavation 19 were added along with other caves beyond cave No.22. The water cistern i.e. No.19 was an outcome of donation by the Mahārathī Kosikiputa Viṇṇudatta. Another son of Kosikiputa had donated at Karla. Nagaraju observed that caves No.24, 26, 21, 23, 25 were excavated in the middle of the third century BC. He observed that many of these caves are simple and go further to prove how the evolution took place from simple to the complex on certain typological variations. However, single-celled caves and circular format continues even in the later period. Besides, the stūpa in cave No.26 is simple and has a socket to hold the cchatra but this alone cannot be taken as a criterion to date these excavations to such an early date. Simple stūpa with wooden cchatra is also found at Wai (to be discussed later) and the tradition even continues further. Several stūpas are also excavated as memorial stūpas at Bhaja i.e. cave no.20. The memorial stūpa gallery also bears stylistic features according to their chronological order. Such a big memorial gallery is also found at Thanala-Nadsur and Kanheri.

**BEDSA**

Bedsa is located on the eastern side of the Sahyādri hills and at the backside of Bhaja cave-hills or Visapur-Lohagad forts. Altogether there are 15 excavations, which includes one caityagriha and one big vihāra, seven cisterns and the rest are small
excavations and a memorial stūpa (fig. 76). Bedsa caves lie on the route between Thanala-Nadsur and Shelarvadi, Ter via Tel-Bailya ghat. The most important cave excavations at Bedsa are the No. 7 and 11. Cave no. 7 is an apsidal vault-roof caityagriha whereas cave 11 is an apsidal vihāra cave. The rest of the caves are vihāra caves except cave no. 3 which is a memorial stūpa. After the grand scale excavations at Bhaja, Bedsa is another challenge that created a new language in the tradition of the cave excavation. By this time, the façade in the western Deccan cave tradition moved from its earlier wood to stone screen wall. Besides, introduction of the veranda (12 ft. wide 30.2 ft deep) with two front pillars in the design of the caityagriha is an added feature at Bedsa. The height of the cave was set on the first scarp from the top of the hill. The vedikā pattern covers the top beam like devices. Then began the carving of the two front pillars with the capital figures (fig. 77). The next stage is to make enough space for the veranda. Three cells are carved in the veranda. Simultaneously the façade is marked over the surface. The main caitya arch windows and the doors are made. Later the interior is taken up for carving. The hall has an apsidal vaulted roof with a stūpa at the semi-circular end (fig. 76). The Design of the cave appears to be an organised effort. Front pillars of the caitya cave are massive (fig. 77). They are pot-based, octagonal with inverted lotus capital figures (fig. 78). The format is the one developed from the relief pillar at Bhaja cave No.22 (fig. 57). The inverted lotus capital is carved with a strong linear rhythm the projection of each petal having an angular treatment (fig. 78). The outer shape of the inverted lotus gets so much curved inside that the lower portion projects out considerably to balance the weight visually. The top portion has a square frame where an āmalaka-like motif is fitted in. The square frame holds the inverted steps where the capital figures are carved. Figures of elephant and horse riders are diligently carved. These images show considerable advance over the carving of images at Bhaja. Now these riders do not get confined to the picture plane. They come out of the picture plane and create independent existence within the provided space. Carving is no more over powered by frontality. Their head gears still retain the same design as those of Bhaja but drapery shows a lot of awareness for the three dimensional surface. Complete roundity with perfection in posture was indeed an achievement at Bedsa (fig. 79, 80). Sculptors have resolved the problem of depicting the
legs with three-dimensional effect by foreshortening. Even the dimensions of body under draped portion, is clearly seen. The animal figures look aggrandised as if they held air inside. One can see how the artisans have moved away from the shallow relief carving at Bhaja to greater dimensions of the surface to activate the space under the upper beam of the cave. On the other hand, the Pitalkhora images, though they are in round, do not display the linear rhythm of Bedsa. The other two adjacent pillars on both the sides, which are attached to side walls, also bear the same quality.

The introduction of a veranda at Bedsa is an important development in the existing tradition of the caityas. The veranda consists of four cells, two on the left wall and two on the right wall. One cell on the left wall remains unfinished (fig.76). It shows how the artisans intended to have symmetry in the design. The whole veranda wall is decorated with a series of caitya arches placed in horizontal bands. (fig. 82). The noteworthy element in this case is every caitya arch is carved in a vertical row thus maintaining the symmetry and physical balance of the decoration. Each cell door is decorated with caitya arch motifs above it.

A big caitya arch dominates the façade decoration. The area around the caitya arch is filled up with a series of caitya arch motifs, vedikā pattern and square design in the horizontal space. The lower portion below the caitya arch is carved in stone and this is a significant departure from the earlier tradition of using wood. The caitya arch window is based on the horizontal beam on which three small arches are carved along with the vedikā design and semi-circular mouldings having square pattern design. The intention appears to be to make the surface active visually to give good appearance like storied-balconies of structural buildings. Under these caitya arches, entrance doors are carved in the middle and left side whereas the right one has a window with jāli. The lower part of the façade is embellished with a railing pattern that continues on the other two sides of the veranda walls. The middle space between the upper horizontal bar over the (entrance) doorways and the lower railing pattern is left empty.

The interior hall is divided into a central nave and two aisles on either side divided by a row of pillars running parallel to the wall. The columns of the hall are
octagonal and do not have either base or capital. They rise straight from the floor level and taper at the top, attached to the triforium i.e. the horizontal band that runs apsidal and is between the vault roof and the pillars (fig.83). The pillars slant inward slightly and have several motifs in relief like the chhatra, and triratna (fig.84). The triforium and semi-circular roof of aisle have some vertical chases and holes, which are used to fix the semi-circular wooden ribs. They are now lost. At the further end of the nave stands the rock-cut stūpa. In the stūpa carving, a progression is observed from Bhaja. While carving the stūpa at Bedsa, the artisans visualised a different design to make stūpa design unique and different from the earlier stūpas of Bhaja. Thus the design they adopted here is different. The cylindrical portion of the stūpa is divided into two sections, one rises from the base and another section rises from the top of the previous one till the anda (fig.83). The base of the stūpa and the top ends of the cylindrical sections are decorated with the vedikā design. The harmikā rises from the square base on the anda. It has a cchatra made of wood, which is still existing. However, one really wonders as to why the artisans have gone for such elongated doubled drum stūpa design. Answer to this question is equally simple. The artisan’s awareness of pictorial balance of the design is clearly shown from the very beginning of this cave, the interior hall is relatively narrow, besides, the verticality in the excavation is highly pronounced, therefore, in order to create a suitable design to suit vertical space, the stūpa is elongated vertically. Such devices are also used in several other excavations where the dimension of the stūpa is largely determined by the suitable interior space such as at Kuda, Junnar and Yerphal. An inscriptional record on the cell door of the northern veranda wall mentions the gift of Pusaṇaka who is the son of Anand a seṭhi inhabitant of Nasik.12 Donor Pusaṇaka was a wealthy man who came from Nasik. It appears that the excavation is an outcome of donation by a single wealthy donor. Considerable resources must have gone into such grand excavation. The veranda cells signify the direct control of the caitya hall by the resident monks. The inscription on paleographic ground is dated to first century BC and considering the style of architectural design which is an advance over the Bhaja cave No.12 together with the commendable carving of the human figure, the cave at Bedsa may be assigned to first century BC. The tradition of the apsidal hall with veranda set forth at Bedsa is also followed in the
Māmala region at Karla, Junnar Amba-Ambika, Ganesh Pahar 6. The façade is also followed at Junnar isolated caitya.

Cave 11

Simultaneously another unique excavation was planned at Bedsa as if the artisans were bent on creating a different visual experience at different site. Cave No.11 is a vihāra cave, which has an apsidal vault-roof. Nine cells are carved around the apsidal hall. Each cell has two beds. The front is completely broken (figs. 88 and 85). The excavation on either side of the entrance appears to be an extension. The entrance of the cave is marked by two vertical-jambs on the roof that suggests wooden screen might have been fitted here. Each doorway of the cell in the apsidal hall is decorated with the caitya arch window. In fact the horizontal space above the doors and below the vault-roof is activated by vedikā design and a caitya arch being held by the two relief pillars on either side of each cell doorway. The lower portion between the caitya arches too is decorated with the vedikā design. The over all pattern of the design is the same that is found in cave no.7 of Bedsa (figs.85, 86).

The site also has a memorial rock-cut stūpa i.e. cave No.3. The stūpa is small and is located in a circular chamber (fig.87) which has a domical roof. There are four holes over the hemispherical dome probably meant to receive the wooden harmikā. The inscription records that the stūpa is made in honour of Gobhuti a monk living at Marakuda, an ancient name of Bedsa. It further says that the stūpa was caused to be made by his pupils Asalamita. Gobhuti is mentioned as aya i.e. living in the forest. The inscription shows that the stūpa is erected in honour of the elder monk who lived in the forest and dwelt on the Marakuda. It is likely that the surrounding area was full of forest and the monk was living on the hill and the settlement must have been close to the hill. It is also evident that the monk started dwelling initially on the hill and later the monastic establishment must have been made when the Sangha became more organised and the monks had an important role to play in the region. The date of this inscription is later than cave No.7 inscription i.e. close to first century BC or early first century AD on paleographic grounds. Thus it is evident that the monk Gobhuti, who was living at Marakuda, might have initiated the excavation of the cave complex. And later it appears
that his disciple who erected a stūpa in Gobhuti's memory must have taken over charge of the monastic complex.

The excavation of the cistern denotes that the site also received patronage from the Mahabhojas. An inscription over the cistern (excavation 5) records ‘Gift of Sandnaka the daughter of a Mahābhoya (mahāboja) Mahadevi Mahārathini the wife of Apadevanaka. The inscription is dated on paleographic ground to the same date as the memorial stūpa inscription. Thus it is evident that the Mahābhojis and Mahārathis appear to be dominant local rulers under the Sātavāhanas and patrons of Buddhism.

The caves were occupied even in later times. Burgess noted traces of paintings of the Buddha figure on the pillars of the caitya hall. Nothing is visible now. The evidence would indicate that the site continued to be in use further. The site might have received the patronage from the local people.

KARLE/KARLA

Karla is located at the end of the Borghat from coastal region to inland i.e. at the end of the pass. Altogether fifteen caves were excavated. Many of the excavations are Hinayāna excavations. All caves face west. ASI has not numbered the caves properly. The numbers are given from the south-western side. The ancient name of the site according to an inscription is Valuraka. Karle is more famous for the big caityagriha and hence more attention has been given to the study of the great caitya cave. Among other notable cave excavations are one caitya-vihāra cave and the rest are vihāra caves. The cave excavation at this site did not begin with the big caitya cave. Therefore to trace the early phase of cave activity at Karla becomes important.

Early phase

The early phase is noticeable in cave No.11 (figs. 89, 90, 91). The cave is irregular in its plan. Today it looks like an open cave as it is much mutilated and is used for varied purposes by the visitors. The cave appears irregular in its plan. Its early configuration can be easily made out. It is a rectangular hall. The length of the back wall of the hall is 8.8 ft. whereas the length of front portion is almost 9.9 ft., thus making it a
little irregular. On the left corner of the hall, a circular dome cut in the rock-cut ceiling, demands close examination. At the first sight, the question arises why there is a rock-cut circular umbrella and what its relationship with the hall is? Indeed, a rock-cut umbrella (fig.90) indicates the existence of a stūpa, which might be a structural one. On the top of the back wall of the hall, starting from the left corner to the right corner, there is a carving of the relief caitya arches as a decorative motif (fig.91). Thus the reconstruction of the existing hall would indicate a rectangular hall with a circular chamber to house a structural stūpa. The plan has considerable affinity with the Lomas Rishi cave of the Barabara hill and a rectangular hall at Kondivite (fig.182). It should also be noted that the use of the caitya arch as a decorative motif for the interior decoration of the vihāra is one of the early features that is observed at Ajanta No.12, 13, Pithalkhora No.4, Thanala-Nadsur No. 7, Kondivite 12, and Kondane 2 which are dated to second century BC and this feature of interior decoration of the vihāras is also observed at Bhaja. Hence, Karle cave No.11 may be considered as the earliest cave of caitya-vihāra type where both the caitya and vihāra concept are merged. This is likely to be earlier than Bedsa 7. This is an indication of the fact that the rock-cut activity at Karla began at an early date. Nagaraju has dated this cave to third century AD and observes that in the third century AD the structural stūpas were constructed in the caves and referred to the example at Kanheri where several brick stūpas including memorial stūpas were constructed. However, Nagaraju disregards the nature of the plan of the cave and the caitya arch motifs in the hall. Besides structural stūpas are also used at Thanala-Nadsur cave No.7 which is dated to early second century BC. Another example would be the caitya griha at Pithalkhora (fig. 21) and Karad-Chachegaon (fig. 55). At Pithalkhora cave No.3 the stūpa is semi-structural, same is the case at Karad Chachegaon group of caves (to be discussed later). So the use of brick had been in practice in the rock-cut cave excavation in western Deccan. Therefore, Karle cave No.11 may be dated to the period from late second century BC to early first century BC. A big water cistern is also carved on the right side of this cave. Thus the activity at Karla began with the excavation of cave No.11. Subsequently, the upper story vihāra on the right side of above cave No.11 is carved (fig. 92, 93). The cave numbered as No.13 is approached by a flight of stairs from cave No.11 which is broken
now. Only the left over portion is seen on the ceiling. This cave (fig. 93) has a big hall and cells around. Four cells are carved on either side of the hall whereas the back wall has as many as five cells. Some cells have stone beds. The front of the cave is broken. Cave 14 is excavated over this cave which is of later date.

**Caitya Cave no. 8**

The next phase of excavation was planned on a grand scale. As has already been seen at Bhaja and Bedsa, the donors came from other places. Patronage provided for this caitya made it possible to excavate ambitious project of grand caitya hall at Karla. By the time the cave was conceived, the Buddhist Sangha had already established its base and looked forward for the grand excavation. The Sangha over here could attract numerous donations. The sethi Bhutapala from Vejayanti (i.e. Banavasi) was the leading patron for establishing this grand cave. Others also joined this effort and the result was magnificent. The architect of the cave appears to be well aware of the earlier designs that were excavated at Bhaja, Pitalkhora, Bedsa, Ajanta etc. and hence could make some additional adjustment to the prevailing formats. The artisans employed their skill in relation to the amount of work expenditure as well as required time. A stone screen wall in front of the caitya façade was an addition to the existing design of the apsidal vault-roof pillared caitya hall with veranda in the front. It not only emerged as the largest caitya hall in the region but also opened-up many new possibilities in the beauty of the caitya excavation. The combination of veranda along with the apsidal caitya hall is received as a new innovative plan. The south-west monsoon in the region is very strong and the means to protect the façade from heavy showers too is thought of. In all the earlier excavations, the caityas are made deep into the hillock to protect them from the south-west monsoon. However in this excavation no such method is followed in spite of the fact that the cave faces the west.

The natural configuration of the hillock is properly used to make this caitya cave monumental and impressive. The top portion is decorated with the vedikā which is visible only from a close view (figs. 94, 95). The front lion capital pillar is chiselled out. It is likely that a similar kind of pillar was carved on the right side where now a temple exists.
The pillar is massive and monumental. It is placed on a platform having sixteen flat moulds. The top is carved with the inverted lotus petals having sharp lines, dividing every petal properly. An āmalaka motif fitted in a square frame is carved, above which, the inverted stepped pyramid patterns are carved. The design used here is the same as at Bedsa cave No.7. Lion capitals are carved over the stepped pyramidal strips. The artisans perhaps did not pay much attention to render the image with precision. Their awareness of the monumentality is best seen here, the lions are heavy and voluminous. It is stated by many that on top of this was a Dhammacakra, but no evidence remains there at present. Artisans had to cut a lot of rock initially to make the front pillars. Soon commenced the inside deep cutting to chisel out rough configuration for the first stone screen wall to protect the façade from the heavy showers of south-west monsoon, which is a new addition to the existing design of the caitya plan. The work simultaneously progressed on the front pillars and the stone wall (figs. 95, 115). The major chunk of the rock is removed till the ground level to determine the proportionate height of the stone screen wall and to fix the floor level. Upper part of this screen wall has five vertical rectangular gaps for light and ventilation. At the same time, veranda is being carved from both the ends i.e. from the upper and lower side of the stone screen wall. Carving at this stage is mere broad configuration. Simultaneously the details are carved on the outside pillars. The veranda decoration is already conceived in a different way. Enough positive rock is left on the left & right in the veranda to make the elephants (fig. 96). Shortly the work started on the caitya façade. The arch window is cut out and a space for the beam is left. The entrance door is cut. The carvers started interior carving. Configurations of the pillars are done and the carving proceeded further to make the stūpa and the circumabulatory path. At this stage the façade is simple, a vertical rectangular frame with the arch window and a central doorway.

