

## CHAPTER V

### THE EVOLUTION OF MAITREYA ICONOGRAPHY IN WESTERN DECCAN

After the study of Maitreya sculptures from the two important schools of Kushana Empire, Mathura and Gandhara, the next significant development in terms of chronological sequence and spatial interrelationship is in the region of Western Deccan.

Approximately, around the end of the fifth century A.D. Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished in this region and had a strong sway during the sixth to eighth centuries A.D. Thousands of images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were carved out on the facades, walls and pillars of the cave temples of this region(1). Over a dozen different types of Bodhisattvas have been identified in this region and so far no iconological analysis of them have been satisfactorily undertaken. The study of Buddhist art of this region generally has been studied in relation to the formal and stylistic characteristics of the Buddha and Bodhisattva images in relation to Gupta period developments at Mathura, Sarnath and other art centers.

The problems faced in study of the Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan are mainly due to the following reasons: the use of combined attributes for a

deity, inconsistency in the employment of particularised typologies, lack of adequate historical evidences etc.

The study of Bodhisattva iconography of Gupta period Mathura and Sarnath becomes extremely important in order to trace the genesis of the Bodhisattva iconography in the Western Deccan. To enable such an understanding the first part of the present chapter deals with the Maitreya images from Gupta domain, from the sites like Mathura, Sanchi Sarnath and Gyaraspur. The part that follows deals with the iconographical features of Maitreya sculptures and its importance in the iconographical programme of the Western Deccan roughly from the mid-fifth to the mid eighth century A.D.

#### V-1. THE ADVENT OF NEW MAITREYA ICONOGRAPHY IN GUPTA DOMAIN

##### V-1-A. MATHURA, SANCHI AND GYARASPUR

From around the beginning of the fifth century A.D. the older types of Bodhisattvas of Mathura school had been changing both in style(2) and iconography. In this respect a standing Bodhisattva image, in the Lucknow Museum (fig. 137), is of great interest. Stylistically, it has a refined and subtle delineation of forms; qualities which can be seen in the Maitreya images as well, in contrast to the earlier examples from Kushana Mathura. Behind the crown is a small disk, which appears to have developed during the mid-fifth

century A.D. The earlier convention of having double necklaces gets reduced into a single ornament which is delineated intricately. The mode of wearing the garment too get modified, although the traditional dhoti and the uttariya remain to be in vogue as such. The image under consideration has lost both the hands, leaving no trace of attributes, and hence the difficulty in its identification. Among the Bodhisattvas who were popular in this period, i.e., Siddhārtha, Padmapāṇi, Maitreya and Vajrapāṇi, the most probable deity that this image represents must be Maitreya due to the following reasons: first, no image of Bodhisattva Siddhārtha or Padmapāṇi having a crown has been identified as yet which belong to before or around the probable date of the image i.e. the mid-fifth century A.D. Secondly, in the art of Mathura the image of Vajrapāṇi is attributed with a crown due to his supposedly close connection with the iconography of Indra. Generally he is not found with the upper part of the body covered with uttariya. Thirdly, relatively there are more number of images of Maitreya with crown, similar to the figure under consideration. Fourthly, the Maitreya image from Sarnath (fig. 151), shows an identical mode of wearing the garment, especially notable is the treatment of the folds of garment on the left shoulder. It is worth comparing the present image (fig. 137) with the Maitreya images of fig. 40 and other crowned images of Maitreya from Kushana Mathura school. The mode of wearing the garments seen in the fig.

137 seems to be a modified version of the sanghati of the early Buddha/Bodhisattva images of Mathura, for example the fig. 12 which differs from other contemporary Bodhisattva images.

A standing contemporaneous image of Vajrapāṇi in the Sanchi Museum, (fig. 138) offers a good comparison. Through broken the crown can be inferred as similar to the previous image, a sash is wrapped loosely around the hip which is tied at the left side of the hip. The crown, ornaments (notably a single round necklace) and a sash with a knot are the characteristic features of the Bodhisattvas of mid-fifth century A.D. in Mathura and surrounding regions. The differing identities of the Bodhisattvas therefore, almost totally depend upon the attributes they hold, as in the case of this image which can be recognized as Vajrapāṇi by the broken vajra in the right hand. Similarly, another Bodhisattva image in the Sanchi Museum (fig. 139), can be recognized as Padmapāṇi, for he carries padma in the right hand. The term Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi can be used here only as adjective in substantive form - padma holder and vajra holder since we know the common use of these as attributes. The padma, for example, can be seen being held even by Nāga deities as well(3). What is noteworthy here is that the padma in the hand of Padmapāṇi of fig. 139 is characterized by small stems that are collected together to form a bunch. In the above two images from Sanchi we can also notice the shiraścakra - the pleated fan type motif .

behind the head. These two features are also seen in the images of Bodhisattvas from Bagh caves and the early phase of sculpture in Western Deccan, especially at Ajanta.

Another important point in the study of the fifth century art of Mathura region is the continuation of the older compositional format of the Buddhist triad. As noted in the earlier context the Buddha images in the Mathura school are flanked by either simple chauri bearers, or Brahmā and Indra, rather than by the divine Bodhisattvas. Taking such chauri bearers as the indications of early representations of Bodhisattvas along with the Buddha, some scholars consider that Bodhisattva images in the early Mathura school had not gained the divinities in their own right(4). The interpretation can however, be done in the other way round; that is by considering that the Bodhisattvas images of Mathura have had their own divinities, rather than being a chauri bearer of the Buddha.

Such a tradition seems to have continued in the fifth century A.D., on the basis of the examples from the four Buddhist triad groups, which Marshall and Foucher believed to have adorned the gateway of the great stūpa at Sanchi(5). Many scholars have paid attention to these groups in order to find out the identification of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva images in connection with the concept of Dhyāni Buddha(6). The results however, are not fruitful enough due to the fact that all the four Buddhas are in identical dhāyana mudrā and padmāsana, and the attendants, except the

triad at the southern side of the stupa, are shown with more or less identical iconographical features(7). The triad on the southern side of the stūpa (fig. 140) can be read as representing Śākyamuni Buddha with Brahmā and Indra; the former stands on the right side of the Buddha and shows an ascetic's hair style and is devoid of ornamentation, whereas the latter on the other side has a round cylindrical crown and is adorned with ornaments. Both display their hands in namaskāra mudrā, the type that was popular in the early Gandhara(8). Although the mudrā was not unknown in Mathura as is shown by the attendant of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha in the fig. 30, the present triad at Sanchi possibly owe its genesis from the Gandharan tradition.

In early Mathura art, Brahmā and Indra are almost invariably shown with the chauri in hand. Such a tradition of Mathura seem to have revised and modified slightly on the other triad groups; the Buddhist triad on the eastern side of Sanchi stūpa(fig. 141), is shown with the typical iconographical features of the Mathura triad. Both the attendants have a chauri in the left hands, and are adorned with ornamentation and they wear uttariya, and a sash which is fastened around the hips. The attendant on the right side of the Buddha is generally regarded as Brahmā(9). The attendant on the other side probably had cylindrical crown and held a vajra in the left hand. Despite the close association of the conical crown and the vajra with Indra, the image may be more appropriately called Vajrapāṇi than

Indra and the counterpart image as Bodhisattva Siddhārtha rather than Brahmā. Thus the triad may be Siddhārtha Bodhisattva-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi. This assumption is based on the following reasons. Firstly, the nature of Brahmā as an ascetic deity does not go with the kingly attire such as turban and ornamentation. Needless to mention that no Brahmā image throughout in Indian art is found adorned with ornaments. Secondly, the image of Bodhisattva Siddhārtha often appears in the Buddhist triad groups of Gandhara school of art. Thirdly, the conical type of crown is not necessarily associated with Indra in Mathura, but often used for the image of Maitreya, for example, the figs. 23 and 27 and for almost every Bodhisattvas of the fifth century A.D. Fourthly, such Bodhisattva image type i.e., with kingly attire without any attribute in hand, appears in combination with other Bodhisattvas such as Padmapāṇi, Vajrapāṇi and Maitreya, in Sarnath and the Western Deccan.