Soon the two side doorways were cut. The arch window and the veranda might have been used to fix the scaffoldings so that the carvers could stand and work on the façade decoration. Horizontal space division in four parts all along the façade and veranda wall is very prominent. Considering the spacing of the decorative vocabulary, it is likely that the grid method is used to carve the series of caitya arch designs together
with the *vedikā* pattern. Similar method was also used at Bedsa and partly at Bhaja 12.
The first top horizontal level begins with the *vedikā* design. In fact, every horizontal space
is divided by the *vedikā* design only (fig. 97). Space between each *vedikā* pattern is
further divided by a row of the *caitya* arches, one is recessed whereas the other one is
followed by a projected one to the level of the projection of the *vedikā* design. The
projected one is being held by two relief pillars. Below the recessed *caitya* arch, another
*caitya* arch is carved, thus making the surface activation a balanced act. The second row
from top however starts from the projected arch being held by the two pillars. The other
*caitya* arch is recessed and is being held by the semi-circular projection having the small
design of the *caitya* arch together with the square pattern (fig. 97). One more *caitya* arch
is carved below the above. The third row too bears the same design as the above but with
a slight alteration. The fourth row however is depicted differently. This row is just above
the beam level that holds the big *caitya* arch. Two small and two big arches are carved
alternately. Under the small *caitya* arches male and female figures are carved (figs. 96,
97, 98, 99). This is a significant departure from the earlier Bedsa excavation. At Kondane
too, the human figures are carved in a row over the façade. At Karla, their relief is highly
pronounced by deep cutting of the area around them. The space for the sculptor is always
a real space and it is deep cutting that gives the amount of high relief. The figures are now
completely free from frontality, and have free movement in the given space. They are
heavy and the muscle-folds, created by their bending postures, are minutely depicted by
the carvers including the bulging of the hips. Therefore they look more sensuous. On both
the side-walls of the veranda three elephants are depicted under the horizontal beam of
the façade, which is extended over the side walls. These elephants stand still. Their
movement has stopped. The configuration of the muscles of the face of the elephants is
stylised and their idea is taken from Pitalkhora. The lower side of the elephant too has a
*vedikā* pattern that runs across the façade wall.

The façade is dominated by the *caitya*-arch (fig. 100). The area around the *caitya*
arch bears the same decorative pattern as on the veranda side wall. Thus, the surface
undulation is done by employing organised repetition of the decorative pictorial
vocabulary. The beam below the *caitya* arch is decorated with the *vedikā* design and three
Caitya arches are carved over it, the way it has been carved at Bedsa. The space below the beam and between the façade doorway is empty at Bedsa, an attempt of sculptural decoration is done at Kondane whereas at Karla, it is filled up by the sculptural decoration (figs. 107, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106). These images are in full round. Though they are confined to the given frame, they are free from any restrictions. The artisans show considerable sensitivity towards the natural modelling. This naturalistic modelling is first seen at Bedsa where the plastic form is fully developed. Every fold of the headgear of the male figure is carved with precision. The eye sockets are not very deep but nevertheless the eye protrusion is much restrained by the outer curvature level. Their nose is not very pronounced. The lips are protruding, round cheeks add to the smiling gesture of their faces. Their drapery too bears independent existence but more or less it integrates with the volume of the entire body (figs. 107, 106). The placement of the hands of the male around the shoulders of female, pose no problem for the artisans, which shows considerable command over the plastic mass of the body. All the Buddha images in the veranda are intrusive and are carved later (figs. 102, 104, 105, 106) as can be observed in their stylistic conventions and also by placing them in between the originally planned and excavated sculptures. Some are even carved on the vedikā pattern.

The interior hall has apsidal plan and vaulted roof. The interior pillars except those around the apse are pot-based and massive. Their capitals too have the design of the front pillar i.e. inverted lotus with āmalaka fitted in the square form, over which, the stepped inverted pyramidal strips are carved to hold the capital figures of animal riders consisting male and female (figs. 107, 108, 109, 110). The artisans’ are aware that their carving of the human figures would be looked from below i.e. above eye level of the beholder, so they have made the images with forward bent as if inviting the spectator’s gaze. It is interesting to note that all the animals depicted on the pillars are elephants. Their movement though is limited by their physical body i.e. seated posture but their trunk is shown swaying towards the back and sometimes even circling around their mouth (fig. 110). Besides, their tusks are not carved out of the solid rock, instead holes are made to fit-in their tusks. What material they used is difficult to say but presumably it was wood. The back side of the pillars too have capital figures of animal riders, but the
animals are horses and occasionally the motif of the sphinx is used (fig.109). The vault roof is covered with wooden ribs. These wooden ribs function as decorative devices (see fig.115).

The stūpa at the back is modelled on the lines of Bedsa. It has two cylindrical bases with anda (fig.107). The vedikā design is carved at the base and at upper limit of the two cylinders. The harmikā is carved out of solid rock where the wooden cchatra still stands. It is decorated with an incised carving. Concentric circles are carved and each circle is delineated in a different pattern (fig.116). Such grand excavation could have been possible because of huge donations by different donors, which indicates the collective nature of the patronage. The category of the donors are: 2 Sethīs, 2 Mahārathis, 3 Monks, 2 Nuns, 2 Carpenters, 1 Perfumer, 5 Yavanas, 1 Upāsaka, 7 Lay donor, 2 Merchants/traders.

Nagaraju observes that the front of the Karle caitya was made when Bedsa 7 was in progress. He finds similarity in front pillars and their placement in front of the caitya, which led him to conclude that both were almost contemporary. But Karle front pillar is very different from the Bedsa front pillars and hence they cannot be taken as contemporaneous. Besides, there is considerable progress from Bedsa to Karla in the stages of excavations. Artisans at Karla utilised past experiences well to create a new architectural language at Karla.

Various scholars have assigned this cave to different dates. Burgess assigned this cave from 50 BC to first century AD, Coomaraswamy assigned it to the beginning of Christian era, Stella Kramrisch assigned in 100 AD, Karl Khandalvala assigned in 1st to 2nd century AD, Percy Brown to second century BC, Dehejia 50-70 AD and Nagaraju 40-60 BC. However, the inscriptive, architectural and sculptural styles indicate a common date bracket. When Ushavadatta, a son-in-law of Nahapāṇa, visited the cave site, it was already excavated. His inscription mentions the gift of a village to the monks residing in the caves at Vāluraka. Besides when the Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi established his rule, he too continued the same grant of land donation which was given by Ushavadatta previously. None of these records talk about the donation for the cave excavation. Thus the cave had already been finished by the time Ushavadatta visited
Karla. As has been discussed earlier, the date of Nahapāṇa's rule is prior to around mid first century AD, therefore this grand caitya cave at Karla may be dated to early first century AD, a date incidentally corresponding with the date proposed by Coomaraswamy.

Subsequently, other caves especially the caves No.15, 12,4 and 14 were excavated. Cave No. 15 was excavated in second century AD. Cave No.4 (fig. 117,118) marks the next phase of excavation whereas cave No14 must have been carved in the third century AD. Thus the rock-cut cave activity at Karla started with the rectangular hall and the circular caitya chamber and then further expanded. The artisans used their pictorial vocabulary effectively to make the designs visually powerful. It also shows how collective patronage to one particular excavation could create a grand caitya cave.

JUNNAR

Junnar is close to Naneghat, it emerged as an important monastic centre in the northern part of the Māmala,region. The circular caitya cave with the pillars is the earliest excavation. Later many caves were excavated. It has already been discussed earlier how the development at Junnar took place and above all how the artisans arrived at a peculiar architectural language of the flat roofed quadrangular caityas.22 The blind caitya arch window on the façade at Manamodi hill gave new direction towards the rock-cut excavation technique. Later it became a necessity while excavating the Ganesh Pahar caitya cave No.6 where a traditional caitya facade design is combined with the vihāra facade design. Subsequently it became an integrated architectural unit in the façade design at Bhimashankar –II. The flat roofed caitya is an adoption from the earlier caves such as at Kondivite and Karle. At Bhimashankar-II the artisans preferred flat roof instead of vaulted roof partly because the caitya arch window was blind and excavation of flat roof was relatively easy as well as less time consuming. Thus there is a transformation from the vault roof variety to the flat-roof variety. The facade design was planned like the facade of vihāra designs developed at Nasik. This is evident at Ganesh leni 14, Shivneri 2, and 48. It must be noted that the excavation of these caitya caves at Junnar was
patronised by single individuals. The addition of a veranda too became the tradition of the cave plan in the flat roof quadrangular caityas.

SHELA

SHELARWADI

Shelarwadi is located on the route from Ter to Bedsa and Karla. Though it is a small complex it has some significant cave excavations. The total number of cave excavations are 11, many of them are water cisterns. Cave No.3 (figs. 121, 122) is a rectangular hall with four cells at the back. None of the cells have stone beds. Only one entrance door is provided to enter the cave. The back wall of the hall has a decoration of the vedikā design on the top above the cell doors. The vedikā design is supported by relief pillars having pot-based and pot-capital types. The rendering of the decoration is comparatively rigid when compared to Bhaja, Bedsa, and Karla.

The other notable excavation is cave No.8 which is a caitya-vihāra cave (fig. 119,120,121). The front of this cave is changed now. But in all probability, it must have had a central doorway and two windows on either side. The hall is squarish having three cells on each side. The central cell at the back wall is cut deep and an oblong chamber is made to house a stūpa. The stūpa was converted into a Shiva linga and much of it is broken. The cchatra over the ceiling is still intact thus indicating that the cchatra is carved out of the rock itself. The patron of this cave is from Dhenukakata whose name is inscribed as Siagutanika, the wife of a farmer and a gahapati. The flat roofed quadrangular plan of the caitya-vihāra is the most economic plan artisans arrived at. Thus, it could have been financed by individuals. The cave also has another inscription, which is dedicatory in nature and mentions the caitya gharo of the Buddha dedicated to the memory of one of the monks Bhayata. Paleographically the inscription is assignable to the third century AD. Nagaraju dated the cave to the later part of the third century AD. He further observed that the cave indicated the transitional phase from the Hinayāna to the Mahāyāna. Dhaivalikar on the other hand considers it as a later Hinayāna cave and assigns it to the end of third century or early fourth century AD. This cave may be assigned to the early-third century AD. The inscriptive reference to the Buddha
caitya gharō would indicate that the Hinayāna dominance in the western Deccan was perhaps receding.

In the Mamala region the rock-cut cave excavation started at Bhaja and Junnar in the second century BC. Bhaja initiated an architectural language, which was later developed at Bedsa and Karla. The first excavation of a caitya at Karla was itself an innovation, deviating from the normative tradition of a separate caitya and vihāra cave. Instead, a combination of the caitya-vihāra design was adopted, a concept developed at Nasik in the first century AD. At the same time, the normative design of the caitya having apsidal plan with vaulted roof and pillared hall was elaborated. Such elaboration was possible due to considerable resource availability. At Junnar, many caves were excavated. Progress of the caitya cave excavations show artisans exercised certain options to arrive at possible solutions which came out of improvisation over the existing tradition. At Shelarwadi, the cave is simple and has no grandness like Karla or Junnar. The apsidal vault-roof vihāra design of Bedsa has not been followed anywhere else in the entire region. This shows considerable consciousness in choosing the plan and design from more utility point of view.

Notes:
3. Personal communication with Dr. Shobhana Gokhale.
4. Ibid.
5. Kramrisch Stella, 1931 Indian Sculpture p. 36.
6. Nagaraju opcit p-120
7. Ibid.
8. Deshpande M.N. 1959 ‘Important Epigraphical records from caitya Cave Bhaja’ Lalit Kala (Ancient) No.6 p. 30
10. Ibid. p. 115
11. L.L. 1078
13. L.L. 1110
15. L.L. 1111
17. L.L. 1087
18. Nagaraju 1981 op.cit p. 224
19. See bibliography
20. L.L. 1099
22. L.L. 1121
KARHĀATAKA REGION: (present Satara, Kolhapur and parts of Pune districts)

In this historical region, cave sites of Karad, Shirwal, Wai, Tamkane, Pohale and Yerphal are located. Karad is the principal site with maximum caves in this historical region. The other sites are small having very limited excavations. All the cave excavations in the region are small in dimensions when compared to caves described earlier. Karad and Wai are important cave sites in this region. Types of the caitiya caves found in this region are: 1) vault-roof pillarless hall; 2) flat-roof apsidal pillarless hall; and 3) the flat-roof quadrangular caitya halls. The caves of Wai-Pandavgad are studied for the first time. The cave sites of Yerphal and Tamkane have very few excavations.

KARAD

Karad is a taluka town in Satara district. The ancient name of Karad is Karhāatak as mentioned in Barhut and Kuda inscriptions. An archaeological mound, situated on the bank of river Koyana, was excavated. The caves are located 5 to 7 km. away from the Karad town. All the caves are located in the vicinity of Karad. The caves are scattered in four groups, totalling sixtyfive. The caves can be grouped as follows:

Group-I and Group-II caves are located near the village Jakhinvadi. On the other side of the same hill are located Group-III and IV caves. Group-III caves are located facing the Koyana valley, at the backside of Kirloskar Company. Group-IV caves are located near Chachegaon.

The present analysis is confined to a few important caves. Mostly the caitya caves and very few vihāra caves are discussed. Intensive surveys need to be done around the hill to locate caves properly.

All the caves at Karad are so far dated to second-third century AD. The early phase of cave activity is observed at Chachegaon. These caves are mentioned by Burgess, and are located in a ravine further west and facing westwards. The cave numbered as No.60, is a vault-roof apsidal pillarless hall (figs. 123,124,125,126). Its façade design differs from the western Deccan cave tradition. Its facade consists of a huge caitya arch window. Perhaps the cave excavation and the façade decoration were
consciously planned in a different way from whatever is planned elsewhere. The scarp of the hill is well chosen to excavate the cave. The top portion of the cave has a series of seven relief caiya arches. Between the bigger caiya arches, small relief caiya arches are carved, thus making the gravitational balance of the design more balanced. An elongated semi-circular arch is carved below the caiya-arches motifs, which dominates the entrance. The relief of the arch is badly damaged (fig.123). Area inside the arch is deeply cut (fig.124). The cutting of a rectangular doorway and the interior carving were a simultaneous process. The hall is apsidal and pillarless with a vault-roof (fig.125, 126). At the end of the apse (fig.125) a stūpa is carved. Only the drum is visible. It is very likely that a structural anda in brick was made on the drum. In fact, a brick structure with an inscription, which is yet to be published, was noticed during the clearance work taken up by ASI. Dhavalikar noted this cave as flat roof and dated it to mid-third century AD. Perhaps by the time Dhavalikar visited the site it must have been full of silt but even then noting the cave as flat roof is somewhat questionable. After the recent clearance, the façade of this cave is visible completely. Considering the facade design, it could not have been done in third century AD. The four squarish holes in front of the caiya facade indicate that they are meant to fix some wooden fixtures. The design of the façade especially the placing of caiya arch right down till the ground level is an adoption from the designs such as those of Lomas Rishi and Guntupalle. Moreover, the caiya arch motifs are fluid in their carving. Apsidal pillarless hall is also seen at Thanala-Nadsur. The use of structural stūpa in the cave excavation is also found at Pitalkhora, Thanala-Nadsur and even at Karla. Therefore, it is likely that this cave may be dated to the end of second century BC or the beginning of first century BC.

A few caves are excavated on the left side of this caiya. The next cave is relatively a small excavation (fig. 127). It is a vihāra, its façade broken and walls relatively thin, and the hall pillarless (fig. 128). The cave is full of debris. Nearly six caves are excavated on either sides. The wall surface of the cave is much eroded. In the absence of the total clearing of the debris, nothing can be suggested further. The next cave is a cave having a veranda and a hall. Only two cells are excavated in the hall. The excavation is unfinished. There are a few excavations on the right side of the caiya cave.
but many of them are yet to be exposed. After the Chachegaon caitya excavation, the area of activity in the vicinity of Karad shifted to the other side of the same hill. This group of caves mentioned as group-I is located Southwest of village Jakhinvadi. All these caves are not easily accessible.

**Group-I** has a few notable caitya cave excavations. There are a number of vihāra caves mainly having a varanda, hall and cells around the hall. However, as noted earlier, the discussion is confined to a few caves here in order to see how the artisans created a pattern of cave excavations, which is confined to Karhātaka region.

**Cave No.6** is a caitya cave, facing South-west. The cave is an apsidal vaulted pillarless hall with a front veranda. The façade of the cave is very peculiar. It appears that the architect of this cave studied the possible problem of light, air and rain at this hillock. At the same time, the façade decoration appears to be well worked out. As usual, when the excavation began a lot of rock was removed from the upper part where a window is located. The window in this case is a significant departure from the normative caitya arch window as it is a squarish window (figs. 129,130,131, 132,133). Such a window is also found at Pitalkhora cave No.10. Part of the cave is much damaged. At present, in front of the entrance, a pillar on the right still exists (fig. 129). It is difficult to make out the configuration of pillar properly. On the left side, nothing can be made out except that rectangular cutting-marks still exist. It is evident from the cutting on either side ends of the entrance that there was a veranda. It had two front pillars and two pilasters at both the ends (as evident in plan, fig.133). Dhavalikar observes ‘ it is highly likely that there was structural or wooden canopy over the pillars as this cave is also open to sky’. However, a close observation reveals that there is no uniformity seen on the veranda ceiling level which indicates that the veranda ceiling collapsed. Besides, generally in many of the cave excavations at Karad the front portion has collapsed. This may be due to the fact that the caves are cut in a very coarse soft trap rock. However had there been structural or wooden canopy, then the artisans would not have cut the front pillars. At the entrance, two pilasters are carved on either side. The pilasters have inverted pots with the horizontal strips that get enlarged at each step where a cakra and a seated lion are carved. The
pilaster is of the octagonal variety. The image of the seated lion is highly pronounced, the three dimensional rotundity dominates the appearance of the image (fig. 116). It may be observed that a lion pillar is also carved in front of Karla caitya cave.

The interior hall is apsidal without pillars. At the end a stūpa is carved (figs. 131, 133). The notable feature of this cave is that the cchātra of the stūpa is carved along with the vault roof ceiling which indicates how the artisans must have had to leave enough rock for the stupa while excavating an apsidal hall. The stupa has a drum and a big anda. The harmika has the usual design of vedikā pattern and stepped pyramidal strips rise above to hold the cchātra. There is a running ridge over the side and rear walls in the apse and at the junction of the vaulted roof. Over the ridge, vertical grooves are carved. These grooves are meant for fixing the wooden rafters.

Dehejia assigns the Karad group of caves including cave No.6 to 90-150AD and observes that the cchātra engraved over the ceiling is associated with the flat roofed caitya variety which is a later feature. On the other hand, Dhavalikar assigns it to the middle of the second century AD. As discussed above, the cave is of apsidal plan with the veranda and front pillars. The absence of pillars in the apsidal hall is not a new feature as it is also found at Thanala-Nadsur caitya cave, which is having apsidal-vault roof, pillarless hall. The caitya cave at Thanala-Nadsur is dated to the second century BC (to be discussed later). Furthermore, the addition of veranda in the apsidal plan is observed at Bedsa, Karla, Ganesh leni No.6 of Junnar. This plan therefore would indicate an early date, at least earlier than what has been suggested by Dehejia and Dhavalikar. The style of the pilasters in the front, together with the apsidal hall with veranda plan and existence of grooves to fix the wooden fixtures would indicate an early first century AD date. As far as the cchātra attached to the ceiling is concerned, it need not be taken as a chronological indicator, for it is a design much widely used in flat roof caityas. However, at the same time, in case of flat roof caitya cave of Junnar Shivaneri LIX, the cchātra is not attached to the ceiling. Stūpas with the wooden cchātra, need not be taken as the only early feature as the tradition continued right from second century BC to even first-second century AD.
The rest of the caityas in this group are with square or rectangular hall and a flat roof. Cave No.7 is excavated adjacent to cave No.6. It has a veranda, hall and a stūpa chamber (figs. 134, 135, 136). The front is supported by two octagonal pillars and two pilasters are carved at both the ends. The front wall of the hall has a rectangular doorway with windows on either side. The left and right wall of the hall have rectangular chambers having cells, left chamber has a cell at the back. The back wall has a stūpa chamber. The cchatra of the stūpa is engraved on the ceiling of the cave. The cave may be dated to the second century AD on the basis of the plan and design. At present the cave is converted into a Vithoba-Rukmi shrine.

Subsequently, caves No.12 & 17 were taken up for excavation. Cave No.12 (figs. 137,138,139). The cave is planned on the lines of the earlier excavation at Karad itself. It consists of a front varanda, which is broken, and a rectangular flat roofed chamber. The cchatra of the stūpa is carved on the ceiling. The technique used for the excavation is the same as in cave No.6 i.e. to keep the rock intact right upto the ceiling and then gradually shape it to the present form. Similarly cave No.17 is another caitya of flat roof variety (figs. 140, 141, 142). It consists of a courtyard, veranda and a small hall with the stupa chamber at the back wall. It also has two square pillars in front. The hall is entered by a central doorway with two windows on either side. The stūpa in the chamber at the back wall, is delineated with due care. However, the anda is still intact, and it conforms to the earlier tradition of caves 6 & 7. The harmika in this stūpa is small. The shaft of the cchatra is broad. Both the caves may be assigned to late third century A.D. This is a phase when the flat roofed caitya designs were standardised.

Among the group III caves, some caves face Karad City whereas some face Koyana valley. Caves are excavated in two rows at the upper and lower levels. The upper level group of caves, includes cave No.48 a caitya-vihara is approached by a flight of steps from the side of cave No.46 (figs.143, 144, 145, 146). The cave has a veranda and 5 cells at back wall. The middle cell is rectangular in dimension and has a stūpa in it. The façade of this cave is broken. The lower side has a railing pattern decoration, the motif commonly used for the façade decoration at Kanheri caves. Four square-pillars are
carved. Behind each pillar, square holes are carved on the floor. It is likely that such provision of square holes were made to fix wooden devices to hold the façade. Perhaps the carvers were aware of the quality of the rock and therefore such a provision was made. The veranda wall at the back has a centrally located oblong chamber. Two caves are carved on either side (fig. 146). The stūpa in the chamber is big (fig. 144). The upper level of the drum has the vedikā decoration. The aṇḍa is proportionately carved and cchātra over the harmikā touches the ceiling. Unfinished sculptural figures are carved on the right wall of the oblong hall. Their lower portion is still unfinished (fig. 145). The principal male figure is tall and hefty, the treatment of volume is pronounced, the lines are clearly defined, distance between the two legs create a movement whereas on his left is a female holding a casket offering to him. Drapery, headgears and ornaments are flat. It is likely that the lower portion was plastered and painted, as similar technique is also found in the Ajanta cave images.

The fact that the caitya-vihāra plan is preferred in this complex would indicate that a more economically viable plan is used. Excavating a caitya separately and vihāra separately requires considerable resources but the caitya-vihāra plans fulfil both the needs thus reducing the resources that are required to excavate the caitya and vihāras separately. This also shows how the Buddhist monks also preferred such plans. On the stylistic grounds the cave may be dated to mid second century AD.

The rock-cut activity at Karad began as early as 2nd C. BC and continued even in first and second century AD. No Mahāyāna excavation is found at this place. There are a number of caves around this hill, which need to be explored properly and documented.

**WAI**

Wai is situated on the bank of the river Krishna and is a taluka headquarters in the Satara district of Maharashtra. There are altogether three cave groups around the present town of Wai. To the west of Wai is Pandavagad group, to the north is Lohare-Sultanpur group and to the Southeast is Bavadhan group. Each group is almost three to four kms. away from Wai and is close to the villages around the town.
Pandavagad group:

This group is briefly mentioned in the Bombay Gazetteer. However, the description appears confusing. For example the description refers to the flat roof chapel but nothing of the flat roof caitya is noticed. This group of caves is located on the Pandavagad hill. The hill has a medieval fort on top and the access is very difficult. Caves are located on a small Southwest projection. These caves face Southwest. They are approached by a footpath from a road before village Dhavadi. The caves are numbered from the northern end. All the caves are filled-up with earth.

Cave No.1 is a flat roofed square hall.

Cave No.2 is the next excavation. Thick vegetation covers the area around caves. Much of the portion is filled-up with mud but the features can easily be read. This is the most interesting excavation in this group. The cave is an apsidal pillarless hall with vault roof (fig.150). The façade of the cave is placed between two beams. The distance between the two side beams is nearly 12 feet. In the centre, a caitya arch is carved (fig.147). The projection of the outer surface of the caitya arch is not very conspicuous. However the interior portion of the arch is 1.8 ft. deep, which has a decoration of stone ribs (fig. 148). The possible doorway in the middle is nearly 5 ft. The hall is apsidal with vault roof. At the base line of the vault roof square holes are carved, six on the apse and 8 each on both the sides. These holes indicate that the cave had wooden ribs attached with the vault roof. Below the base line of these holes, a band measuring 3.9 feet runs all along the apsidal hall. The arrangement resembles the triforium of apsidal vault roof caitya with aisle and nave having pillars. The hall is 19.5 feet deep and 8.5 feet wide. The stūpa is carved at the apsidal end, its drum measuring 14 feet diameter. The upper part of the anda is damaged. The height of the anda is nearly two feet (fig.149). It appears that this caitya hall is without a varanda and has a stone screen wall. Apart from the existence of holes to fit wooden ribs, it is also likely that the stūpa had a wooden cchatra. Besides, the cave was plastered and painted. Traces of plasters are still visible on the ceiling. Considering
the existence of the stone screen wall and the apsidal plan and vaulted roof, together with
the provision of square holes to fix the wooden ribs, the cave may be dated to the end of
the first century BC. Besides the stūpa too is simple and points to an early date.

Cave No.3 (fig.151) is located 20 feet beyond the above cave. This is a big vihāra. The
cave is filled up with mud. This hall is nearly 28 feet deep and 23 feet wide. It has seven
cells around the hall, two each on its sides and three at back-wall. What kind of floor
arrangement or stone beds the cave has, can not be made out as the cave is filled up with
mud. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain its exact date but it may be presumed that the
vihāra must be of the same time period of the adjoining caitya hall.

Cave No.4 is a big water cistern now filled-up with mud and water.

Nearly 1,000 feet beyond the above group towards the Southwest of the same hill, is a
mutilated vihāra whose entrance is blocked by the collapsed front roof. The hall inside is
nearly 22.6 feet wide and 24.6 feet deep, with two cells at the back and one each on either
side (figs.152,153). The chronological position of this cave is difficult to ascertain. It
must also be noted that the caves have not been brought under the protection of the ASI.

Lohare-Sultanpur group:

The next phase of excavation seems to have been done at Lohare-Sultanpur in Wai. The
place is situated nearly 4 kms away north of Wai and towards Northeast of the
Pandavagad group. The caves are mentioned by Sir Bartle Frere and later by Burgess very
briefly. In the present analysis the caves are numbered from west.

Excavation 1 is a cistern.

Cave No.2 is a vihāra cave but is filled up with mud at present.

Excavation 3 is another cistern.

Cave No.4 is a vihāra cave having a veranda, a hall with back cell (Fig. 154). Front of
the cave has a door in the centre and two big windows on either side. The hall is nearly 8
feet deep and 16.5 feet wide. On the left end of the back wall of the hall is a cell measuring 5 x 6 ft. The cell door has two pivots on the top to fix the wooden frame. A window is carved on the left side of the cell. At present a linga and Nandi are kept in the cell.

**Cave No.5** is a vihāra having a veranda hall and a cell. The cell is carved on the back wall of the hall and has a stone bed on the left. The hall has two recessed benches. The veranda too has two recessed benches on either side. It may be observed that the types of plan of cave No.4 and 5 are commonly found at Junnar and Kanheri caves.

Situated next to the above is a huge vihāra cave no.6 (figs. 155, 156, 157, 158). It consists of a veranda with two cells on either side and a pillared hall with six cells i.e. four at the back and two on either side. The front portion of the cave is much broken. In the front, there are two cells on both the sides. The hall is nearly 30 feet deep and 29 feet wide. A low bench runs along all the three sides of the hall. There are four cells at the back and one each on the side-walls. The cell on the left is near the back corner whereas the cell on right is near the front corner. All the cells have stone beds except one (fig.155). A beam on the upper level runs all along the three walls in the hall (figs. 156-58). The window too is cut along every cell door, which touches the ceiling. On the right wall a sculptural panel is carved. It is difficult to make out the possible thematic content of the sculpture. Nevertheless the images are of a high sculpting quality. Their grace and movement is handled with considerable sensitivity. Line is rhythmic and is integral part of the volume. These sculptures on the stylistic features may be assigned to 4th century AD. Dhavalikar has wrongly stated that this sculptural panel is located in the caitya cave. The hall had six octagonal pillars, three each on either side of the hall, but only the left side pillars are attached to the ceiling (fig.145). The cave appears to be a later addition in the cave complex and may be dated after the excavation of the caitya-vihāra cave.

Towards the eastern side of the above group several important excavations are done. **Cave No.7** is a much damaged cave and is now converted into a water tank. The next is **cave No. 8**, which is caitya-vihāra cave having a hall and cells at the back wall
and the right wall (Figs. 159, 160, 161). It is 31 feet deep and 29.6 ft. wide. The left wall has a low bench that runs along the back wall and right wall but is much damaged. On the right wall, four cells are carved with beds inside. In the middle a big chamber is provided to house the stūpa. Two cells with bed are carved on either side of the middle stūpa chamber (fig. 161). Cells have doors and windows. The upper level of cell's door and windows is attached to the ceiling (fig. 160). The front of the stūpa chamber has a central door and on either side two big windows are carved (fig. 159). The provision appears to be well planned and the artisan knew that there would not be enough light in the stūpa chamber and hence the windows are big. The stūpa is well carved. The cchatra is carved attached to the ceiling. The plan of the cave is like Sheralwadi, Mahad 8 except for the plain wall on the left side. The cave therefore may be dated to late second century A.D.

Cave No.9 is much a damaged vihāra. The hall is rectangular with two cells on the left, one at the back and one on the right. Cave No.10 is a single cell excavation.

The third group of caves is near Bavadhan, 4 Kms. Southeast of Wai. The caves are difficult to reach. Only two excavations survive. Many of the caves have collapsed. The collapsed wall of one of the caves is seen on the roadside.

Thus, the rock-cut excavation in the vicinity of Wai started around the end of first century BC with the apsidal caiṭya with vaulted roof and other related excavation at Pandavagad. The monastic establishment at Wai appears to be small. Later several cave excavations were made in the late second century AD. It may be said that the apsidal vault roof variety with stone façade, which is carved at Pandavagad group of caves, is much closer to Karad Chachegaon caiṭya. If exploration is done with the clearance of existing caves, more valuable information may come to light on this monastic complex.

SHIRWAL

The Shirwal caves are located nearly 4 to 5 kms. South-west of Shirwal village. Shirval is situated on the Pune-Satara road. This group of caves is situated at the head of a short narrow valley on the eastern slope of a spur from the Mandhardeva range of hills, which
bound the Nira valley on the south. All the caves face northeast. There are total seven caves excavated at this site.

Cave No.1 is a caitya cave (fig.162). It is simple, having a veranda and an oblong hall. It follows the plan, which was developed at Junnar. The cchatra of the stūpa is absent. Only a harmikā is carved. It is likely that the cchatra was painted. At present the cave is converted into a Shiva-Linga shrine. In fact a separate Shiva-linga is placed in front of the stūpa itself. The stūpa is much similar to Kuda caves. Therefore the cave may be assigned to the latter half of second century A.D.\textsuperscript{10}

The next cave excavation is a vihāra cave. The front of the cave is broken (fig.163). Three cells are carved on each side of the hall. A low bench runs all right along the wall. Thus it is evident that the site indeed began with these two principal excavations. The rest of the caves are carved at a lower level than the above two caves and many of them are ruined.

YERPHAL & TAMKANE

Yerphal is located on the route between Karad and Chiplun. It is 4 kms before Patan, a taluka headquarter in the Satara district. The caves are 1 km. away from the village on the northern hills. They face southeast. It is a small cave site having a caitya and a small vihāra (figs.164, 165). The caitya is in a very bad condition. The hall is relatively small. It is apsidal in plan and the ceiling is a vaulted roof. The façade had a squarish window instead of a regular caitya window. The lower part is much broken. A similar window is also seen at Karad 6, Pitalkhora No.10. Therefore, the cave is closer to cave No.6 of Karad and may be dated to the first century AD.