Two other triad groups, on the Northern and Western sides of the stūpa allow no easy identification of the attendants, although some differentiation is intended by the artists.

Thus, what is clear from the above discussion is that the Bodhisattva attendants in the Buddhist triad groups were in a developing stage in the middle of the fifth century, although the individual characteristics of each of the Bodhisattvas might have been in a stage of flux at this point of time. The attendants holding the chauri are

perhaps the continuation of the elements of Kushana Mathura and also in some respects Gandhara. The reason for the absence of Maitreya in the Buddhist triad of Mathura and Sanchi during Gupta period may suggest that the status of Maitreya has not yet been reduced as a Bodhisattva attendant of the Buddha. It is at Sarnath that Maitreya appears to become an attendant in the Buddha triads and this tradition had been followed by the artists of the Western Deccan.

#### V-1-B. SARANATH SCHOOL OF ART

Sarnath has been often claimed to be the source of innovation for the development of the Mahāyāna art in Deccan. At an early stage, around the early years of the fifth century A.D. Sarnath sculptors were developing a radically different style of the images, taking off from the Kushana Mathura tradition in general. Probably by the mid-fifth century A.D. they arrived at their own local style characterized by buoyancy and sophistication. In the iconography too, the artists of Sarnath developed a specific regional type of imagery which further led to its great influence upon the other contemporary Buddhist sites and the later Buddhist art in general. In spite of the importance of this school in the Indian art history which has produced large number of Buddha images, only around a dozen of Bodhisattva images can be traceable(10).

A standing Bodhisattva image in the Archaeological



Museum, Sarnath (fig. 142) is the only sculpture that can be safely identified as that of Maitreya from the Gupta Sarnath school. The identification of this image is of great importance, since the identification of Maitreya images in the Western Deccan largely depends upon this. What is remaining now in this mutilated image is the long curly hair falling till the shoulders, a tiny seated Buddha image in front of the hair arrangement, a simple garment consisting of dhoti and uttariya and a trace of the stem of a plant at the left side. The lower half of the right hand is broken. By reading the iconographical features of this image one can easily notice that a totally new iconography now has emerged. Compared to the early Buddhist iconography of Mathura and Gandhara, the image can be neither Buddha (for, it has the unusual long hair), nor Bodhisattva (for it does not have the bodhisattva ornaments). It is difficult to relate this image to any of the two Kushan traditions since Bodhisattva images in both the centers invariably had employed elaborate ornamentation. J. Williams too opines that this is the earliest example of Bodhisattva image from the Gupta Sarnath school, and identifies it as Maitreya Bodhisattva. She states that the "usual fanning locks of hair may indicate Maitreya's identity as a brāhmin"(11). Undoubtedly, J. Williams relates the hair style of this image with the bow-knot hair arrangement of Maitreya from Gandhara. However, she does not explain any of the other features which are different from the traditional Maitreya

iconography; particularly the presence of emblematic Buddha image in front of the hair arrangement, the absence of the bodhisattva-ornamentations, and kamaṇḍalu), the position of the right hand as Maitreya probably showing varada mudrā, the flower like object below the left hand etc.

To determine the identification of this image as Maitreya, we have to study other Bodhisattva images and Buddhist triad groups from this school. A large number of the Bodhisattva images from Sarnath have been identified as Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara having more or less the same features as seen in the standing image installed in the National Museum, Delhi (fig. 143). The fundamental difference between the above two images is the presence of the ornamentation in the latter example. Avalokiteśvara of Gupta Sarnath school can be clearly distinguished since the images invariably have elaborate ornamentation and the attribute of padma in their left hands(12). The tiny image of the Buddha on the hair arrangement is represented with dhyāna mudrā and is seated in padmāsana, which are the characteristics of the Buddha Amitābha, whose iconography developed to this type in the late Gupta period. On the other hand, the Buddha image on the head of the fig. 142, displays abhaya mudrā(13) which is the mudrā of Amoghasiddhi, the parental Dhyāni Buddha of Maitreya according to the Vyūha tradition. From the above comparison we may reach to the conclusion that the identity of the fig. 142 is not that of Avalokiteśvara, but possibly

Maitreya for we have an example of Maitreya having such emblematic Buddha figure with abhaya mudrā (fig. 40) from Kushana Mathura(14).

Apart from such single Bodhisattva images we have a dozen of Buddhist triad group from which we can trace the iconographical characteristics of the Bodhisattvas(15). In India proper Bodhisattva attendants may have been invented first time in the Gupta Sarnath and their origin might have derived from the Mathura school rather than the Gandhara school. Basically, the attendants of the Buddha in the art of Sarnath are treated as mere chauri bearers rather than as divine Bodhisattvas who accompanied the Buddha as observed in the art of Gandhara. In Sarnath they are shown comparatively smaller in size and are treated with less importance. Iconographically, there are three types of compositions of the triad groups; i.e., Buddha with Maitreya and Padmapāṇi, Buddha with Maitreya and Vajrapāṇi and Buddha with Vajrapāṇi and Padmapāṇi. The most popular type is the combination of the Buddha with Maitreya and Padmapāṇi attendants. The characteristic features of Maitreya in the Buddhist triad are as follows:

- a) Maitreya invariably has a hair arrangement which may be called jaṭāmukuṭa, slightly different from the Gandhara type with the lock of hair at the centre of the bow-knot.
- b) He is devoid of ornamentation.
- c) The garments consist of dhoti and uttariya delineated as clinging to the body.

d) He carries a chauri in the right hand, while the left hand often carries a rosary.

e) A deer skin is sometimes seen on the left shoulder.

A standing Buddha image, in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (fig. 144), is attended by two small Bodhisattva images; one at the right side of the Buddha is devoid of ornaments, whereas the one on the other side is adorned with the ornaments and a crown. The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha holds a chauri in the right hand, while the left hand is kept akimbo. He has an ajina, a deer skin, on the left shoulder. His counterpart Bodhisattva has a chauri in the right hand and holds a stem of the lotus in the left hand. These Bodhisattva attendants may most probably represent Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara.

Another standing image of Buddha in the Archeological Museum, Sarnath (fig. 145), is shown with the similar arrangement of the Bodhisattva attendants, but they are now placed high on the shoulder level of the Buddha. The Bodhisattva on the left side of the Buddha is adorned with ornaments and has a lotus in the left hand whereas the Bodhisattva on the other side is devoid of ornamentation and holds a japa mālā in the left hand. They are probably Padmapani and Maitreya(16).

Such triad groups are often represented along with the scenes representing the life of the Buddha, as in the stele in the Archeological Museum, Sarnath (fig. 146). The uppermost part of the stele is a stūpa with a seated Buddha

in front, below this is a scene of the Mahāparinirvāṇa, the middle panel represents the First sermon, the next is the Māra's attack or enlightenment and the lowermost section depicts the 'Birth of the Buddha' (the top most and the lower two sections can not be seen in the present reproduction). The Buddha image in the scene of the First Sermon, is attended by two Bodhisattvas who are identical with the above example. The one on the right side of the Buddha may be identified as Maitreya, for he has a japa mālā in the left hand, and the other one as Avalokiteśvara, since he has a lotus flower in his left hand, and is adorned with ornaments(17).

A combination of Maitreya and Vajrapāṇi is shown on the stele depicting the scene of the Great Miracle at Sravasti(18), now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (fig. 147). The lowermost seated Buddha image is flanked by two Bodhisattvas; Maitreya on the right side and Vajrapāṇi on the left side. The former is devoid of ornaments and holds a japa mālā in the left hand, and the latter is adorned with ornaments and has a vajra in the left hand. Both of them have a chauri in their right hands, which are raised up so the hands come above the head and the chauri touches the left shoulders. Such an interesting pose is often found on the attendants of contemporary Jain Tīrthāṅkara images from Mathura region(19).

Thus, the proposed iconographical characteristics of Maitreya could possibly be confirmed by the following

sculptural example. A standing image of Maitreya, preserved in the Sarnath Museum (fig. 148), is shown with two most important iconographical features of Maitreya of Gandhara, i.e., the bow-knot hair arrangement, and a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand, although the other features such as the presence of chauri, absence of ornaments and the garment type are peculiar to the Gupta Sarnath school. The type of kamaṇḍalu and the manner in which it is held are certainly unique here. The image might have been originally part of a triad group and most probably this must be from the right side of a Buddha image. The important fact that reveals itself by now is that the Maitreya images in the Gupta Sarnath school do not show the princely ornamentations.

Such a change in the iconography of Maitreya might have occurred due to the change of the concept; a shift from the celestial Bodhisattva Maitreya, to the ascetic Bodhisattva, which have been only slightly emphasized in the region of Gandhara. Such appearance of Maitreya with simple garments and without ornaments is indeed not very surprising, if we remember that Śākyamuni Buddha is also portrayed with the same ascetic features. The Buddha is recorded as 'Munirāja', king of ascetics in the inscription found in Cave no. 17, Ajanta, which has been interpreted by M.E. Leese as, "the combination of monastic restraint and regal dominance"(20). Here the question is how closely we can relate the meaning of Maitreya's ascetic feature in

connection with that of Śākyamuni Buddha. As we have proposed in the second chapter, the cult of Maitreya developed with the concept of Mānushi Buddha or Bodhisattvas, and not with that of the Dhyāni Bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In this connection, we have a very unique image where a Buddha image is represented with a chauri. Along with an image of Vajrapāṇi, this image of the Buddha is presented as an attendant of a standing Buddha, in the Collection of Archeological Museum, Sarnath (fig. 149). It is quite obvious that the sculptor of this triad not only knew the concept of Maitreya as the future Buddha but also had no hesitation in representing him in the form of the Buddha. A chauri in his hand not only distinguishes his identity from Śākyamuni Buddha, but also indicates the fact that he is the one who would follow Śākyamuni Buddha. The left hand is raised up in the usual fashion which holds the hem of the sanghati. When we compare this figure with the Bodhisattva attendants of the fig. 144, we soon realize that both this chauri bearing Buddha (fig. 149) and the chauri bearing Bodhisattva are shown without ornamentation as in the fig. 147 and are none other than the same deity, Maitreya.

Another puzzling question is how the japa mālā came to be related to Maitreya. We will see repeatedly in the following parts of the present study, the presence of a large number of Maitreya images having japa mālā as well as the kamaṇḍalu as his attributes (21). Mallman state that the

japa mālā constitutes a special attribute of Avalokiteśvara, and is constant from Gupta art of Maharastra until the decline of the Sena style in Bengal(22). A study of Maitreya image of Gupta and Post Gupta period, however, reveals that the japa mālā has been more closely related with Maitreya compared to Avalokiteśvara. As evident in the Gupta Sarnath school (see figs. 145, 146 and 147), it was Maitreya who used to be first represented with this attribute, whereas the image of Avalokiteśvara is also characterized by the ornamentation and a lotus flower in the hand. The origin and exact symbloism of the japa mālā in the context of Maitreya iconography are controversial(23). Saunders suggests that the japa mālā was one of the attributes of Brahmā in the pre-Buddhist India(24). From the remote period in India numerous holy men carried japa mālā irrespective of their particular religious affilations. Thus, the japa mālā seems to have close association with ascetic nature of Maitreya in general and symbolized his knowledge and the Dharma, which are the most pertinent aspects of the deity. Thus, to get back to the standing image of the fig. 142, it is almost certain that it is definitely a representation of Maitreya on the basis of its ascetic feature. The broken right hand might have been kept downwards hoing varada mudrā along with a japa mālā. The broken stem below the left hand resembles the stem of lotus, but the study of the Maitreya images from the Western Deccan suggests that this stem could have been of the



nāgakesara plant, one of the most important attributes of Maitreya which is often mentioned in the later Tantric Sādhanas(25). The iconographical type of the nāgakesara seems to have not yet been properly distinguished during the Gupta period or the post Gupta period as is evident in the Western Deccan. Although the type of flower held in the hand of Maitreya (fig. 142) looks similar to the padma of Avalokiteśvara, somehow there are differences in the details(26). If our reading of the image of the fig. 142 is correct and J. Williams' proposed date for this image, 450-460 A.D. is reliable, we have here an absolutely new iconography of Maitreya by the mid-fifth century at Sarnath. The above statement become very important when we study the genesis of Bodhisattvas of the Western Deccan.

Another peculiar combination of the Buddhist triad that emerged at Sarnath during Gupta period is the one where Buddha is depicted in the company of Vajrapāṇi and Padmapāṇi. Such an example is housed in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (fig. 150). The image of the Buddha is accompanied by two Bodhisattvas, both of whom are adorned with high jaṭāmukuṭa and ornaments. The Bodhisattva at the right side of the Buddha, may be recognized as Vajrapāṇi although the vajra is absent here. It is evident when we compare it with the already identified images of Vajrapāṇi (figs. 147 and 149). In the art of Gupta Sarnath it is Vajrapāṇi who could be shown with ornamentations other than Padmapāṇi(27). The counterpart Bodhisattva image is undoubtedly that of

Padmapāṇi.

At Sarnath during the Gupta Period, the Mānushi Bodhisattva Maitreya concept seems to have been in vogue which emphasized the ascetic nature more and this apparently distinguished the deity from the other celestial Bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Such a change, in a way is not unexpected, since this is an outcome of Maitreya's nature which was present long before the cultic images came into existence. With the advent of the Bodhisattva concept during the Mahāyāna period, Maitreya was already on the way to become an ascetic figure as evident from the iconographical programme of Gandhara. Thus, the iconography of Bodhisattvas in Gupta Sarnath school shows little or no direct continuation from the earlier Mathura school but reveals the origin of many new features which then got diffused to other parts of India especially to Western Deccan.

Gyaraspur(28) has yield<sup>ed</sup> some very important triads in the study of Bodhisattva iconography in general and particularly in the study of geneology of the art of Western Deccan. They are found on the four sides of the stūpa at Gyaraspur and may belong to the post Gupta period(29). The iconography of the Bodhisattva attendants of the Buddha at Gyaraspur differ from that of the Sarnath in the following details:

- a) Instead of the japa mālā which was one of the most significant attributes of Maitreya in Gupta Sarnath, the

image here has the kamaṇḍalu held in the left hand. As was the case in Sarnath, the image of Maitreya is characterized by ascetic features devoid of the ornaments. The Buddhist triads, on the western(fig. 151) as well as on the eastern sides of the stūpa show Maitreya holding a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand. In both the cases, he is devoid of ornaments(30).

- b) The image of Padmapāṇi is represented here without the ornaments and wears an ajina, antelope skin on the left shoulder(31). Apart from jaṭāmukuta, the above two features are also indicative of Maitreya iconography in Gupta Sarnath. At least three cases are clear: The counter Bodhisattva of the Maitreya image in the fig. 151 is characterized by the jaṭāmukuta with a seated Buddha figure in it. He holds chauri in the right hand and a lotus flower in the left. He is devoid of ornaments. Others are; one in the southern side of the stūpa (fig. 152) and another one on the northern side, where he stands on the left side of the Buddha(32).
- c) All the images of Padmapāṇi here have a seated Buddha in the headdress; the Avalokiteśvara images on the western (fig. 151) and southern (fig. 152) sides, show the Buddha image in dhyāna mudrā on their headdress.
- d) The image of Vajrapāṇi wears a crown, while maintaining the early tradition of ornamentation that is seen in Mathura and Sarnath. The triad of the fig. 152 is shown with the Vajrapāṇi image on the left side of the Buddha.