Adjacent to the above is a small vihāra cave consisting of a hall and two cells at the back. The front is completely broken. Besides this, a small excavation is made where now lots of other deities like Linga and Devi etc. are housed. Both the caves i.e. caitya and a vihāra may be assigned to first century A.D.
Tamkane is located to the northwest of Patan or Yerphal. The caves are located 1.5 kms away from the village and are locally known as Kalkaighata. There are only two caves and both face east (fig. 166). A waterfall flows from the top of the caves. The site during rainy season is very picturesque (figs. 166, 167, 168). Cave No.1 is a caitya griha. The plan is very simple, having an interior hall and a veranda. On the front side of the veranda, four square holes are excavated to fix wooden pillars. The anda of the stūpa is slightly elongated. The harmikā has the usual stepped inverted pyramidal strips and a cchatra is carved on the ceiling. The cave has a slanted ceiling at the rear. The adjacent cave is a vihāra cave with a veranda, hall, and two cells at the back. The front of the cave is completely mutilated. Only the upper part is visible from which it can be ascertained that the hall had a central door and two windows on either side. In the hall, there is no ornamentation or any decoration. The rear wall has two cells. The left corner cell is without bed. There is a niche carved on the back wall, between the two cell doors. A bench is carved also on the left corner that extends to the left side wall and back wall. On the right wall another niche is carved. The plan is much similar to that at Junnar. Therefore both the caves may be dated to mid-second century AD. No inscription or other evidence is found in the cave. Beyond these two caves there are a couple of caves but now they are filled up with mud.

POHALE

To the south of Karad, near Kolhapur, the caves of Pohale are located. The caves are excavated at the foot of the Jotiba hill, which is near the village Pohale. Altogether six caves are excavated. One is a caityagriha, three are vihāras and two are cisterns.

Cave No.1 is the vihāra cave (fig. 171). The front of the cave is much broken. It has six pillars in the front. The pillars are ruined, but appear to be octagonal. The veranda has a large central door with the two windows on either side. The central hall is squarish with six cells on every side. The cells are almost squarish without stone beds. The cells on the left walls are ruined but their existence can be made out through the remains of the walls on the floor level. There are pillars in the central hall, running parallel to the side and
back wall. Only two pillars are visible now, the rest are damaged. The pillars were attached to the beam running under the roof.

Cave No.2 is a caitya griha (fig. 169, 170). The hall is slightly apsidal without pillars and it has the veranda in the front. The roof of the hall is flat. At the back of the hall, a stūpa is carved. At present only the drum and the cchatra are visible and rest is much damaged. Its harmikā and aṇḍa are completely lost. The front door is rectangular and very plain. There is an open veranda in the front of the cave.

Caves No.3 and 4 are excavated next to the above. They are much damaged. Excavation 5 and 6 are two cisterns cut besides caves 3 & 4.

Pohale is a small cave site situated in the Karhātaka region. The place has a very small number of caves and falls in the category of other sites of the Karhātaka region such as Wai, Yerphal, Tamkan, Shirwal. The apsidal pillarless plan is seen at Karad cave No. 6, Chachegaon caitya, Wai-Pandavagad, and Yerphal. However, the ceiling of the hall is not a vault roof. It is flat. The cave is closer to cave No.6 of Karad in its plan. At Karad No.6, the ceiling is of vaulted roof variety but the cchatra is carved under the ceiling, which is a strenuous process as far as its technique of excavation is concerned. On the other hand, if the roof is flat, it is easier to excavate. This caitya may be taken as an improved design over the Karad cave No.6 caitya and therefore may be placed in the second century AD. Architecturally cave one is very significant. The arrangement of the interior pillars is often compared with the Kondane cave No.2. However it may be observed that a similar arrangement is also followed at Wai Lohare-Sultanpur cave No.6. Therefore, this may be placed in the late second century AD.

To sum up, the rock-cut cave activity in the Karhātaka region began at an early date. Chachegaon caitya is an indication of the start of rock-cut cave activity at the end of second century BC or early first century BC. The development in the Karhātaka region appears to have been much different from the rest of western Deccan. However, the activity further expanded at the other centres. In the second phase Wai emerges as an important centre. Subsequently Karad No.6 and Yerphal are the important excavations.
which denote how the expansion of the Buddhist Saṅgha took place at Karad itself and at Yerphal which is a very small monastic centre and is located on the Karad-Chiplun trade route. In the third phase, rock-cut cave activity spread to Karad (caves No.7, 12, 17) Shirwal, Tamkane, Lohare-Sultanpur and Pohale. Thus in the second century many small cave centres emerged in the Karhāṭaka region. It is very likely that some individual patrons came forward to finance the rock-cut excavations and hence the design of flat roofed caitya-vihāra is widely preferred. The largest number of cave excavations also indicates that the Buddhist Saṅgha was considerably strong at Karad and in fact it became the epicentre in the Karhāṭaka region. But surprisingly there are no further excavations during the Mahāyāna times, a problem which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes:

1. LL 763, 765, 767,
2. *Bombay Gazetteer* 1983
3. Dhavalikar M.K.1984 *Late Hinayana Caves of Western India* p- 29
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Dehejia Vidya 1972 *Early Buddhist Rock Temples* p- 183
7. Dhavalikar 1989 *opcit* p- 30
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. – p-35.
10. Dhavalikar *opcit* p- 30
11. Dhavalikar *opcit* p- 37
APARĀNTA REGION: (present Thane, Mumbai, Raigad, Aligarh and Sindhudurg districts)

Kondane, Ambivalle, Uran, Virar, Kanheri Kondivite, Chaul, Thanala –Nadsur Nenavalvi, Kol, Kuda, Mahad, Khed, Chipun, Lonad and Panhale-Kaji\(^1\) are the cave sites located in the Aparānta region. In the present analysis Kanheri is not discussed in detail as it has already been extensively discussed by Nagaraju\(^2\), Dhavalikar\(^3\) and Maryleen Edward Leese.\(^4\) However important cave excavations having architectural and sculptural significance are discussed. Uran is mentioned in the gazetteer but the actual site could not be traced during the field-work. Similarly, Pali has not been included in the present discussion due to lack of field work. Virar, too, is omitted in the present analysis as it does not have any significant cave excavations and many of them are converted into Hindu shrines. Lonad is a Mahāyāna Buddhist site. The earliest traces of rock-cut cave activity are first observed at Kondivite and Thanala-Nadsur. Kondane emerges after these two, whereas in the early centuries of the Christian era, cave sites such as Kanheri, became important centres of activity. The activity spreads to south Konkaṇ also where the caves of Mahad, Kol, Kuda, Khed, Chipun and Panhale are located. As far the architectural plans of the caitya caves are concerned, four types of the caitya plans were used in the Aparānta region. They are- 1) the apsidal vault roof pillared hall; 2) the circular stūpa chamber with the flat-roof hall; 3) apsidal vault-roof pillarless hall; and 4) flat roof quadrangular caitya halls. The facade designs of the vihāra caves were standardised in the Aparānta region, consisting of front pillars with a base wall having the vedikā design in the front. This is a very significant for understanding its further development in the Mahāyāna cave excavations in the region. Kanheri is the biggest cave site having 106 caves. The smallest cave site in the region is at Chipun, and Ambivali. Ambivali is the only cave site in the region which has a single cave excavation and has no caitya cave.
KONDIVITE:

The caves at Kondivite are locally known as Mahākāli caves and are located 6 km away from Andheri (East), a suburban railway station on Western Railway of Mumbai (Bombay). There are 19 caves, belonging to the early date of second century BC as well as later phase of excavations which is datable to third and fourth centuries AD with many peculiarities. 15 caves are excavated facing east and only 4 caves are excavated facing west. The general condition of the cave complex is in a very bad state. The rock of the hill is very porous. The early phase of the Hinayāna cave excavations consists of caves no. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. The rest are Mahāyāna cave excavations and will be discussed in the next chapter in the context of the development of the early Mahāyāna cave excavations. Among the Hinayāna caves, there is only one caitya cave with a flat roofed rectangular hall and the rest are all vihāra caves. The early caves in this complex bear certain peculiar features which make this cave complex very unique in the region. Another important characteristic of this cave site is the existence of a brick stūpa on top of the hill, the only example in western Deccan. In eastern Deccan, Kapavaram, Anakapalle, Guntapalle have brick structural stūpas on the top of hills.

Cave no. 9 is a caitya cave. It is a circular caitya griha with the flat roof rectangular hall (figs. 172, 173, 174, 182). It has a big flat roofed rectangular hall followed by a circular caitya-griha with a domical roof. The overall plan of the cave follows that of Lomas Rishi cave of the Mauryan times. A semi-circular wall, which separates the hall and a stūpa chamber of the caitya hall has two perforated windows with an inscription mentioning the gift for carving of window-crossbars by Kanha, a Brahmin of Pathi Kanayi and his sons. This inscription may be palaeographically assigned to the first century AD. But the architectural plan of the caitya indicates an early date. Therefore, the window was a later addition. The façade of the cave is broken and must have had a wooden-screen as there are mortises on the front line of the floor of the hall, which gives an indication of having wooden devices. The right side-wall of the hall has several Buddha images that were carved later (figs. 175, 176). The hall has flat roof. The
The interior circular chamber has a cylindrical drum with a vedikā band at the rim and over this is the hemispherical dome. There is no harmikā above but a flat incised carving with holes in the corner is present and this might have been used to fix the wooden harmikā.

Caves No. 10 & 12 are contemporary to the above caitya griha. Both are vihāra caves. Cave No.10 is excavated at a higher level and is adjacent to the caityagriha (figs. 177, 178). It consists of a hall and a cell at the back. The front façade is broken now. The right side is carved with a projected caitya arch. At present it is badly mutilated but still conspicuous (fig. 178). A beam decorated with stepped pyramidal design in low relief is carved below the roof at the right end of the hall. Similarly cave No.12 is another vihāra cave having a hall and three broken cells at the back wall (figs. 179, 180, 183). On the right end, at the front of the vihāra, a caitya arch motif is carved in relief. The veranda of this vihāra is decorated with the vedikā rail pattern design, extending over the side walls of the veranda where two caitya arch projections are carved. At present, both motifs are not very conspicuous due to erosion of the rock. Such decorative devices are also employed at Bhaja and Ajanta. It may also be noted that the decoration in this cave is close to Guntapalle vihāra cave decorations. At Guntapalle, such caitya arches in the exterior as well as in the veranda are profusely used. There is an inscription on the vedikā of the cave, which reads as ‘.... Natha Pethanakasa kara danam veyikā.’ Paleographically, the inscription is assigned to second century BC. The donor of the cave is from Paithan. Thus, considering the plan of the caitya and the use of wooden devices in the front, together with the two small vihāra caves i.e. caves No.10 & 12, these three cave excavations may be dated in the second century BC.

Subsequently, other caves, mainly caves no. 11, 14, 7 and 8 were added to the complex. Cave No.11 is placed between caves 10 and 12. It consists of a veranda with two front pillars and a hall with a cell at the back. Caves No.7 and 8 are simple excavations (fig.181). Cave No.7 has a narrow veranda with the hall having three cells on its three sides. The rear cell is bigger than the side cells. Cave No.14 is a subsequent excavation, consisting of a veranda, a hall and a cell at the back wall. On the rear wall of the veranda, a door with two windows having jāli design are carved. The jāli design is
now mutilated. The hall has two benches along the side walls. The front wall of a cell at
the back wall of the hall, has an entrance door and a window with a jāli design. The
interior of a cell has a bench along its wall. It may be noted that the window jāli designs
are similar to those found in the caityagriha. The left corner of the hall is now broken due
to the intrusion of the veranda of cave No.13. This cave along with caves No. 7, 8 and 11
were done probably in the first century AD.

Rock-cut cave activity at Kondivite started early, almost contemporary to Bhaja
and Ajanta. Vihāras are very few in number and also small in dimensions. Even the later
additions in the complex are limited, meant to accommodate a few monks. Patrons came
from places like Paithan in the second-century BC, which indicates that people from
inland region visited the centre and donated money. There must have been a settlement at
the foot of the hill, i.e. Kondivite village but due to heavy industrialisation in the region
and encroachments, nothing can be made out. The site must have begun with patronage
from outsiders. The brick stūpa on the hill-top is another noteworthy feature, which is
unique in western Deccan as no other cave site has this feature. The other caves of this
complex show remarkable features to recognise the transition from the late Hinayāna
architecture to the Mahāyāna architectural tradition, and therefore will be discussed in the
next chapter.

THANALA-NADSUR

The caves of Thanala are known as Nadsur Caves as the communication by road
is accessible only up to Nadsur. But the closest village to the cave-site is Thanala. The
cave site is almost one to two km from the village. According to M. N. Deshpande10, the
mountain's ancient name was 'śristhana', which is mentioned in a Nasik cave No.3
inscription. He observes that the mountain derived this name from the four sculptures of
Sri or Lakṣmi carved in this cave group, two each in caves 7 and 15.11 The caves are cut
in a long line of trap cliff, which faces nearly west. Cousens put the total number of caves
to 1812 whereas M. N. Deshpande records the total number of excavations as 23.13
Among these 23 caves, one is a caityagriha, one is a memorial stūpa gallery excavation
and the rest are vihāra caves. Caves no. 3, 7, 8, 15 are of great importance to establish the early phase of rock-cut cave activity in this region. The discussion here is confined to caves no. 7, 8, and 15 as they are different in architectural style and belong to early date i.e. second century BC.

Cave No.8 is a caityagriha. The cave is apsidal in plan, having vault-roof with a pillarless hall. The front of the cave is very much broken now (figs. 183, 184). The caitya arch has a slight projection and has two square holes on either side meant for the wooden fixtures. The front must have had a wooden façade. The stūpa in this cave is very simple, having a drum and semi-circular anda. The drum has no vedikā design on its upper rim. There is a hole on the anda to fix the wooden harmikā. The cave also has an inscription recording the gift of one Mitra. Palaeographically, the record is dated to second century BC or even earlier. The fact that the front of the cave had wooden screen and considering the style of stūpa design, which is very simple with wooden devices, the cave may be dated to second century BC. Deshpande, however, assigned this excavation to third or second century BC and observes that it is older than Bhaja cave No.12. He further observes that the stūpa had a heavy plaster and a brick-platform was constructed in later times. Dhavalikar on the other hand dates this excavation to later half of the first century AD on the basis of the absence of pillars in the hall and wooden rafters over the ceiling. Nevertheless, this assumption cannot be taken as a yardstick as we have already observed that the pillarless apsidal hall also emerged in the early caves such as at Karad Chachegaon caitya cave. The right wall of the cave is badly damaged.

Cave No.7 is a vihāra and excavated on right side of the above cave. This vihāra cave is contemporary to the caityagriha cave No.7. The cave has many peculiar features (figs.184,191). The present form of the cave is an expanded version of a small cave. M. N. Deshpande analyses the expansion of the cave in the following way:

a) The cave originally had a hall and two cells on either side, the remnants of the cells can be made out on the left side of the platform.
b) In order to carry out the expansion, walls were pushed back.
c) An additional cell was carved on the northern wall corner behind the present *caityagriha* and four more cells were carved at the back wall. A platform was carved all along the wall with the steps.

A projected beam at the upper level, below the ceiling, runs all along the three sides. The back wall and part of side-wall have a decoration over the projected beam. The decorative vocabulary includes *caitya* arches, which are carved over every cell door as well as in-between the space of each cell door. Under these arches, niches, the stepped pyramidal design, horizontal strips, *vedikā* design and few images in low relief are carved. Some cell doors have two windows on either side with the square and diamond shape *jāli*. It may also be observed that the area between the arch of niches and the cell door has angular rhythmic *vedikā* design. Below the *caitya* arches of some cell doors, various images are carved in low relief including the images of *Gajalakṣmi* (figs. 187, 190). The side walls do not bear the decoration of *caitya* arches. Instead, the motif of a snake having five hoods and couples worshipping the *stūpas* are carved. The relief of the sculpture is low and artists appear to have concentrated on schematic representation rather than capturing the details. The image of *Lakṣmi* is elongated keeping its weight firmly on the lotus and is carved very freely. The other interesting feature is a medallion carved on the ceiling of the cave with a hole in the centre. The design of the medallion is considerably simple; flower petals are arranged in the circle (fig.191). M. N. Deshpande observes that perhaps it was intended as a *cchatra* below which a *stūpa* was to be erected. But he also adds that no evidence to substantiate the above idea is found. However, in the light of the above observation, it may be noticed that this particular device is made in order to fix the wooden pole to hang the lamps. Such a provision is also observed in the Ajanta vihāra cave No.12 where a hook is carved on the ceiling to hold the lamp. The cave is an outcome of a donation by Godatta, a son of Sivaganaka. The palaeography of the inscription and the sculptural style indicates that the cave was excavated in early second century BC. Cave No. 15 also has a similar sculpture like the one found in cave no. 7 and bear the same stylistic features. Therefore, cave no. 15 must have been excavated around the same time.
Cave No.3 is a memorial gallery, which started initially with one stūpa and expanded gradually to the present size (fig. 192). It has been discussed at length by M. N. Deshpande.\textsuperscript{18}

Other cave excavations at this cave site are vihāra caves having a veranda, hall and one, two or three cells. Their plan is the same that is found at Kanheri and Junnar. These caves may be dated to first-second century AD. An inscription on the water cistern of cave 16 & 17 records the donation by a Pakaras who was a disciple of the Buddhist female monk Pujavati, from Puskar.\textsuperscript{19} The record is assigned to second century AD on palaeographic grounds.\textsuperscript{20}

Thus the activities at Thanala started as early as second century BC. But it appears that the later caves were mostly excavated in the second century AD. As usual, the pictorial vocabulary used at this place, is confined to caitya arches, horizontal strips, pyramidal strips etc. However no deliberate attempt has been made to make these caves more ornate or even the excavation of the caitya and adjoining vihāra indicates that no ambitious plan was made like the one found in Māmala or Mulaka region caves. The caityagriha and also memorial gallery (the early phase) indicate an early date which is further strengthened by the sculptural and epigraphical language.

**KONDANE**

Kondane is located near the Borghat on the route between Kalyan and Ter, passing through Borghat and is situated on the western side of the Sahyadri on the north bank of the river Ulhas and below the Rajamachi fort. It is nearly 10 km. South-east of Karjat railway station on Mumbai-Pune line of Central Railway. The cave site is small considering the number of excavations. It has a total of eight excavations, one caityagriha and seven vihāras. All the caves face west and are numbered from south to north. Cave No.1 is an apsidal vault roof caityagriha. Its front is decorated beautifully. It is carved deep inside the scarp of the hill for protection from the monsoon showers. The artisan who excavated this caityagriha already had experiences behind them of the caitya excavation of Bhaja, Ajanta and Pitalkhora because the artisans derived number of
pictorial elements from these excavations and saw to it that the grid structure in the cave excavation reached its perfection, achieving a perfectly balanced visual symmetry. As usual the façade is divided in a symmetrical proportion to accommodate all possible decorative motifs. The arch in the centre of the façade dominates the front view (fig. 194). It is carved with low protrusion on the outer surface. The outer surface around it is divided into six horizontal bands which also run along the two projections on either side of the main caitya arch and also over the side walls (fig. 203). The two balcony like projections are carved on either side of the caitya arch. The balcony like projections are decorated with the caitya arches, one on the top and two small one below the above. The horizontal bands are decorated alternately with the caitya arches. Space around all the caitya arches is filled with the square jāli. The decorative vocabulary consisting vertical strips, horizontal strips and the vedikā. The caitya arch and vedikā are prominent. The following diagram illustrates the caitya arch motifs in the horizontal bands.

The scheme is aptly repeated on side walls too with no change in its sequence. The lower most vedikā design is linked to the lower end of the principal caitya arch. Above this vedikā, another row is created where small figures of male and females are carved (figs. 195, 196). The figures are fully in the round and the treatment of the turban is found very similar to Bhaja or Ajanta cave 10 paintings or the sculptures of Pitalkhora and Sanchi. The figures are highly pronounced over the surface. Their postural bends create movement in space. Besides their heads are shown with a downward gaze indicating how the sculptors visualised them from the beholder’s position. The images are in the round (figs. 195, 196). Even in their miniature dimensions the artisans did not forget to carve the lines of their eyes. Musculature is suggestive and the outer configuration line is sharp indicating its linear treatment of the plastic form. Another noteworthy element in the designing of this caitya is the low relief carving over its outer
surface with great clarity. The area below the cāitya arch level is cut deeply and the human figure is carved. The addition of the sculptures on the façade is indeed an advance over Bhaja cave No. 12. It is for the first time that the lower part is adorned with sculptures. One such figure still survives on the left wall (fig. 197). This image is badly mutilated but its high relief quality suggests considerable advance over the sculpting of the pronounced volume. At Bedsa, the cāitya excavation does not have this arrangement and hence this area has remained untouched. On the other hand, at Kondane, the introduction of the image makes a new beginning, which is later followed at Karla and Kanheri. An inscription carved near the image says that the image was carved by Balaka a disciple of Kanha.21

The area below cāitya arch is open, indicating that the cave had wooden devices. Some of the wooden ribs on the window are still visible. The interior hall is apsidal in plan with a vault roof. The hall has a row of pillars running in an apsidal shape (fig.202), dividing the hall into a nave and aisles. The pradakṣiṇāpatha too has a semi-circular ceiling. The interior pillars are octagonal in shape but at present badly mutilated (fig. 200, 201). One of the pillars in the left row has a carving of the stūpa in low relief (fig. 201). The interior pillars hold the triforium where the square holes are still visible (fig. 200). These holes indicate that there were wooden ribs over the vault-roof ceiling like Ajanta cave 10, Bhaja cave 12, Bedsa cave 7. The stūpa at the back is very badly mutilated (fig. 199). But one can easily read the configuration of the stūpa. A harmikā in stone is carved exactly as in Bhaja cave 12 and must have had a wooden chhatra. It may be observed that the height of the vault roof ceiling is determined by the upper level of the front cāitya arch window.

Adjacent to the above is cave no. 2, a vihāra cave which is carved (figs. 203-206). It is located at a much higher level i.e. the floor level starts from the lower base of the cāitya arch window of cave No.1 (fig. 198). The cave is very much ruined. Nevertheless, the existing remains are sufficient for a reconstruction and detailed analysis. It consists of a veranda in the front and a large central hall with cells on its three sides.
The front of the vihāra is very interesting as it is integrated with the caitya cave. It shows a very careful and well thought-out planning in the making of the cave (figs. 194, 203). The horizontal space division of the caitya façade is further extended over the front of the vihāra cave. The upper most level is set in harmony with the upper level of the caitya cave and is determined by the actual configuration of the hillock. The upper level is decorated with the series of caitya arches that are held by the vedikā pattern, then the deep cutting is made, thus creating the effect of projection (fig. 203). Again, the vedikā design together with the recessed horizontal strips are carved, and then a veranda ceiling begins, which is being held by the bars carved over the ceiling. The ceiling of the veranda is very high. The right wall or the side that creates the partition between two caves, has the depiction of caitya façade in relief covering the entire wall (fig. 204). The upper level has simple decoration of vedikā. A caitya arch in relief is carved. The surface level of the vedikā and the caitya arch together with other motifs is the same, which indicates that first, a wall is dressed up and then the caitya façade design is carved. Below the caitya arch a stupa is carved. The drum is relatively smaller than the āṇḍa. The upper rim again is decorated with the vedikā design. The harmikā and cchatra indicates that the stūpa design is an adoption from the earlier example such as at Bhaja. The artisans are aware of the fact that the upper level of the relief would be as high as the caitya arch around it. Hence in order to make the stūpa more three dimensional, a deep cutting is made around the area, thus achieving the effect of pronounced dimensions. In the relief carving, this is the norm in sculpting as for the carver, the space he handles is a real space and therefore better options always are to have deep carving in order to arrive at desired dimensions. The stūpa stands over the vedikā pattern, which is supported by the relief pillar, which becomes octagonal in the middle. Similar pillar design is also observed at Thanala vihāra cave in relief (fig. 192). The back wall of the veranda has a door in the centre and two windows on either side (fig. 203).

Six cells are carved on each side (fig. 208). The first cell has two benches on either side whereas the rest have only a single bench. The capacity of this vihāra appears to be to accommodate nearly twenty monks. A vedikā pattern is carved above the cell door, which runs all along the three sides. Its continuity is interrupted by the caitya arch
over each cell door. The relief level of the decoration is properly maintained at uniform level. The interior hall has a row of pillars all along the side walls. Six pillars are carved along the two sides whereas four are carved along the back wall resembling a structural prototype. Now none of the pillars exists. Only the top portions of some pillars are intact (figs. 205, 206). The ceiling of the hall is decorated on the pattern of a structural building. Horizontal beams are carved on the ceiling and these beams are supported by the side pillars (figs. 205). Similarly, small rafters are carved in between every horizontal space created by the beams.

The cave has two inscriptions on the façade. One records a donation by Kamachika Putasa i.e. son of Kamachika and another records the donation caused to be made by Kamachika son of Dhamayakha of Baraka. The donor appears to have come from another place i.e. Baraka which is yet to be identified. It may be observed that the inscriptions of this cave and the caitya cave have same palaeographic features and are assigned to the end of second century BC and early first century BC. The figural style together with the architectural design of the cave indicates that the cave was excavated after Bhaja cave No.12. Carving a caitya and vihāra adjacent to each other is followed at Thanala in the Aparānta region and also at Pithalkhora in the Mulaka region. Besides the inscriptional references to the sculptor’s name is Balaka, a disciple of Kāpha, may also indicate that the sculptor Kāpha was the one who is mentioned at Pitalkhora. This name is often identified with Kāphadasa who sculpted the image of yakṣa at Pithalkhora (fig. 24). However, the name Kāphadasa that is mentioned on the yakṣa inscription is that of a goldsmith who took up stone carving, therefore Kāpha mentioned in Kondane inscription cannot be equated with Kāphadasa. Another Kāpha also appears in inscriptive record at Pitalkhora, which is inscribed in front of cave No.4 i.e. on the base of the plinth. This Pitalkhora inscription says that the image is made by Kāpha, a son of Samasa from Dhenukakata. This Kāpha’s place of origin is Dhenukakata, and as noted in the previous chapter this place is situated in the Māmala region. Hence Kāpha of the Kondane inscription may be equated with the Kāpha of this inscription. Thus, the identification also helps to understand the migration pattern of the artisans. So Kāpha of Dhenukakata worked at Pitalkhora which is an important site with rich sculptural work. His disciple
Balaka worked along with him and then migrated to the Borghat area from the Mulaka region. It should also be noted that palaeographically both the inscriptions of Pitalkhora and Kondane are not far from each other in terms of date. Another similarity between the two sites i.e. Pitalkhora and Kondane is the execution of the designs of the caitya and vihāra adjacent to each other. The columns inside the hall i.e. of vihāra cave of Kondane and Pitalkhora are made to decorate the interior. But the pictorial decorative vocabulary at Pitalkhora is not limited like the one employed at Kondane. Interior decoration like the one at Kondane cave No.2 is also found in the earlier caves such as at Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Bhaja, and Thanala. In the subsequent period this tradition is abandoned. Similarly the interior pillars too are discarded in the vihāra plans but the tradition gets revived again at Ajanta in the Mahāyāna cave architecture.

In subsequent times two more caves were added in the veranda. Cave No. 3 can be considered as the next stage of expansion at Kondane. It is small in dimensions. The hall has cells around it, i.e. two cells excavated on the north wall and three cells each cut on the south and the rear wall. This cave is very much ruined. The front portion is almost broken, interior side walls are also broken. All the cells in this cave have two stone beds. This feature resembles Ajanta caves 12 and 1325, which are generally dated to the first century BC.

Other caves are badly mutilated and consist of a chamber and a cell at the back, and three to four cells with common veranda, it includes caves No 4, 5, 6 (fig. 207). Only the upper portion of the walls has remained attached with ceiling. Caves no.8 has a squarish hall with a stone bench along its wall. Two cells are cut at the back wall with common entrance. Caves no. 5, 6, 7, 8 appear to be later additions. Such plans are widely used in the Māmala region at Junnar and are datable to the first century AD. It may be noted that the plaster in the cave complex is still noticeable. Apparently the caves were painted.

KANHERI
Kanheri is located near Borivali a suburb in Mumbai. The ancient name of Kanheri as known from inscription is Kañhagiri. There are altogether 108 caves. A detailed account of caves is found in the works of Nagaraju, Dhavalikar and Leese. The present discussion is confined to a very limited number of cave excavations, which are important in the development of sculptural and architectural language. Dehejia, Nagaraju, Dhavalikar and Leese have proposed different dates for the cave excavations. Nagaraju traced the rock-cut Hinayāna cave activity from third century BC to third century AD, whereas Dhavalikar identifies certain features in a few more caves and assigned the Hinayāna cave activity till the first half of the fourth century AD. On the other hand, Leese traces the beginning of Mahāyāna cave activity from late fifth century AD onwards on the basis of the Traikutāka copper plate inscription, which has been dated by Mirashi to Kalachuri era. But as already discussed in the second chapter on background, the Traikutāka inscription will have to be dated prior to 400 AD in the Konkaṇ region on the basis of an inscription of the Konkaṇ Maurya. Thus considering this evidence and the palaeography of the inscription together with the stylistic development of the pictorial conventions at Kanheri, the dates will have to be shifted backwards and the monument needs to be studied afresh. Nevertheless, Leese's analysis is still very useful in studying the caves except its dating. The aim in the present analysis is to understand possible breakthroughs in the tradition of rock-cut cave architecture and to trace the early Mahāyāna development, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Hence the discussion here is limited to a few caves.

The question of the beginning about the rock-cut cave activity at Kanheri is controversial. Nagaraju assigns it to the beginning of later half of third century BC. Dhavalikar assigns it to the time of Vasisṭhiputra Sātakaṛi datable to second century AD. Their reasoning is different. Therefore, the problem has to be solved in the light of the available evidences. It would be better to look at the inscriptive evidences first. In the Nasik inscription of Puṣumāvi, Gotamiputra Sātakaṛi is addressed as the lord of several regions and the mountains Vindhya, Achhavata, Parivata, Sahya, Kañhagiri, Macha, Sīrīṭana, Malaya, Mahida, Setagiri and Chakora. Kanhagiri is identified with Kanheri whereas Sṛthana is identified with the hills of Thanala-Nadsur in the western Deccan.
Both the places are situated in the Aparānta region. Thus it is evident that Kanheri was an important place during the time of Gotamiputra Sātakaḷi who defeated Nahapāṇa. Their conflict took place some time between 60-70 AD, which has already been discussed earlier in the chapter-II Nahapāṇa’s domination in western Deccan began in the first century AD. The reconstruction of this political event would indicate that Kanheri became important even prior to Nahapāṇa’s domination and later his conflict with Sātakaḷi.

Let us examine the architectural evidence. The early rock-cut cave activity at Kanheri may be traced to cave No. 2. It is an important cave and both Nagaraju and Dhavalikar considered this excavation as the earliest cave. Cave No.2 is a caitya-griha. The cave is very simple comprising an open veranda and an interior rectangular flat roofed hall containing stūpa at the end. The façade is badly mutilated at present (figs. 209, 210, 211, 212, 235). The veranda is still noticeable by the traces of mutilated walls below the ceiling and on the floor (figs. 210, 212). At the entrance of the hall, two big square holes and two small square holes are still visible on the floor level (figs. 210, 212). These holes were meant to fix the wooden poles. The ceiling of the veranda is curved (figs. 209, 211). The veranda wall is thin and its dimensions can be made out from the remains under the ceiling. The side walls of the hall are also as thin as the veranda wall and hence are broken. This has led Nagaraju and Dhavalikar to assume that the entire cave No. 2 has a common veranda. However, the veranda walls are noticeable under the ceiling (figs. 209, 210, 211) which proves that each cave was properly separated and hence had no common veranda. The hall is rectangular with a flat roof. The interior stūpa is very simple, having a drum without any embellishment and an aṇṭa. An incised square is cut over the aṇṭa. A hole in the round shape is carved in the centre of the incised square. It indicates that the harmikā was made separately and placed over it and then a cchatra must have been placed in the central hole. It is likely that the wooden cchatra must have been used. The walls of interior hall are well dressed up but the Buddha images are carved on the walls (figs. 213, 214, 215, 216). These images are intrusive, carved in later times. Nagaraju assigns this caitya to the later half of third century BC on the basis of simple stūpa design and the polish seen on it.30 But the polish which is observed on its surface is due to the
handling of the *stūpa* by the visitors every weekend. Dhavalikar too gives the same reason for the polish on the surface of the *stūpa*. Dhavalikar further adds that the flat roof quadrangular variety comes much later in the *caitya* cave architecture and therefore dated the cave to the latter half of the second century AD. In order to refute Nagaraju's dating, Dhavalikar also observes that there is no *vihāra* cave, which can be dated to an early period i.e. as early as third century BC. But the above analysis shows that though the cave is flat roofed and quadrangular, it has a veranda with curved roof. Besides, the use of the wooden *cchatra* cannot be taken as an indication of such an early date as third century BC as such devices continued even till second century AD as seen at Junnar Shivneri cave no. LIX. The emergence of veranda along with the shrine hall started in the first century BC itself such as at Bedsa. The present plan of the cave is an adoption from the Kondivite *caitya* cave but without the circular chamber at the end. As discussed earlier with regard to the inscriptive evidences related to Kanhangiri, it is likely that the cave may belong to the first half of the first century AD. One may also question the view that no *vihāra* is datable to first century AD. However, it is likely that the adjoining cave no.2f or 2b must have been a *vihāra* cave, which was later destroyed for expanding the existing excavation. Expansions of such instances are also observed at Thanala-Nadsur where a simple *vihāra* is converted into a large hall with the addition of the cells. Similarly even at Aurangabad, no *vihāra* cave is found which is contemporary with the *caitya* cave. Therefore, the existence of early type of *vihāra* contemporary to this *caitya* at the site has no relevance for assertion of its age as such.