These triads at Gyaraspur reveal new iconographical features distinct from Sarnath, although they are linked in terms of style. What is significant is the introduction of Avalokiteśvara image with the ascetic features. Except for the attribute held in the hand the general features of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara are now indistinguishable. The Avalokiteśvara image in the Western Deccan too, is almost invariably represented with the same features observed here; namely the ascetic feature. Since the time frame of Ajanta pre-dates Gyaraspur, the credit for the new iconographical feature of Avalokiteśvara in the ascetic form goes to the artists of the Western India, especially to the sculptors of Ajanta.

#### V-1-C. BODHISATTVA ICONOGRAPHY AT BAGH CAVES

There are only two Buddhist triad groups and a pair of Bodhisattva images that are still intact in the Bagh cave. These Bodhisattva images become important in this study mainly due to two reasons. Firstly because they belong to the earliest phase of development of Buddhist iconography of the Western Deccan. Secondly, due to the fact that they are located on the ancient trade route that linked Mathura and the Western Deccan, particularly Ajanta. Thus, the study of these images can give us a clue to understand the artistic interrelationship of the ancient Mathura and Sarnath with the Western Deccan.

In general, the chronology of Bagh has been studied on the basis of architectural and stylistic features and is assigned a date contemporaneous to the cave temples of Ajanta, i.e., the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. If we go by a more precise approach the images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas at Bagh may indicate an earlier date compared to the earliest sculptures at Ajanta. In all, there are three types of Bodhisattva images found at Bagh, and show greatly confused iconography. Vogel who divided the types of Bodhisattva at Bagh into two groups; the plain and the ornate groups, points out that "in each of the three pairs of Bodhisattva found at Bagh the one to the proper left is much plainer in appearance than his companion on the proper right"(33). He assumes that the planier Bodhisattva represents Maitreya and the more ornated Bodhisattva represents Avalokiteśvara(34). This classification and identification do seem to be plausible, but at the same time there exists three types of Bodhisattvas which cannot be catagorized merely by the term 'planier' and 'more ornated'. The three types of Bodhisattvas at Bagh are; the ornated Bodhisattva with 'empty hands', the ornated Bodhisattva with lotus flower and the ascetic Bodhisattva with kamaṇḍalu.

The two Buddhist triad groups, carved on the left and the right sides of the antechamber of Cave No. 2 are very similar in both style and iconography; (the triad on the left side wall fig. 153 and fig. 154 for the right). In both the cases the Buddha stands at the centre and on the

right side of the Buddha stands a crowned Bodhisattva with a chauri in the right hand and the left hand is kept akimbo without any attribute. On the left side of the Buddha stands a Bodhisattva wearing a matted hair style and holding a bunch of lotus flowers in the right hand. Although the Buddha image is depicted with the right hand in varada mudrā which reminds of the Sarnath idiom, the type of the Bodhisattva attendants do not show relatedness with the Bodhisattva type found at Sarnath, but is more closely related with the Buddhist triads from of Mathura. The Bodhisattva type with the 'empty hand' has not been identified so far, but is generally regarded as the Vajrapāṇi. Whereas, the other Bodhisattva type haivng a lotus flower in the hand can be safely identified as Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara(35). This identification becomes clear when we compare this image with the figures of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara from Sanchi (fig. 139) or the figs. 147, 148, 149 and 153 from Sarnath. Vogel denies its possible identification as Avalokiteśvara and according to him "the lotus characterising this Bodhisattva in later Buddhist art is invariably held in the left hand"(36). Such a tradition, however, seems not to have yet fully developed in the mid fifth century A.D. as we have an example of the Padmapāṇi Bodhisattva from Sanchi (fig. 139). On the other hand, the Maitreya images of the late Gupta period are characterized by the ascetic features and holds either kamaṇḍalu or japa mālā as we have already observed but does

not hold padma. Thus, padma is the most important object that distinguishes Maitreya from Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara.

The third type of Bodhisattva at Bagh is seen on the right side of the doorway to the inner shrine where an octagonal stūpa is enshrined. The figure under consideration (fig. 155) has an elaborate jaṭāmukuta containing a tiny seated Buddha showing abhaya mudrā. The right hand of the Bodhisattva is kept in varada mudrā and undoubtedly holds a japa mālā in it. The left hand holds a kamaṇḍalu by its neck. He wears a dhoti, the folds of which are indicated by the incised lines and the hem between the legs. Due to the presence of the emblematic Buddha in front of the jaṭāmukuta Grunwadel precludes doubt that the representation is any deity other than Avalokiteśvara(37). He notes that the kamaṇḍalu is not only an attribute of Maitreya, but also of Avalokiteśvara, which is noticed at least in the Western Deccan. Vogel however doubts Grunwadel's proposal with the following reasons: It is not only this image but the counterpart Bodhisattva at the other side of the doorway also has such Buddha image in the headdress, which means one of them can not be Avalokiteśvara. Second reason is that the miniature Buddhas do not display the dhyāna mudrā which is required for the image being Avalokiteśvara's spiritual father Amitābhā(38). It is however, not the mudrā of the emblematic Buddha image that indicate the identification of the Bodhisattva image as argued by Grunwadel and Vogel, but there are few strong

evidences to identify the image as Maitreya. Firstly, the ascetic attire without ornamentation has been reserved for Maitreya in the contemporaneous school of Sarnath, although the later works of Gyarpur also reveal the images of Avalokiteśvara without ornamentation. Secondly, the japa mālā, seen in the right hand of the image had been recognized as one of the most important attributes of Maitreya in the Gupta period Sarnath. Thirdly, outside the Western Deccan not a single contemporary image of Avalokiteśvara has been found with the kamaṇḍalu as an attribute. It is most certain that by the time when this image was being made, i.e., the third quarter of the fifth century A.D., the emblematic image of the Buddha in the headdress of the Bodhisattva had not been fixed to indicate Amītabha for Avalokiteśvara. We have suggested before in the third chapter(39), that the emblematic image of the Buddha might have been used for the Maitreya image to indicate his successive career as the Future Buddha rather than as the representation of the Dhyāni Buddha. The Buddha image in front of the jaṭāmukuta of the Maitreya image is much bigger and prominent than that of the Avalokiteśvara image. Thus, the identification of the Maitreya image seems to be having no problem despite the argument that there exists the image of Avalokiteśvara with the similar features in Western Deccan.

The corresponding figure on the left side of the entrance to the shrine is a Bodhisattva with much elaborate



ornaments (fig. 156). He wears an intricate headdress and ornaments. In the headdress is a tiny Buddha in abhaya mudrā, which is much smaller than that of the Bodhisattva Maitreya standing on the other side. The right hand is kept downwards and is partially broken. The left hand kept on the side of the hip. Due to the absence of any attributes, the image cannot be identified with definiteness. Vogel proposed its identification as Avalokiteśvara with the assumption that more elaborate ornamentation could be indicative of the figure being Avalokiteśvara. Vogel compares this ornate image (fig. 156) with the crowned Bodhisattva who stands at the left side of the Buddha in the triad group on the two side walls of the antechamber. The image, however, could be compared better with the plainer Bodhisattva attendants on the left sides of the triads (fig. 153 and 155). The plainer Bodhisattva which according to Vogel are Maitreya can now be identified as Avalokiteśvara. The indication of the present Bodhisattva image being Avalokiteśvara is neither the tiny Buddha in the headdress nor the elaborate ornaments. The best indication at the present state of our knowledge for image to be identified is to be found in the right hand. Although it is much damaged, there is enough indication that the figure held a bunch of lotus flowers, similar to that of the Avalokiteśvara attendants who are seen on the left side of each of the Buddhist triads. His hand might have been in a very similar pose as that of the figure on the left hand side of he

Buddha in the fig. 154, except that the hand here can be seen placed in a much lower position. Iconographically, the image under consideration is quite close to the mid-fifth century image of Padmapāṇi from Sanchi (fig. 139). The ruffled halo-like decoration behind the head suggests its close link with the Sanchi idiom.

Thus, the Bodhisattvas at Bagh cave seem to have been influenced by the contemporary Sanchi and Sarnath schools. The iconographical features alone indicate their date to a period between the mid-fifth century of Sanchi and Sarnath sculptures and the last quarter of the fifth century date of Ajanta sculptures.

To sum up, the characteristics of Maitreya image outside Western Deccan during the Gupta and the immediate post Gupta periods are; a jaṭāmukuṭa (sometime with a seated Buddha image on it), a japa mālā in the hand (either in the right or in the left hand), a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand (sometimes absent), the avoidance of ornaments (in the Sarnath school) or adorned with ornaments (in the regions following Mathura tradition).

## V-2. INTRODUCTION IN THE STUDY OF THE MAITREYA

### ICONOGRAPHY IN WESTERN DECCAN

Even after a century since the study of Western Indian

cave temples began, the analysis of the iconography of Bodhisattvas tradition in the region remains confusing and inconclusive. It may not be very wrong to point out that the present knowledge on Bodhisattva iconography is still at preliminary stage as to identify Padmapāṇi for the lotus - holding Bodhisattva and Vajrapāṇi for the vajra-holder. Bodhisattva images having no specific attribute is quite commonly encountered in the cave temples, which has often been variously identified as Maitreya or as Mañjushrī or as Vajrapāṇi. We do not have sufficient knowledge as yet to differentiate the individual Bodhisattvas from among large number of them found in this region.

There are so many factors that have led to such confusions. First of all, various kinds of Bodhisattva images that are found in this region exhibit so many iconographical variations which do not allow any easy solution in classifying them into specific groups on the basis of present archeological or textual information which can determine their identities. For instance, the Maitreya image here has been recognized at least by two iconographical features, quite different from each other. One is the ornate Bodhisattva type and the other is the ascetic type. In the case of the iconography of Padmapāṇi; he can either appear with an elaborate crown and ornaments or in the ascetic nature.

Moreover, difficulty in the study of the iconography in this region is increased by the commonly shared attributes

and symbols, such a stūpa or a Buddha figure<sup>1</sup> in front of the head, lotus, japa mālā, kamaṇḍalu and ajina. All the above features are observed being shared by Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, and even sometimes Vajrapāṇi also holds lotus and japa mālā in his hand. On superficial grounds one may even conclude that the individual Bodhisattva iconography has not been clearly established in this region.

To complicate the situation further, we are still not very clear about the chronology of Mahāyāna sculptures of Western Indian cave sites so as to firmly fix the development of the Bodhisattva iconography. Evidently, we often look at the differences in iconographical details without considering the time sequence which might have resulted<sup>in</sup> such changes. Avalokiteśvara, for instance, is represented at Ajanta with elaborate crown and ornaments in some cases, while a majority is also shown with ascetic features. Maitreya, too, appear with different kinds of attributes. In fact, this is the case for almost all the Bodhisattvas in Western Deccan. Hence we are to first of all define the differences in the Bodhisattva iconography on the basis of an acceptable time and spatial sequence.

In the present study, the development of the Bodhisattva iconography of Western Deccan has been divided into three stages: first stage follows the early tradition of Mathura and Sarnath with the main centre at Ajanta; the second stage marks the emergence of local tradition seen in most other Mahāyāna caves and the third stage reveals

Tantric influence with its centre at Ellora. Often, two or three stages are observable simultaneously existing in one particular site itself.

Yet another problem in the study of Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan is that almost every site follows its own distinct tradition in iconographical programme. This is a significant factor since we generally treat them under a single title, namely as Western Deccan cave temple sculptures. This inevitably result in further confusion. Hence, we have to adhere to the fact that although the stylistic features of the Buddhist sculpture of Western Deccan seem to have been based on a more or less common development, the iconographical programme observed in different sites reveal variations, proving that almost every site had their own iconographical schema to work upon. At Ajanta, for example, Maitreya appears paired with Vajrapāṇi or Siddhārtha, whereas in Nasik and Karla, he appears more commonly with Padmapāṇi. Maitreya image hardly appears in the iconographical programme of Aurangabad; and at Ellora he always appears in elaborately ornated form. Similar variations can be observed in the case of other Bodhisattvas also. There are quite a few theories in vogue which contribute more confusion to the study of Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan than clarifying anything in particular. Firstly, the representation of stūpa in front of the crown or headgear has been generally regarded as a conclusive indication of the image being Bodhisattva

Maitreya. Secondly, Maitreya has been more frequently regarded as an ornated Bodhisattva than ascetic Bodhisattva, while Padmapāṇi has often been related with ascetic Bodhisattva type. Thirdly, the kamaṇḍalu has been understood as an attribute of not only Maitreya, but also of Padmapāṇi. Fourthly, flower in the hand of any Bodhisattva, irrespective of the variation in the designs, have been mostly taken to be the lotus flower. Such facile assumptions, however, cannot be applied immediately without adequate consideration for varying time and space.

The study of the emergence and decline of each of the features and their changing meanings became most essential in understanding the ever complex Bodhisattva iconography of Western Deccan. Keeping these in mind the analysis that follows is broadly divided into four sections. The first section deals with the Maitreya iconography in the group of seven past Mānushi Buddhas and the other three parts attempt to interpret three distinctive traditions of Maitreya iconography centred at Ajanta, Nasik and Ellora.

### V-3. MAITREYA IN THE GROUP OF MANUSHI BUDDHAS

The concept of Mānushi Buddhas appears to have been a major theme for the artists of Western Deccan. Although they seem to be mostly the stereotypical repetition of Śākyāmuni Buddha type, there are some representation which obviously differentiated the Mānushi Buddhas visually from

that of the Buddha. The uncertain number of figures in certain cases, however leave us confused while determining their identities among Buddhist pantheon. When a group of Buddha images is accompanied by a Bodhisattva image at the end, it has been conventionally identified as the 'Past Mānushi Buddhas' and that of the Future Buddha Maitreya. At least sixteen depictions of the seven past Buddhas along with Maitreya have been noticed in Western Deccan; eleven times at Ajanta itself, four times at Kanheri and once at Ellora(40).

Iconographically, there seems to have occurred a few changes in the representation of Maitreya in comparison with those of the Kushana Mathura and Gandhara. The first and the most notable variation is in kamaṇḍalu, the most distinguished attribute of Maitreya that had been noticed in Kushana art. Secondly, different kinds of mudras have been introduced here while the traditional abhaya mudrā, which had been invariably shown in Mathura school, is still maintained; this is noticed at least five times(41). The most frequent mudrā in Western Deccan, however, is the dhyāna mudrā seen in half of the total number of images(42). He is also shown with the varada mudrā, once in Cave No. 17 at Ajanta (fig. 157)(43), once he is attributed with dharmacakra pravartana mudrā which is seen on the facade of Cave No. 19, Ajanta (fig. 158). All of these are seated in padmāsana, while other companion Buddhas in the Mānushi Buddha group are often represented in pralambapādāsana,

which become one of the most popular poses of the Buddha in this region. Maitreya is generally shown at the end of the proper left side of the group, with one exceptional case which is on the right side wall of the Cave No. 26, Ajanta (fig. 159). Maitreya images, as seen in the figs. 158, 159 are not accompanied by the Bodhisattva attendants, while other Buddhas are flanked by them. Each of the Bodhisattva images in such cases is interspersed between two Buddhas. It seems to be implying that only the Enlightened Buddha needs to be flanked by the Bodhisattva attendants.