The adjacent *caitya-grihas* i.e. 2d, 2c are later additions.

**Cave No. 2d** is also a *caitya-griha* of the same variety. The *stūpa* is badly broken. No *cchatra* is seen carved on the ceiling. This therefore may be considered as the next addition. Furthermore another *caitya* cave 2c is added. The hall is a little deeper than cave no. 2d. The roof is flat and the *stūpa* is well carved (figs. 217, 235). At the base of the *stupa* is a rim and the upper end of the drum is decorated with *harmikā*. The *harmikā* and *cchatra* on the rounded *apāda* are carved out of a single rock. The *cchatra* is attached to the ceiling. This excavation is assigned on stylistic ground to second century AD. Cave no. 2f is contemporary to cave 2c. The inscriptive record in this cave mentions the
patrons of the cave and they are from Kalyan and Nasik. A refectory (Sala) in the cave 2f was donated by Naganaka from Nasik. The inscription indicates that the cave is meant for the free distribution of water and food. The other patron was a goldsmith from Kalyan who made donation for the excavation of the cistern. Another cistern was a gift by Puṇavasu from Kalyan.

The next phase of excavations is done at a higher level towards the northern end of the above mentioned caves. Nagaraju has discussed the caves in detail. While these excavations were being done, an ambitious excavation was planned near cave No.2. The caitya cave No.3 was planned keeping in mind the traditions developed in the Māmala region. The cave follows Karla (great caitya) pattern in many ways like two front pillars followed by the stone facade wall, a veranda with cells and apsidal vault roof pillared hall. It may be observed that some additions in the plan of this caitya cave at Kanheri were also incorporated such as a big court-yard with pillars and a front fencing wall which is decorated with the vedikā design and the nāga guardian figures. The method of rock cutting is employed from the experience gained at Karla. The cave is planned in the sloping scarp of the hill. Chief patrons Gajasena and Gajamita contributed for the excavation of the caitya for the Bhadāyaniya sect. Its plan is conceived on a grand scale like Karla. Carving started from the top (figs. 218 to 235). The first stone wall is marked and excavated exactly like Karla. The veranda is excavated and carving of the façade started. At the same time, the pillars and front courtyard began to be excavated. The interior carving also progressed simultaneously.

The front of the court-yard has a fencing wall. Its outer surface is decorated with the vedikā design and an entrance is provided in the middle. The vertical and horizontal bars of this vedikā are decorated with the circular lotus petals. The upper part of the vedikā design i.e. the uppermost horizontal bar is decorated with the semi-circular lotus. The lower one is decorated with an animal frieze and below it another horizontal band, which functions like a base, is divided into square frames where a standing figure and a circular lotus petals are carved alternately (fig.219). The vedikā design is adopted from Amaravati railing stūpa. The entrances are guarded by the male guardian figures. On the right end, a nāga figure in human form with hood is carved. The figure is framed within
the two relief pillars, which hold the horizontal bar, over which caitya arches are carved (figs. 219, 220, 221). On the width of the entrance fence, the motif of Kalaśa is carved (fig. 222). It also resembles the Kalaśa that is carved in Amaravati and Nagarajunkonda. The Nāga figure carved on the right end (fig. 220) with broad shoulders shows heaviness in the overall treatment of the surface. However, one can observe that the artist preferred to make the shoulder broad, in fact the hands bear separate volume from torso. The face is round. No heavy ornamentation is preferred. In the overall treatment of the sculpture, frontality dominates. It appears that the guardian figures right from Bhaja have always been treated with heaviness and stiffness, lacking movement, perhaps keeping in mind their function as dvārpāla.

In the court-yard two pillars are excavated with different designs. They are monumental and have square base with sculptural decorations. The one on the left has been carved without breaking the continuity of the octagonal shafts whereas the right pillar’s continuity is broken by the pronounced ghata like motif. The base of these two pillars is in square format and is decorated with figures. The right court yard pillar has some significant visuals that are very important. For the first time, the Buddha images are carved in western Deccan. In the middle of the pillar, a seated figure of the Buddha is carved along with two attendants on either side (figs. 224, 228). The drapery of the Buddha image is plain, whereas on the lower base, another standing Buddha with two attendants is carved (fig. 227). The face is round, shoulders are broad, one hand is in varada mudra whereas the other hand holds a robe. The figure is slightly elongated and firmly placed on the ground. It is significant to note that the drapery of these images is plain. Stylistically these images are contemporary with the guardian figures and the images that are carved between the façade doors. The treatment of the drapery of the Buddha images is plain and transparent. Thus the plain or transparent variety of the Buddha image’s drapery appears in western Deccan at a stage earlier than its appearance in the Gangetic valley. This is very significant in order to study the development of stylistic conventions of the Buddha images in western Deccan itself.

According to Nagaraju,38 these Buddha images on the pillars are a later incorporation. However if they had been excavated later, then the octagonal shaft of the
pillar would have been uneven, therefore, these images are an integral part of the design itself and were included quite consciously. It may also be observed that the forecourt pillars in this cave too have sculptural decoration. The left one has images of bhārvāhakas (fig.223). They are dwarfs and while chiselling them, the artisans were aware that these images would be viewed from above the eye level. Their treatment is flat, having low volume. In respective of their low volume treatment, these dwarf figures are completely free in their surface plane and do not stick to the surface completely. If they are compared with the images at Pūtālkhora (fig. 22, 23, 24, 37, 38) as well as Nasik cave No.3, one notices that the contour of the figures has sweeping edges, images no more remain within the conformity of their surface. The images on square base, framed between the motif of vertical railings (figs. 225, 226) include the nāga in the ther- anthropomorphic form with two attendants on either side (fig.225). The figures are simply standing holding some object in their hand (fig.226), which is not very clear. On the left side pillars too, similar decoration is attempted (fig.226).

The stone screen-wall is excavated between the court-yard pillars and the façade of the caitiya. The lower base of the stone screen wall is decorated with the vedikā design. The façade is almost plain. The arch has no relief projection. Similarly the surrounding area is devoid of caitya arch decorations which are profusely found at Karla, Bedsa. Thus it was realised that the upper level of the façade decoration does not serve much visual function. On the other hand, the area between the doorways has a sculptural decoration. The upper part of this sculptural panel is decorated with the vedikā rail design whereas its either side is carved with relief pillars having pot based and pot capital on the top with animal figures. The images on this panel are planned on the pattern of Karle. Their faces are fully in the round, linear treatment of facial planes being absent. Their volume is much pronounced, curves are sharp, male figure’s shoulders are broad whereas female figures do not show such conventions (figs. 230, 231, 234). The Buddha images are also carved on the façade wall. These Buddha images are later additions, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter (figs. 231,232).

Simultaneously the interior carving also began. As a matter of fact the interior hall is carved with a lot of care where the initial cutting is made deep in order to determine the
desired depth of the hall with the probable stūpa mark at the semi-circular end. The interior, however, remained incomplete at this juncture. Only half a row of pillars on both the sides is properly carved having the ghata base with rising vertical strips and inverted ghata capital. The pillar type is like Karle. But, nevertheless, the pillar capitals have motifs different from those sculpted at Karle. At Kanheri, the inverted ghata holds the square platform and animal figures or the stūpa being worshipped by the animals or humans are carved. The rest of the pillars do not have the ghata base. The left row of pillars, however, has inverted ghata capitals but the right row does not have the ghata base or capital, indicating that the excavation on this cave stopped in between and was again resumed. The stūpa is simple. But its method of carving indicates that it was carved hurriedly (fig. 233).

The chief patrons of this cave are Gajasena and Gajamita, two brothers who financed this excavation for the monks of the Bhadakāṇiya sect, during the time of Yajña Śri Sātakarna whose reign is assignable to the late second century AD and early third century AD. (Yajña Śri's possible years of reign have already been discussed in the earlier chapter). Thus, the excavation can be assigned to the same date. Besides, the sculptural language too is different from that of Nasik and Karla, which also indicates the same date. It is significant to note that the rock-cut cave excavation involves several people including the Buddhist monks. Monks Achala, Gahala, Vijayamita, Bodhika, Dhamapala are mentioned. Others who are found mentioned are overseers, stone masons, artisans, polishers and also navakammika. The inscription also records that the cave is established i.e. (paṭhithapitam) and also completed by Aparenuka the merchant, thus indicating two stages of work in this cave. It is likely that the interior of the hall and other work was completed under Aparenu's patronage. Another inscription adds that some additions were made in the cave. It is likely that the cells on the left were added in this cave and the Buddha images are later additions. The Buddha images in this cave will be discussed separately.

According to Nagaraju, the cave excavation took place in several phases from 100 BC to 200 AD & 5th century AD, based on the typological variation of the pillar types and stūpa design. However, the incomplete nature of the cave in the first stage should be
taken into account. Nagaraju, for example, says that the nature of stūpa carving i.e. design of the stūpa indicates a post-Bhaja phase and pre Karla. But this appears to be impossible due to fact that the stūpa remained incomplete in the first stage of the excavation itself. Besides, the inscription clearly mentions the establishment and completion of the cave during the time of Yajña Śri Sātakarṇi. Hence to determine the stages of excavations on mere typological grounds is an acceptable proposition. Even the Buddha images on the pillars can not be a later addition. Their stylistic features do not indicate a 5th century AD date. Leese, on the other hand, assigns it to the late second century AD. 43 Generally the plain drapery or transparent drapery is associated with Sarnath images of late fifth century AD. 44 However, in western Deccan, such features appear much earlier i.e. in late second century AD itself. The second phase of the Mahāyāna excavation at Kanheri will be discussed in the next chapter. Dhavalikar and Nagarju consider that the Mahāyāna phase began in 5th century AD and, therefore, dated a few caves of Kanheri to third and fourth centuries AD. 45 However, in the next chapter the Mahāyāna beginning will be traced and accordingly the dates of the late Hinayāna excavation will have to be changed.

**CHAUL**

Chaul is a seaport. The Periplus also mentions Chaul as an important seaport on the west-coast. 46 The caves of Chaul are located much away from the coast. At present none of the caves is in a good state of preservation and all are converted into Hindu shrines. The caves are locally known as Ashpari Mata Mandir. They face west and are numbered from the south. Cave No.1 is now a Mata Mandir temple. The cave consists of a hall and cells at the back. Cave No.2 is completely transformed into a temple, which is recently built up. Cave No.3 is now a Hindu Shrine where making of cells are still visible. Cave No.4 & 5 are small cells. Cave No.6 is a vihāra cave with a hall with three cells at the back and one each on either side. On the left wall, a stūpa is carved in relief (fig. 236). Much of its drum is eroded but, nevertheless, the vedikā decoration and other elements are conspicuous. The harmikā is relatively small, the horizontal plates in inverted triangle are carved and shaft of the cchatra is broad. The cchatra is attached with the ceiling portion of the cave. Though the cave is in a bad state, the remaining portion of
the ceiling above the relief stūpa would indicate that the cave had a veranda and a small hall. The style of the stūpa indicates a date of first-second century AD.

At the back of the same hill, two caves have been excavated. One is a simple cell and the other is also a cell with a veranda in front. One cistern is also carved.

**NENAWALI**

Nenawali-Khadasmbla caves are located in Raigad district, and are approached from Pali. They are located nearly 35 km from Pali and discussed in detail by Henry Cousens. The important excavation is a big caitya-vihāra cave, consisting of a hall and cells around including a shrine. There are six cells on the left, and five on the right. At the back wall, the shrine-chamber is located on the right end, five cells are carved on the left of the shrine chamber (fig. 237). The right corner has a cell with inner cells on the two sides. The stūpa chambers’ roof is partly vaulted but the upper corners of the side and rear walls are slightly curved. The base of the stūpa is rather low and the hemispherical dome is high. Very probably the wooden umbrella was fixed in the squarish hole on the top of the stūpa. Dhavalikar further observes that the stūpa chamber was an afterthought when the carving was under way and hence it is not in the centre of the rear wall and suggests a first century AD date (fig. 238).

Nenawali is a small monastic complex, which emerged in the first century AD. Its proximity to the earlier cave site like Thanala Nadsur would indicate that the site together with Pali-Sudhagad (which is not discussed here) served as a subsidiary monastic complex to the ancient Thanala-Nadsur caves.

**KUDA**

Kuda is located south of Alibag, opposite to Rajapuri creek. In all 26 caves have been excavated at Kuda. All the caves face west and have been numbered from the north. The caves are situated on the Mahoba hill and excavated in the upper and lower group. Caves No. 1, 6, 9, and 15 are the caitya caves having veranda and hall with stūpa. Rest are either simple hall or small vihāras. Many of the caves have inscriptional records mentioning the names of the patrons. Cave no.6 is the biggest excavation at Kuda. By the
time, the caves at Kuda started getting excavated, the flat roof quadrangular caityas had become the most widely used plan. Caves at Kuda can be clubbed in four groups based on their location of excavation on the hill:

- **Group I** - caves No. 1 to 7
- **Group II** - caves No.8 to 14.
- **Group III** - caves No.15 to 20.
- **Group IV** - caves No.21 to 23.

**Cave No.1** is a flat roofed quadrangular caityagriha, consisting of a hall and an outer veranda with a cell at the left (Figs. 239, 240, 241). The façade of the cave is broken. Two front veranda pillars are broken, but they are simple octagonal pillars with pilasters having hour-glass decoration. The inside veranda pillars are octagonal with pot capital and base. The stūpa inside the chamber has cylindrical drum with the dome and a harmikā attached with the ceiling. There is no umbrella over the stūpa. The base of the stūpa drum has three rings around. The patrons of this cave are Shivabhuti and his wife Nanda. It is also mentioned in the inscription that Shivabhuti is the son of a Lekhaka (writer/scribe) Sulasadatta and his wife Utaradatta. Sularadatta is a lekhaka of Mahābhhoja Mamdavasa-Khamdapalita.

Adjacent to the above is the **cave No.2** (fig.242). It has a cell with stone bed on the left wall. The cell opens into a big room having a stone bed on the north wall. The front wall of the cave has a door on its right and a big window on the right side. Situated next to the above is cave No.3 which follows the plan of the previous cave (figs. 243, 244). On the right wall in the open court, a niche with a relief stūpa has been carved. It is significant to note that a relief stūpa is also carved on the side wall of the vihāra cave at Chaul (fig.236). Stylistically it follows the same norm. An inscription in the cave mentions the patron whose name ends with Bhutis.

**Cave No.4** is at a higher level than the above (figs. 245, 246). It has a large interior hall with a veranda and an open court in the front. The veranda wall has a door in the centre and two windows are carved on either side of the door. The front pillars of this cave are octagonal. The veranda floor is considerably at a lower level than the hall's floor level. A low raised wall covers the area between the pillars and pilaster. It is decorated
with the vedikā design from the exterior side. The interior hall has a low running bench along the side and back wall. At the back side, two niches are carved. The excavation appears somewhat incomplete. The overall pattern of designing the cave is adopted from the Kanheri vihāras, but its genesis lies at Nasik. There are niches on the back wall, which indicate that the cave was intended to be either a vihāra or caitya cave. There are chisel marks at the back. Dhavalikar considers them as an attempt to carve a stūpa chamber.53

Close to the above is cave No.5. The cave has a very elaborate plan avoiding the symmetrical plan of the vihāras. Such plans are implemented at Junnar considerably. The cave has an open court, veranda and two sections of cells (figs. 247, 248). The façade of the cave is broken now. Two front pillars are still visible. The veranda has a back-recess on its south wall. There are two doorways carved on the back wall of the veranda. Each opens into the cell chamber. The door at the northern end is relatively big and opens into the interior veranda. A back recess bench is cut on the south wall of this veranda. At the back of the veranda, a door opens into a big cell, which is another cell on its north wall. Back wall of the cell has a recess bench. Another door on the southern side of the main veranda opens into a hall like cell and at the back wall of the same also has one more cell with the recess bench at the back wall. In the front court, on the left side, a water cistern has been excavated. The inscription in the cave mentions the Buddhist monk Goa--------- pupil of elder monks Sivadata and Satimita54, and nun Padumakika, daughter of the nun Naganika, the sister's daughter of the elder monk Patimita and monk Agimita, together with her pupil (ativasini) Bodhi and her pupil Asalhamita.55

The plan of the cave deviates from the normative symmetrical vihāra plans. This shows the norms followed in plan of the second century AD, which were prevalent in many excavations such as at Junnar. It is also likely that the vihāras might have been used by the particular monk who might have commanded respect or it may be that by now the individual monks at the monastic complex were getting greater importance than the Sāṅgha as a whole.

An inscriptional record in the cave mentions a donation by the Buddhist monks. It also shows how the family members were active in making donations to the Buddhist
Sangha. Even after joining the Sangha, their identity is established only by showing their family relationship, such as Patimita or (Svatimita ) and Agimita who were brothers. Naganika was a nun who was the daughter of their sister. Naganika's daughter was Pudumnika who was the main donor of the cave. She contributed for the excavation of the cave along with her disciple Bodhi who also had a disciple, Asalhamita. The record establishes that Kuda assumed importance as a centre for learning or as a monastic institution. Names and the relation of the monks and their family members would suggest two generations, one is represented by the elder monks and the other is represented by their fellow family members and their disciples.

As noted earlier cave No. 6, is the biggest excavation at Kuda (Fig. 262). Considerable thinking and pre-planning went into designing this cave. Octagonal pillars together with a low raised wall, which has the decoration of the vedikā, was the most preferred façade design at Kanheri and other places. Thus, this format is retained in the façade design of this cave also. But apart from this, the artisans thought of something different in order to make the façade visually dynamic and different, so they chose to put two elephants on either side. The choice appears to be obvious and drawn from previous experiments. For example, elephants are carved at Pitalkhora vihāra cave No. 4 that holds the plinth of the vihāra; at Karla they are carved on either side of the main façade of the caitya cave. The motif appears to have been taken from Karla. The elephant figures (figs. 249, 250, 251) are life size. The carver's meticulous observation of the anatomical details of elephant's body is so visible that each plane of the elephant heads including protruding planes have the effect of perfect anatomical details. The trunks of the elephants bear weight and now are broken. The figure at right (fig. 251) is much more broken than the figure at left (fig.250). The octagonal pillars in the centre form the entrance to the veranda. Their bases are square. The veranda floor level is higher than the ground level. The vedikā railing over the raised low horizontal block is carved with proper care (See fig. 252). The design appears to have followed from Nasik cave No. 3 railings (fig. 411). The lower base of vedikā is carved by the relief square blocks at regular intervals (fig. 252). The back bench at the railing in the veranda (fig. 253) is a continuous tradition that
is being practised from Nasik cave No.3 onwards and widely used at the other sites like Junnar- Ganesh Leni, Karad, and Kanheri.

The gap between two front pillars serves as an entrance with windows on either side. The veranda back wall is plain without decoration, a door is cut in the centre and two big windows are cut on either side. Such big windows provide enough light for the hall. The hall is large, larger than cave No.1. A low running bench is carved all along the three sides. These low benches would suggest that the hall could well be an assembly hall. On the back-wall, the format is almost the same as that of the facade. Again two octagonal pillars are carved in the middle, leaving a large space between them, thus the doorway is cut, two windows on either side are carved. The lower portion of the window has a sculptural frieze whereas the space at both the ends is filled up with the sculptural decoration (figs. 255 to 260), which are bordered at the upper as well as lower side. Semi-circles in relief are carved over these borders. Images in the frieze have their volume much pronounced. Animal figures have rhythmic movement created by a rhythmic linear motion. The artisans preferred to show the figures more simplified, no attempt is made to bring out different undulations of the different anatomical planes. The area beside the window is carved by the figure couple (figs. 255 and 256). Frontality still dominates their posture. The male figures are shown with one hand raised above while the other hand rests on the waist. The female figures are shown with very little bend. The images no more stick to the surface, treatment of volume shows how the carvers have gained experience of creating sculptural mass. Their contours are well defined. Their pronounced volume does not make them shabby or make them inferior to other sculptural work. The physiognomic details are captured with the bold rendering of the mass; besides, their proportion does not cross their life-likeness. The turban of the male figure has undergone a change, its details are subdued. The drapery of the dhoti and a cloth around the lower body bears immense volume i.e. a heavier look is given to these parts. Recessions in the space are further enhanced by placing the hands of male figures raised above the shoulder level. The bend of their hands creates recession in the space.

The Shrine antechamber is little smaller than the wideness of the hall. A cell is also excavated on the left with a stone bed. The shrine chamber has a flat roof. The stūpa
has an elongated drum, three rims are carved at the base of the drum whereas the upper level has a *vedikā* rail pattern. The *harmikā* is carved over the *aṇḍa* and a *cchatra* is attached to the ceiling (Fig. 261).

The main patrons of this cave are Sivam and his wife Vijaya together with their other family members. The record also mentions the donation of the stone carving (*selarupakama*), it is likely that the donations of the stone carving is a special provision to decorate the cave. The donor of the cave is a younger brother of the donor of cave No.1 and hence they are not far from each other in date. The style of couple image is closer to the images of Kanheri cave No.3. Therefore, the date of this cave is likely to be mid-second century AD or late second century AD. The other inscriptions in the same cave are of later times, mostly recording the gifts by the monks. The Buddha images too are carved in the front; which are later incorporation in the cave. Addition of the Buddha images is an indication of the fact that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was introduced at Kuda. The plan of the cave has a variation such as the addition of interior veranda with shrine chamber, interior hall and outer veranda. The façade design suggests an improvisation over the old design to arrive at a new design, but, nevertheless, the format of the façade remained unique in western Deccan as no other side followed this format.

Close to cave No.6 is cave No. 7. It has a big cell with a veranda. The cell has a stone bed on left (figs. 263, 264). It also has a stone bed cut on the north -wall and one more stone bed in the southern veranda wall. The front façade of the cave is very simple in design (fig.263). The doorway to the veranda is cut at the northern side of the veranda wall. The pillars are cut in the middle of the cave. They have square bases and octagonal shafts. The square base is rested on the small wall emerging from the base, a back-bench is also provided in the veranda along with this wall. The pilaster has an hour glass decoration. There is a cistern in the southern side of the small courtyard. The cave was patronised by a physician, Somadeva, whose father was also a physician. Somadeva had three sons and four daughters. The cave is meant for residential purpose and only one monk can be accommodated. A little beyond this cave is a ruined cistern carved under a recess. The inscription over it is much ruined. But the patron's name is recorded as Manadava Kumara, son of Sivama of the chief of the Mandavas.
The next group of caves has been excavated at slightly higher level.

**Cave No. 8** is a simple excavation (see Fig. 265). Front of the cave is broken, but appears to have had a doorway, with a window to the left, leading to an oblong chamber. A cell having a recess bench on the north side of the oblong chamber has been excavated.

**Cave No. 9** is an important cave, placed slightly at a higher level. This is a flat roofed rectangular caityagriha with a veranda in the front (figs. 266, 267, 268, 269). The veranda has two pillars with octagonal shaft. Pillars have ghata-bases on square pyramids. It has also inverted ghata-capital attached to the inverted square pyramid. The pilasters are plain. One pillar is completely broken whereas the other is still intact (fig. 267). A wide door in front of the two pillars opens into the irregular hall. A cell is carved on the northern veranda wall with the stone bed on the eastern wall. The stūpa in the chamber (fig. 268) has an elongated drum. Three rings around the base of the stūpa are carved. The upper level of the drum has two tiers, but there is no vedikā decoration carved. The anda is carved over the drum and a harmikā is large, stepped abacus is carved and attached with the ceiling. Traces of plaster are still visible. This indicates that the cave was painted. It is intended that the cchatra would not be carved, instead, it must have been painted on the ceiling, thus indicating the economic measures adopted by the artisans to save time and resources to carve the ceiling out of the rock. The elongated drum was an outcome of pre-planning. The excavation was financed by Brahman woman Bhayila wife of the Brahman lay worshipper Agitilu.60

Design of the front pillars of the cave was evolved as at Nasik and Junnar. The architectural plan and design of the cave follows Junnar- Shivneri group's cave No. 2 caityagriha, with the addition of the cell in the veranda. The artisans have chosen the economic plan considering the available resources. The patron of the cave was a Brahman who became a follower of Buddhism. Donations by Brahmanas are also recorded at Junnar Amba-Ambika caityagriha and at Kondivite caityagriha. Considering the stylistic peculiarities in the plan and design of the caitya, this excavation may be considered one of the earliest caityagrihas at Kuda and may be dated to mid second century AD.

Nearly five feet below the above cave, several caves have been excavated. Caves No.10, 11, 12, 13, 14 are additions along with the caityagriha (fig.265). Cave No.10 (fig.
is identical with cave no.2 and 3. The cave has an open courtyard. The front wall of the veranda is broken but it had a door to the north side and a window at the south end. The veranda is oblong and has a cell with a stone bed. An inscription above the window mentions the patron Sivapirita, a son of the gardener (mālākāra) Vadhuka. It may also be observed that gardener as the patron is also mentioned as patron of one of the water cisterns in Kuda. Cave No.11 is a small excavation having a veranda and a cell at the back with the stone bed. The veranda wall has one door at the southern side opening into a large oblong cell. A window is carved on the veranda wall at the northern side. The record in the cave mentions the patron as Goyamna, daughter of Hala, the royal minister (Rajamacha). Cave 12 (Fig. 271) consists of a veranda with a hall and a cell at its back. A cell on the southern end of the veranda has a back-bench on the back wall. The excavation was patronised by Mamdavi the daughter of Mahābhōja Sadakara Sudamsana.

Cave No.13 (fig. 272) has a veranda with a cell in the back wall of the veranda. The back wall has a door and a window opening into the cell. The cell has a stone bench in the back wall. The front is broken. It was financed by Vijaynika daughter of Mahābhōja Sadakara Sudamsana. It appears that the Mahābhōja mentioned in the earlier caves especially No.1 & 6 is different from the family of the Mahābhōjas mentioned in these two excavations, but their social status appears to be the same. Cave No.14 is situated adjacent to the above. It has a veranda and a big cell with the stone bench at the back wall. The excavation was financed by the iron trader Mahika from Karad. A cistern is excavated beyond cave 14. It is a gift by Gahapati and banker Vasula. In the record it is clearly mentioned a cistern as a bathing tank (Snānpodhi) thus indicating its use for the bathing of residing monks. The patron was a sethi-gahapati. Other places such as at Mahad and Kol gahapati is also mentioned as Sethi (Banker).

The next group of caves is much beyond the above one and at a higher level. Cave No.15's excavation was sponsored by Adhagachhaka Ramdata and his wife Velidata. It is the only caityavihāra in this group. The cave has an open courtyard, front veranda and a caitya hall at the back of the veranda wall. Two cells are carved on either side of the veranda wall (figs. 273, 274, 275). The stūpa has a simple drum having the design like
cave No.9 stūpa. The *harmikā* over the *aṇḍa* is neatly carved and stepped abacus over it, is attached with. The plan of the cave is an elaboration of cave 9 plan with the addition of cells. The inscription record further adds that the cave has been excavated when Mamdava Kocchiputa Velidata is Mahābhōja. The Mahābhōja Mamdamva appears to be different from the one mentioned in caves No.1 & 6 inscriptions. But, nevertheless, the Mahābhōjas are local rulers of the region as indicated by these inscriptions. This excavation appears to have done after cave No.9 and may be assigned to early third century AD.

**Cave No.16** is situated at higher level than the previous one. It consists of a big courtyard. A low bench is carved in the front of the veranda. The front wall of the veranda has a door in the northern side and a window on the southern side. A bench is carved in the recess along the north wall of the veranda. At the back wall of the veranda, a big cell is excavated with a recess-bench on its north wall. There are two water cisterns under recess on either side of the open courtyard. Both the cisterns have inscriptions, one is patronised by a female disciple, Bodhi⁷⁰, whereas another inscription mentions the donation by Mugada a *mālāraka* (gardener).⁷¹ Inscription on the veranda wall records the gift of the nun, Sapila, the disciple of the elder (*thera*) Bhayata Vijaya with Lohita and Venhuya and her female disciple Bodhi.⁷² But who was the occupant of the cave was unknown. Cave 5 similar also records similar pattern of donation.⁷³

**Cave 17** is similar in plan as cave 16. The front wall of the veranda has a door and large window. It has an inscription on the back wall of the veranda, which records the donation of Nāga a *Gahapati* and *Sārthavāha*.⁷⁴ It is likely that though the person is a *Gahapati*, he is also a *Sārthavāha* himself and a leader of trading group. It is likely that his involvement is more in directing various routes of communication, as geographically, the region around Kuda has lot of hills and creeks. Even several places are visible from the top of the hill but their approaching roads are very confusing and difficult to make out. Perhaps this could be a reason for him to take up the profession of *sārthavāha* in order to guide people along the coastal and inland routes.
Plan of cave 18 is the same as cave 17 except the front veranda wall, which has a door in the middle and two windows on its either side. The patron was a sethi (Banker), Vasulanka.75

Cave 19 is excavated slightly at a higher level than the previous one. The front veranda wall has a large door on the southern end and a big window in the middle. A passage on the northern corner leads to a room at the back whereas a cell with recessed bench at the back wall is carved in front of the main entrance. The plan resembles the plans of several caves at Junnar Ganesh Pahar. Cave 20 is badly mutilated. It has a cell with a large veranda.

The next group of caves is located nearly 70 to 80 ft. further and about 5 to 7 ft. high is cave No.21, which is an unfinished flat roofed caityagriha. To the southern end of the front court is a cistern with an inscription recording the donor Vasulanaka who was a sethi.76 The cave has two rough square pillars and pilasters in front of the veranda. A door is cut at the back wall of the veranda leading to the inner chamber where a square mass has been left in the middle of the back wall, which being partially worked out from both the sides of the wall. It is intended to cut out the stūpa.

Cave 22 is situated at the lower level than the above. It has a cell with the stone bench at the back and veranda which is broken. Beyond this excavation, two water cisterns are carved. Cave 23 is similar in plan to caves 17 and 18. The front veranda wall has door and window on either side. The back wall of the veranda has a door on the southern side leading into a big cell with the stone bed in recess at the back wall. The cell also has a window on its front wall. The patron of the cave was Sivadatta wife of a Vehemita who is sārthavāha.77

Cave 24 is situated at nearly 10 ft. higher level than the previous cave. It has a small courtyard, veranda with a central door in the front, and little off-centred door at the back wall. The back door leads to the inner cell, which has recessed stone bed at the southern wall. The cave was the outcome of donation by Asalamita, the son of the sārthavāha Acchada(la)dasa.78 Next to the above are caves 25 & 26. Both the caves are identical in plan having open veranda with a door and a window at its back wall. A cell
chamber is carved at the back wall. A recessed stone bed is also carved at the cell's back wall.

The above analysis shows that Group-II may be considered the earliest one, assigned to mid-second century AD followed by group-I excavations and group III and IV are assignable to late 2nd century AD to early 3rd century AD. Kuda emerges as an important cave monastery in the Konkani region after mid 2nd century AD. The location of the cave site suggests that there must have been a seaport close to it. However, none of the records mentions any name that would hint at the presence of the seaport. The Periplus, which is dated to the 1st century AD, does not mention any seaport nearby to Kuda caves on the west coast. But it mentions seaports like Chaul, Bankot, Dabhol and Jaigad on the west coast after crossing Sopara. Chaul lies on the north and Bankot lies on the south of Kuda caves. Both the seaports are away from Kuda caves. The date of the caves on stylistic and paleographical grounds would suggest a period from mid-second century AD onwards. Thus the place seems to have emerged as an important monastic cave centre after mid-second century AD. The plan and design of caves at Kuda appear to have been adopted from plans that are evolved at Junnar, Kanheri and Nasik. There are as many as four caitya caves. Excavating more than one caityagriha at a single site has been a part of tradition in Western Deccan. But the assembly hall for the monks remained confined to cave No.6. The flat roof quadrangular caityas are easy to excavate and require less labour and resources than the apsidal vaulted roof variety. Similarly, the vihāra façade design at the site is very simple, having an open veranda and a door and window at the back wall in the most cases. This is a deviation from the front pillar variety of façade designs, which are widely used at Kanheri. The Kuda caves show greater simplicity. Option for such simplified design has to be seen from the context of resource availability. Besides, many excavations are financed either by the individuals or a group of persons from the same family, thus indicating shift from collective to individual patronage. This then largely depends upon the resource availability to the artisans, but nevertheless artisans used their skill to make the visual form more dynamic within the limitations. The tradition of vault roof apsidal caityas with the stone screen façade and veranda provide ample scope for decoration and sculptural embellishment, whereas flat roof variety
provides less scope for the sculptural embellishment. But within such limitations the façade design of cave No.6 turns out to be unique in western Deccan cave tradition.