Another notable feature shown by the above three examples of the figs. 157-159 is the representation of the bodhi tree behind them. This particular feature has gained no special attention from scholars so far, despite the fact that each Bodhisattva has different designs of the tree leaves. Judging from the realistic treatment of the pipal tree above the last Mānushi Buddha Śākyamuni, we can be certain that the trees behind each one of them may not be merely a decorative motif but indicate their respective bodhi trees. The design of tree leaves above the Maitreya image of the fig. 157 can in fact be seen as depicting the nāgachampā tree(44), under which Maitreya is known to have achieved the enlightenment. When we compare it with the real nāgachampā tree (fig. 160), the above assumption become obvious, although in painting the leaves looks longer and slender. A similar group of Mānushi Buddhas is found painted in Cave No. 22, Ajanta(fig. 161), where the names of



the Buddhas and the name of their respective trees were originally inscribed(45). Surprisingly, here, the Maitreya image is shown in Buddha's features, indistinguishable from the other seven Buddhas, and the trees behind each Buddha do not have distinctive designs(46). This enable us to conclude that the shape of nāgachampā tree had not been well established in the minds of the artists, although the concept of the tree was known to them. This becomes more evident, when we look at the tree of the fig. 158 and 159, in which the flowers are carved along with the leaves; whereas in real nāgachampā tree the flowers do not bloom on the branch along with the leaves, but are found on the main trunk of the tree without any leaves around see fig. 212.

A unique example of Maitreya image is seen in Cave No. 2, Kanheri (fig. 162). Here Maitreya has a flower as an attribute. Represented at the left end of the seven Mānushi Buddhas who are seated in pralampādāsana and showing dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, Maitreya is adorned with ornaments and wears a crown. The right hand is raised in abhaya mudrā while the left hand holds a stem of a flower similar to the fully opened lotus. Except the flower, there is hardly any doubt for its identification as Maitreya. It may be either Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara, if we consider the flower as padma; or as Maitreya if we agree that artists of this region had not fully understood the formal characteristics of nāgakesara flower at this time. Students of Buddhist iconography hesitate to call this image as

Maitreya since we do not have any other image of him with such a flower, while at the same time we cannot also possibly call it as Padmapāṇi. However, there are a few reasons for the image to be called as Maitreya; firstly as a tradition it is only Maitreya who can be represented as a Bodhisattva at the end of the seven past Mānushi Buddhas. Secondly, the nāgakesara flower of Maitreya was in the developing stage throughout the region of Western Deccan, except for the later phase of Ellora. Thirdly, the peculiar type of crown with three-pointed shape is frequently noticed on the head of Maitreya when found in a group of Mānushi Buddhas, where as Avalokiteśvara image at this time were invariably shown with ṣaṭāmukha hair arrangement. Such a type of crown may be called 'trishikhā' mentioned in some texts as a type of headdress 'with three peaks'(47). Among sixteen examples of the Mānushi Buddhas noticed in Western Deccan almost half of them show Maitreya having this type of crown and the rest is shown with slightly different types of crowns. A group of Mānushi Buddhas on the facade of Cave No. 3 at Kanheri is shown with the image of Maitreya having the trishikhā crown, (fig. 163). The painting of Maitreya in the fig. 157 shows clearly the same crown where the pointed shape in the front is the highest, than the lower points at each sides. In sculptural representation the tip of trishikhā often becomes smaller possibly in order to prevent breaking. The fig. 159 has an additional design behind the trishikhā as an additional support. The Maitreya image on

the freize of Cave No. 26 at Ajanta (fig. 164) is depicted with a round helmet shaped crown, similar to that of Maitreya image from Cave No. 6 (fig. 165), Ajanta, or the Maitreya image from Cave No. 67, Kanheri (fig. 166). The crown of the fig. 165 is the combination of the trishikha and the headgear of the fig. 166. Interestingly, the head gear of the fig. 166 looks like the so-called kapārdin hair style of the Buddha, i.e., the snail shell ushinisha with the bold hair arrangement. Here the projected portion at the top of the headgear seems to emphasize the ushnisha, the potential sign of Maitreya's nature as the Future Buddha.

Other characteristics of the Maitreya images represented as the eighth Mānushi Buddha are the bodhisattva ornamentations consisting of a pair of earrings, necklaces, armlets and bracelets. This feature is especially noteworthy since Maitreya images when represented as an attendant of the Buddha or as a dvārapāla, is always shown with the ascetic form; the only exception from this is in the Tantric phase of Ellora sculpture. Thus it seems apparent that the artists of Western Deccan emphasized two aspects of Maitreya, the celestial Buddha of the Future and the present status as a Bodhisattva. His garment seems to be sanghati worn in the open mode i.e. with the open right shoulder as is clearly seen in the fig. 157.

The Maitreya image from Ellora, Cave No. 10 (fig. 167), has somewhat different hair style; it does not seem to wear the crown but a simple jaṭāmukuta similar to the bow-knot of

Maitreya images from Gandhara. As pointed out earlier, this differences in the hair arrangement between this unique example from Ellora and the other images from Ajanta and Kanheri may suggests that the Buddhist cave of Ellora possibly had its own iconographic tradition different from other centres.

Curiously enough the depictions of the Mānushi Buddhas are not found in other important Buddhist sites in Western Deccan other than Ajanta, Kanheri and Ellora. A row of seven Buddhas on the outer side wall of cave No. 1 at Aurangabad (fig. 168) has been often considered as the seven past Mānushi Buddhas and the standing Bodhisattva at the right end of the row as the eighth Mānushi Buddha Maitreya. However, in reality it is a group of the seven past Mānushi Buddhas who are flanked by two chauri bearers. They are the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who stand, at the left end and Maitreya (or Vajrapāṇi ?) at the right end of the row. This example deserves attention due to the fact that the Maitreya as the eighth Mānushi Buddha is omitted here. It is a matter of conjecture to consider that the cult of Maitreya had lost its importance at this site. Similarly, we have also the case of Ellora where the eighth Mānushi Buddha Maitreya do not seem to have emphasized much. In Cave no. 12, at Ellora we have three-dimensional representation of seven Mānushi Buddhas as well as seven Dhyāni Buddhas; in which Maitreya is omitted. Thus, it is from Ajanta and Kanheri that most of the Mānushi Buddha groups are known and

it may be right to say that there have been a close link between these two art centres.

Although the formulation of the group of eight Mānushi Buddhas as such seems to have its root in Kushan Mathura school rather than Gandhara school. This assumption is supported by the fact that the Maitreya in the Kushana Mathura and Western Deccan are represented with a crown, whereas in Gandhara this is not the case. It also seems most probable that the early tradition might have been imbibed here through literature and oral tradition, rather than through migration of artists and transmission through sculptural medium. Due to the absence of contemporary representations of Mānushi Buddhas outside Western Deccan, a definite study of its development becomes problematic.

#### V-4. THE EARLY PHASE IN THE EVOLUTION OF MAITREYA ICONOGRAPHY IN WESTERN DECCAN

##### V-4-A. AJANTA

In contrast with the celestial nature of Maitreya as the eighth Mānushi Buddha, the deity appears in the form of an ascetic when he is represented as an attendant of Śākyamuni Buddha. It may be remembered that such an ascetic form of Maitreya was unknown to the early artists of Mathura and Gandhara, but it was in the Gupta period Sarnath that Maitreya image manifested for the first time devoid of any

ornamentation. This tradition is seen followed at Bagh. In Western Deccan, the dominant type of Maitreya image that was prevalent was this lately developed ascetic type. Significantly, here it was not only Maitreya but also Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara who appeared in the same ascetic form, which we noted as evident at Gyarpur (figs 151 and 152). As studied in a previous context Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi in the Gupta period is neither decorated with ornaments nor does he carry a kamaṇḍalu and ajina over his shoulder. Iconologically, such modification surely meant that there had been fresh interpretation of the cultic meaning for the deities. Traditionally, both the Bodhisattvas have been treated as the two most important figures in Mahāyāna Buddhism; Maitreya Bodhisattva is believed to be the ruling Bodhisattva over the Tushita heaven, while Avalokiteśvara rules over the present world - from the time of parinirvāṇa of Śākyamuni Buddha till the arrival of Viśvapāṇi, who is believed to be creating the fifth world. Both of them had been invariably represented with elaborate ornaments during the Kushana and Gupta period and Maitreya in Mathura school of art had been often represented with a crown symbolizing his kingship over the Tushita heaven.

Almost suddenly by the mid-fifth century A.D. at Sarnath, and Western Deccan Maitreya began to be shown with purely ascetic features, where Avalokiteśvara too discarded the earlier ornamentation and took on the ascetic attire.

Such change could better be understood in the Hīnayānic sense; where Śākyamuni Buddha is the only lord and Bodhisattvas are those who still struggle for the salvation through the ascetic life. The representation of large number of Śākyamuni Buddha's life stories and the Jātaka stories in the cave temple of Western Deccan may strengthen the above hypothesis.

Vajrapāṇi, on the contrary, maintained the older feature with the traditionally ornated attire which eventually speak of his state as a personal guard of the Buddha. On the other hand, the appearance of the other two Bodhisattvas in the simple ascetic form might have originated from the Buddhist idea of arhatship which stands for knowledge or liberation.

As mentioned earlier Śākyamuni Buddha himself was characterized as having munirāja (arhat) nature. Such arhatship could best be emphasized in Western Deccan, where a number of monks were educated and actually lived in the various monastries. S. Gokhale suggests on the basis of epigraphic evidence found at Ajanta, that "Ajanta was not only a flourishing Buddhist establishment but a centre of monastic education." (48) For the Buddhist monks, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya must have been the ideal figures who were to be followed or as archetypal examples who imparted encouragement during strict monastic life.

The characteristics of ascetic type of Maitreya in Western Deccan is more or less the same as that of the Gupta

Sarnath. These are synoptically as follows; jaṭāmukuta similar to the bow-knot of Gandhara school, chauri in the right hand, simple attire without ornaments and the sanghati type garment clinging to the body etc. The differences however are:

- a) Maitreya images in Western India generally carry a stūpa in the hair arrangement, while Sarnath Maitreya do not. This feature, however, appears only from the second phase of the iconographical programme, which began after the main activity at Ajanta.
- b) The chauri is placed over the right shoulder while Sarnath images often hold it in a fancy way, above the head (figs. 145, 146 and 147).
- c) Maitreya generally carries a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand whereas at Sarnath he mostly carries a japa mālā in hand. In some cases in Western Deccan, he is shown with a japa mālā in the right hand and a kamaṇḍalu in the left; this feature has been already observed at Bagh (fig. 155).
- d) The ajina, which is frequently shown on the shoulder of Maitreya at Sarnath has been reserved for Padmapāṇi in Western Deccan, while Maitreya adopted this feature only occasionally.

Comparing the iconographical features of Maitreya images from both Gupta Sarnath and Western Deccan, there seem to be a strong genealogical connection between them; which illustrates most certainly that the influence moved from Sarnath to Western Deccan. The reason for the above



hypothesis is that Maitreya image of Western Deccan shows more complicated iconographical features than that of Sarnath. If the influence moved vice versa, the Maitreya images of Sarnath would have possessed a stūpa in the headdress and his counter part Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara would have been represented in the ascetic feature which became his most popular typology in Western Deccan. It should be remembered here that it was not only the japa mālā that was the popular attribute of Maitreya in the Gupta Sarnath, but it was also the kamaṇḍalu (fig. 148).

Concerning the representation of the ascetic type of Maitreya, three distinct traditions seems to have been prevalent in Western Deccan; they may be called Ajanta tradition, Nasik tradition and Ellora tradition. The main characteristic of the 'Ajanta tradition' is the appearance of Maitreya without the emblematic stūpa in the hair arrangement in the compositions of Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi triad. Vajrapāṇi is sometimes replaced by almost identical image of Bodhisattva but without vajra in hand(49). On the contrary, the 'Nasik tradition' is characterized by the emblematic stūpa in the hair arrangement and typically composed in the triad combination of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi. The general features of Maitreya from these two centres are otherwise more or less the same. It is only at Ellora that the iconography of Maitreya changed almost fundamentally, where he appears with heavy ornamentation and the nāgakesara flower.

At Ajanta, over two dozens of the Buddhist triad exemplify the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi, while no example is seen with the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi(50). At Nasik, it is the triad of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi which is the dominant type, while none of the Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi triad has been found here(51). The same tradition is observed in Karla, where almost all the representation of the Buddhist triad group are of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi(52). The characteristics of such representations in the context of each Buddhist site become necessary in order to understand the genesis of the above three traditions.

In Western Deccan, it is at Ajanta that the earliest image type of Maitreya developed fully with the features deriving from of the more or less contemporary tradition at Sarnath. In the chronological scheme they belong to the first phase of iconographical programme and there seems to have been no stūpa used as an emblem of either Maitreya or Padmapāṇi at this phase. Instead they often carry Dhyāni Buddha or just floral design in their headdresses following the tradition of Gupta Mathura(53).

The most striking features seen at Gupta period Sarnath can be observed in the Buddhist triad carved outside the Cave No. 26, (fig. 169). At the centre of the triad is a standing image of the Buddha who is much bigger than the Bodhisattva attendants. The right hand of the Buddha is raised in abhaya mudrā and the left holds the hem of the

saṅghati. On the right side of the Buddha stands Maitreya holding chauri in the right hand and kamaṇḍalu in the left. He has jaṭāmukuta and is devoid of ornamentation. The counterpart Bodhisattva at the left side of the Buddha is Vajrapāṇi, holding chauri in the right hand and vajra in the left. He is adorned with the bodhisattva ornamentation. Such features of the triad indicate the influence of Sarnath idiom, especially the standing Buddha in abhaya mudrā recalls the Sarnath examples of the fig. 144, 145 and 149. The lotus pedestal on which each of the three figures are standing, remind the same feature noticed at Bagh (fig. 153 and 154). However, the differences between the Buddhist triad at Bagh and Ajanta are obvious particularly in the mudrā of the Buddha and in the identity of the Bodhisattva attendants; at Bagh, the Buddha is shown with the varada mudrā and is flanked by chauri bearing Bodhisattvas with the 'empty hand' among whom one is Padmapāṇi.

The triad on the left side of the window frame on the second floor of Cave No. 6 shows the central Buddha standing in varada mudrā, (fig. 170). Maitreya is shown on the right side of the Buddha and on the other side stands the Bodhisattva who could be identified as Siddhārtha Bodhisattva. Sometimes, Maitreya appears on the left side of the Buddha as seen on the proper right side wall of the verandah of Cave No. 11 (fig. 171). Here, Maitreya is paired with Vajrapāṇi who stands on the right side of the Buddha. In front of the jaṭāmukuta of Maitreya is a small

oblong projection which can neither be called Buddha nor stūpa. The similar object is often observed on the headdress of Vajrapāṇi images at Ajanta. One should, therefore be very careful in reading such a small object and unless we are sure of the shape of the stūpa, the reading may result in absolutely baseless conclusion that even Vajrapāṇi images at Ajanta will have to be interpreted as carrying the stūpa in the headdress. After a close observation it can be confirmed that none of the Maitreya images found at Ajanta show proper stūpa design, but the oblong projection can be interpreted either as depicting a gemstone when the image is small or as a flower when the hair arrangement is elaborate when the figure is rather larger in scale.