None of the vihāra caves at Kuda follows the normative plan of a vihāra having a large interior hall with the cells around, like Nasik cave No.10. All cells of the caves have stone benches and are large in dimensions almost 6 to 8 ft. squarish. The patron perhaps desired to express his/her respect of the act of donation by the excavation of such cave, along with maintaining his/her individualistic, personal identity.

MAHAD

Mahad is situated in the historical region of Apañānta/Suñāpañānta and is a taluka headquarters in the present district of Raigad in the Maharashtra state. There are altogether 27 excavations. Two are the caitya-vihāra, two are the manḍapas, 2 are memorial stūpas and the rest are vihāras. The caves face east and are located on the present Mumbai-Goa highway. The river Gandhari flows in front of the hill.

All the 27 caves are excavated on one hill that runs parallel to the existing national highway. It is also interesting to observe that the location of the caves on the hillock is somewhat very disorganised but it does formulate a kind of 3-tier level and also the caves form a sort of groups. For example cave No.1 is much isolated from the rest of the caves and at a considerable height whereas caves No.2, 3, 4, 5 are slightly at the lower level than cave No.1. Caves No.6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 are almost at the same lower level. Again caves No.12 & 13 are at a higher level. Caves 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 are below caves No.11 & 12 whereas cave Nos. 21 to 27 are at the lower most level.

CAITYA CAVES

As stated earlier caves No.8 and 1 are the caitya-grihas in this complex. Cave No.8 is a flat roofed caitya-vihāra type (figs. 276, 277, 278, 279). It consists of a hall surrounded by 8 cells and a shrine chamber. The façade of the cave is broken. Two pillars in the front are broken, but their top portion is visible (fig.276). They are carved with inverted stepped and an inverted pot-capital. It may also be taken as an indication that the lower portion of the pillar must be a pot-based type as similar pillars are also found at Nasik 20, Junnar (in many caves), and Kuda caitya cave No.9. The hall is plastered (only
certain portion is seen plastered and painted, indicating the wall must have been painted) and has a bench running along the three walls. The left and right walls have three cells each and two cells are cut at the back wall. In the centre of the back wall, a shrine chamber is excavated at the level of low running bench. In fact, the floor level of the hall is considerable at lower level than the shrine and cell's floor. The cells have a bench at the back. At the back of the cell door, on the top and bottom of the door, there are 4 holes, two holes at the top and two holes at the bottom. These holes are meant to fix the door jams.

A shrine chamber at the back is larger than the area of cells. The stūpa is no more there, but its circumference can be ascertained due to existence of lower portion on the floor. Only the upper part of the cchatra is visible and is attached with the ceiling. This feature indicates a late date of the caitya cave. There is an inscription at the side of the pilasters on right wall recording a gift of eight celled caityagriha, two water cisterns (which are carved on the left & right side of the cave), the path in front of the cave donated by Kumāra Kanhaboa Vhenupalita. Word Kumāra is very significant in this inscription, it indicates that the patron is associated with the ruling family and therefore the word Kumar is used i.e. Prince. Vidya Dehejia on paleographic ground assigns the date of the cave to 100 AD i.e. the paleo. series III dated to 90-150 AD. On the other hand, Nagaraju proposes the date of late third century AD or early fourth century AD, which is again based on paleography and also the stylistic consideration of the typology of the cave and its pillar type. Dhavalikar argues that paleography is not always a safe criterion because even in the present case, scholars assign different dates to the same inscription. He observes that the pillars are akin to those at Junnar, Nasik and Kuda, but the cave is an advancement over the Kuda cave and, therefore, it is excavated in middle third century AD. But the issue in this case is not really the chronological position of the cave but how & when the caitya-vihāra design was adopted and that too with improved plan. For the first time such plan occurs at Nasik caves no. 3 and 10 without a separate shrine chamber and cave no.17 with the provision of the shrine chamber at the back. Especially cave 17 of Nasik consists of a hall, cells and a separate shrine cell. A similar plan is also adopted at Karad No.7, 48, Wai (Lohare-Sultanpur group), Nenavali, Khed,
Sheralwadi. Khed and Nenavali are in the Aparānta region itself. The plan of this nature (i.e. of Mahad 8) is well developed and perfect symmetry is maintained in its execution. Another important aspect is the name of the patron, Kumāra Kanaba Vhenupalita. In the absence of the name of the Satavahana King or an affiliation to the Sātavāhanas, Vhenupalita is more likely to be a local ruler and he must have ruled in the lower Aparānta region. The local rulers appear to have consolidated their political position either after the Sātavāhana rule or soon after the Yajña Śri Sātakarṇi’s rule or even may be earlier than the Yajña Śri i.e. during the time of the Rudradaman’s control of the Aparānta. But the former appears to be the likely possibility and therefore early third century AD is a likely date for this excavation.

Cave No.15 (fig.280) and 21 (281) are the memorial stūpa caves. Nagaraju calls cave No.21 as the caityagriha.83 This cave has a stūpa in a cell like excavation and a cell on its left whereas cave No.15 is a relief stūpa chamber. Both the stūpas are identical in design. The former resembles Kanheri cave No.36 and a stūpa of cave No.4. It also has Buddha image carved on its right wall with the same motifs as on cave No.1. Caves no.15, 7, 21 at Mahad cannot be termed as caityagriha as it does not have enough space for circumambulation. Besides, Kanheri cave No.4 also has a Buddha image carved in it, which is a later incorporation. This cave too has a Buddha image, which is also a later incorporation. Cave No.21, therefore, cannot be termed as a caityagriha. It is a memorial stūpa. As the surface of both the stūpas in caves No.15 & 21 is much eroded, nothing can be said about the possible existence of the inscription.

The rest are vihāra caves. None of the caves has cells around the hall. All the caves have a cell or two and a hall along with the veranda. Their plans indicate that the caves are meant for individual monks. In fact, they adhere to the design that came up in the second century AD. Cave No.3 is approached by a flight of steps (fig. 283) which is between caves No.7 and 8. These steps and the overall technique of excavations relate much to the Bhaja cave complex. In the rest of the caves, the upper façade is broken. But whatever has remained, it is certain that there is no attempt to make any decoration whereas the lower portion is decorated. Either the exterior part of the veranda or the exterior of a small courtyard in front is decorated with the vedikā design. There is a
considerable shift in the decoration of the vihāra design. In the earlier caves it is mostly the upper part of the façade that is decorated with various motifs such as vedikā design or the caitya arches etc. Such design of the decoration on the lower part of the façade is widely used at Kanheri in particular but also in the Aparānta region. Cave No. 27 (figs. 284, 285) has a veranda, hall and an interior cell, but noteworthy is a relief stūpa in the veranda, which is also found at Kuda and in earlier cave at Kondane in the Aparānta region itself. The cave was patronised by Vadasariya, a son of gahapati and sethi. The pictorial vocabulary of the façade design is confined to the front octagonal pillars and a space in front is fenced by a raised rock-cut wall which is decorated with the vedikā design. In the case of cave No.10 (fig. 286), the façade design is followed from numerous Kanheri vihāras, which consist of octagonal pillars and a raised rock-cut low wall having the decoration of vedikā design on its exterior face. Other noteworthy developments at Mahad are the pillar types. The pillars are octagonal with elongated square base where its broadness gets reduced at the upper level such as in caves No.3 and 5 (fig. 288). Their plan consists of a veranda, hall and a cell or two cells at the back wall. Many plans are the same as at Kuda and Nadsur.

**Khed**

Khed is located to the south of Mahad. Only four caves are excavated at Khed. The caves are located behind the present state transportation Bus-stand on a small hillock. On the western side of the hillock is a small water stream, now turned into a waste drain. The numbers are given from the eastern side. Cave No.1 is a small cave with a cell and veranda (fig. 289). In the front there is a big water cistern.

Cave No.2 (figs. 290, 291) is situated little away from the above. Its front is broken, a cell is cut on the right in the front which appears to be a later addition. The hall is big, measuring nearly 23 feet deep and 19 ft. wide. A low bench runs around the side and back wall. Two cells are carved at the back wall measuring 6 ft. x 7 ft. Cells are devoid of any stone beds.
Cave No.3 (figs. 292, 293) consists of a veranda and two cells at the back. Both the cells have a recess bench. The veranda measures nearly 15x4 ft. Beyond this cave is a water cistern.

Cave No.4 is a flat roofed caityagriha (figs. 294, 295, 296). The front of the cave is broken, but it can be assumed that the cave has a veranda as the remains of the side walls and a broken pillar in the front would indicate. The interior hall is big with three cells and a shrine chamber. Two cells are carved on the right wall whereas one is carved on the left. At the back, a big shrine chamber is carved. The shrine chamber is not located in the centre. A stūpa inside the chamber has a long cylindrical drum with a semi-circular aṇḍa over it. The aṇḍa is relatively small in proportion to drum. A cchātra is carved over the stūpa and attached to the ceiling of the shrine chamber. According to Dhavalikar, the stūpa was an after thought; when the cells were being cut there was a change in the original plan and, therefore, the stūpa-chamber is off-centered. The cave, therefore, is assignable to early third century AD.

CHIPLUN

Chiplun is a taluka headquarters in Ratnagiri district. The caves are locally known as Pandav Leni. They are away from town. The cave complex consists of just three excavations including a flat roofed quadrangular caitya (figs. 297, 298, 299). The caves generally face south and are in a deteriorating condition. The numbers are given from west. The excavation number one is water cistern.

Cave No.2 is a flat roofed caityagriha. Its plan consists of an open veranda and a shrine hall. The left and right walls of the veranda have square holes to fix the wooden poles in. This device is not new in the western Deccan as similar arrangement is also done at Kanheri. The interior hall is equally in a bad shape. The drum portion of the stūpa is completely broken. The cchātra is still visible, which is attached to the roof. On stylistic considerations the cave may be dated to the late second century AD.

PANHALEK AJI
Panhalekaji is located in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. It is on the Khed-Dapoli road. The complex consists of 29 caves. M. N. Deshpande has described and discussed its chronology in detail. The discussion here is confined to a few caves.

Caves No.4, 5 and 6 are considered as the Hinayāna excavations. Caves No.4 and 5 share a common courtyard. Cave No.4 (fig.301) has a cell at the back.

**Cave No.5** is an important excavation. It has astylar hall. The back wall has a low bench, which is interrupted by the door. On the right side of the shrine door a relief stūpa is cut (Fig. 302). The stūpa is like that of Khed. The recess bench on the right wall of the hall appears to be a later addition. The shrine door has two plain dvārṣākhās and a plain lalātāmba. M.N. Deshpande observes that the shrine chamber at the back wall is a later addition. The back wall of the chamber has a low bench. Perhaps an image placed against the wall over the rock-cut platform, which will be discussed later.

**Cave No.6** is another important excavation (Fig. 303). The façade is very simple. Doorway is provided in the middle by carving a gap between the two pillars. The pillars are octagonal. At a lower level is a parapet wall. The pilasters too are octagonal. The upper level is carved with the motif of a lintel. The upper part of pillars and pilasters have bracket capitals. The windows carved on either side of the doorway are big and dominate the façade design. The veranda is a rectangular hall. In the veranda, there is a bench on either side, the one on the east having a head-rest. In the eastern wall is a rectangular niche with another smaller niche with a semi-circular top set within it. The veranda back wall has a central doorway and has two plain dvārṣākhās with plain lalātāmba. Two cells are carved at the back wall of the hall. The inscription in the cave is much eroded but a few letters are visible and on paleographic ground assigned to third century AD.

It may be observed that at Panhalekaji that the doorways begin to get elaborated. The dvārṣākhās is a part of that elaboration together with the lalātāmba. Considering the nature of façade design together with the plan, the caves may be assigned to early third century AD. Caves No.7, 8 & 9 are also considered Hinayāna excavations, which were later modified. All these excavations may be assigned to early 3rd century AD.
AMBIVALE

Ambivale is located near Kusur Ghat in Karjat Taluka of the Raigad district. The cave (fig. 294) is situated at the northern foot of the hill fort of Kotaligad. The façade of the cave is decorated with the four front pillars and two pilasters on either side with octagonal shaft. The pillar capitals are of inverted-pot variety. The lower side of the pillars has a raised horizontal block having a back-bench in the veranda. The doorway in the centre leads to the interior hall. Two windows are carved on either side. The interior hall has four cells on the side and a back wall. A low bench runs along the three sides. The cells are neatly carved and are devoid of stone benches. Nagaraju assigns this cave to early 4th Century AD as there are no beds in cells as seen in the Mahāyāna caves. However, this cannot be taken as a criterion as stone beds are absent even in Bhaja cave No.18 which is assigned to 2nd century BC, some caves of Junnar-Manmodi and Ganesh Pahar group of first-second century AD and stone beds are absent even in the Mahāyāna caves No. 7, 11, 15, 20 of Ajanta. Considering the façade design, the cave may be assigned to mid second century AD. Besides, the inscription on the paleographic ground is dated to 2nd century AD by Dehejia.

Aparānta is the only historical region where the maximum number of sites are located. The early beginning of cave excavation started at Kondivite and Thanala-Nadsur. At both the places, the format of the caitya cave excavations was different i.e. flat-roof hall with the domical stūpa chamber and an apsidal pillarless hall respectively. However, at Kondane, the caitya and vihāra designs were more close to the tradition of neighbouring Māmala region. Kanheri emerged as the most important cave site in the region and the excavations went on for a very long time. The caitya caves were of both the varieties i.e. flat-roof hall and the vault-roof apsidal pillared hall. The second option was no doubt planned on the pattern of Karla great caitya hall. But the cave could not be completed due to lack of patronage. Nevertheless, in later time, excavations of caves continued at Kanheri. The other cave site such as Kuda exhibited progression in the concept of pictorial vocabulary in the caitya cave decoration. The other cave sites like Mahad, Khed, Chiplun, Nenavali-Khadsamla, and Panhale-kaji follow the normative architectural format. At Panhale-Kaji and Kanheri, the development of the facade designs
of the vihāra caves was a significant development. Even the doorframes began to show an elaboration, which were later fully developed in the Mahāyāna cave excavations at Kanheri and Kondivite.

Notes:

1. Uran caves are mentioned in the Gazetteer of 1883 but could not be located, Kol and Virar caves are not of much significance and is discussed by Nagaraju. Lonad is a Mahayana cave site near Kalyan and has been described by Deshpande and Jamkhedkar (See Bibliography).
3. Dhavalikar M. K., 1984, *Late Hinayana caves of Western India*.
5. LL 1035
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
14. LL 1068.
20. Ibid.
21. LL 1071.
23. Ibid.
27. LL 1123 & also see Senart E. 1905, Inscriptions in the caves at Nasik, Epidaphia Indica vol. VIII.
32. Gokhale Shobhana, 1991, Kanheri Inscriptions, No.2 (henceforth S.G. No.).
33. Ibid.
34. S. G No.3.
35. S.G. No.4.
37. S. G. No. 5.
39. S. G. No. 5.
40. S. G. No. 5.
41. S. G. No. 6.
43. opcit.
45. Op cit.
47. opcit.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. LL 1037.
52. LL 1038.
54. LL 1040.
55. LL 1048.
56. LL 1045.
57. LL 1046 & 1047.
58. LL 1048.
59. LL 1049.
60. LL 1050.
61. LL 1051.
62. LL 1053.
63. LL 1052.
64. LL 1054.
65. LL 1063.
66. LL 1056.
67. LL 1073.
68. LL 1075.
69. LL 1058.
70. LL 1059.
71. LL 1061.
72. LL 1060.
73. LL 1041.
74. LL 1062.
75. LL 1063.
76. LL 1064.
77. LL 1065.
78. LL 1066.
79. LL 1072.
84. LL 1073.
87. Ibid. p-41.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid. p-36 & 43.
90. Ibid.
92. opcit.