There are at least three examples of Maitreya having a sort of floral design in the hair arrangement at Ajanta, all of which are seen in Cave No. 26. One on the right side wall (fig. 172), and two on the back side wall (figs. 173 and 174). All these exemplify that they carry chauri in the right hand and kamaṇḍalu in the left. The fig. 174 is shown with ajina in the left shoulder(54). Ajina however, cannot be taken as an indication of the image being Maitreya(55). Nearby the fig. 172 is the triad of the same composition, Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi. Interestingly, Maitreya here has a small image of the Buddha in the jaṭāmukuṭa which is decorated with hair band (fig. 175). He has a chauri in the right hand, while the left hand holds a

kamaṇḍalu. He is devoid of ornaments, but ajina is seen on the left shoulder.

In the same cave, on the left side of the stūpa is the image of Maitreya with the similar iconographical features (fig. 176); jaṭāmukuta with a small Buddha, chauri in the right hand, kamaṇḍalu in the left and he is shown with ascetic features without any ornaments. On his right hand side stands an image of the Buddha in varada mudrā and the next to him stands a Bodhisattva image probably Vajrapāṇi. Most probably, they represent the usual Buddhist triad similar to the fig. 171. There are two more images of Maitreya having the emblematic Buddha in the headdress; one in Cave No. 22 (fig. 177), and in Cave No. 9/10 (fig. 178). Such images has been often considered as Avalokiteśvara by scholars of Buddhist iconography with the preconception that the image of the Buddha in the headdress of the Bodhisattva is the representation of Āmitābhā Buddha and inevitably its bearer is Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Due to this, the image having the ascetic features and holding kamaṇḍalu in hand, as seen in the above four examples, has been considered as Avalokiteśvara, which is absolutely conjectural which leads to the conclusion that there is no Maitreya images at Ajanta and it is Avalokiteśvara who is the most popular Bodhisattva in Western Deccan.

Such facile assumptions are refutable with the following criteria. First of all, traditionally the kamaṇḍalu is a definite attribute of Maitreya, and it is

followed by the artists of Western Deccan until the coming of Tantric influence which begins sometime around the beginning of the seventh century A.D. As we will see clearly in Nasik and Karla, Maitreya is distinguished by kamaṇḍalu alone from Avalokiteśvara who is invariably shown with Padma in hand. It is true that in some cases of Ajanta and Kanheri, Padmapāṇi also carries a kamaṇḍalu in hand: the examples are in Cave No. 2, Ajanta (fig. 179); in Cave No. 26, Ajanta (fig. 180); in Cave No. 90, Kanheri (fig. 181); in Cave No. 93, Kanheri (fig. 182). The most important fact however is that they never carry kamaṇḍalu alone but is always seen in combination of lotus flower. The fig. 179 actually uses kamaṇḍalu as a container of flowers or as a flower vase. In the fig. 180 and 182 the deity even carries a japa mālā in their right hands.

The second reason for the argument is that none of the major representations of Padmapāṇi at Ajanta carry the image of the Buddha in the headdress; it is only a few, perhaps, later images of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara that seem to have this emblem(56). The early images of Padmapāṇi, for instance, seen in the shrine of Cave No. 2, 4 and 17 show the floral design. W. Spink reads a small figure of the Buddha in the crown of the padma holding Bodhisattva in the shrine of the Cave No. 17 (fig. 183), and hence identifies it as Amitābhā and its bearer as Avalokiteśvara. However, it is the floral design that dominates the headdress as was the case in the image of Padmapāṇi at Bagh (fig. 156) and the

reading of the small Buddha in this case is controversial. As per the conventions known to us such Buddha figures do occupy the central part of the crown and have much prominent size compared to what is seen in the figs. 156 and 182. If this assumption is correct, it can suggest that the representation of a small Buddha, if there is one at all could be understood as a later adaptation. In the third chapter, it has been suggested that the emblematic Buddha is a symbolic representation of Maitreya's future career as the Buddha or suggestive of his predecessor, the Śākyamuni Buddha. We have the examples of Maitreya having ascetic feature and an image of the Buddha in its jaṭāmukuṭa from Sarnath, (fig. 142) and Bagh (fig. 155). In this context we have already analysed that the mudrā of the small Buddha image in the head of Bodhisattva does not hold any particular significance during pre-Gupta period. The proper symbolism of the mudrā, indicating the parental Dhyāni Buddha seems to have originated in Western Deccan with the coming of Tantric Buddhism where many Padmapāṇi images represents the parental Buddha image in dharmacakra pravartana mudra and only in the later phase of iconographical developemnt at Nasik, the emblematic Buddha is seen with the dhyāna mudrā, which is Amitābhā Buddha according to Tantric tradition. Thus, the kamaṇḍalu in the hands of an ascetic Bodhisattva images in Western Deccan seems to be one of the most certain indicative attribute of Maitreya, despite the appearance of the Buddha image in the

jaṭāmukuta.

One may question at this point that how the japa mālā, an important attribute of Maitreya in Gupta Sarnath, has functioned in the iconographical programme of Bodhisattva in Western Deccan. As we have studied earlier, Maitreya images at Sarnath carry the japa mālā more popularly than the traditional kamaṇḍalu; the figs. 145, 146 and 147 are shown with a japa mālā in the hand while only the fig. 148 shows a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand.

There are a few examples of Maitreya figures having the japa mālā at Ajanta. On the wall of the verandah of Cave No. 4 is the Buddhist triad and on the right side of the Buddha is an ascetic type of Bodhisattva holding a chauri in the right hand and a japa mālā in the left (fig. 184). As is often seen in the Maitreya images at Sarnath, the japa mālā holding Bodhisattvas often carry ajina on the left shoulders. He is undoubtedly the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Such Sarnath idiom seems to have gained popularity in Western Deccan in a revised manner where Maitreya image now carries a japa mālā in one hand and a kamaṇḍalu in the other. Maitreya image standing on the right side of the Buddhist triad on the left wall, Cave No. 26 (fig. 185) is shown with unusual ascetic features including ajina on its left shoulder, but what is noticeable here is that he holds a japa mālā in the right hand and a kamaṇḍalu in the left. The counter Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi holds a vajra in the right hand and the left hand nearly supports or does not carry



chauri as if to balance with the image of Maitreya on the other side who carries the japa mālā instead of the usual chauri.

In the Buddhist triad (fig. 186) carved on the left side wall of the facade of Cave No. 19, both the Bodhisattva attendants carry a japa mālā in their right hands instead of the chauri. The Bodhisattva figure on the right hand of the Buddha must be Maitreya as indicated by the kamaṇḍalu in the right hand; while the other features are of the usual ascetic type. The counterpart Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi is shown with a crown and ornaments and holds a vajra in the left hand, but he has here a japa mālā in the right hand. Thus, the japa mālā is not only an attribute of Maitreya at Ajanta but is used for other Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi also. The meaning of it may be similar to chauri which the symbolic suggestion of seeking knowledge. This type of Maitreya with the combination of japa mālā and kamaṇḍalu in hands seems to have developed at Ajanta after the influence from Sarnath.

Another curiously interesting type of Maitreya image at Ajanta may be called the 'empty handed' type. In the main shrine of the second floor of Cave No. 6, is the Buddhist triad, with a seated Buddha at the centre in padmāsana having dharmacakra pravartana mudrā and two standing Bodhisattva attendants (fig. 187). The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha is depicted with ascetic features devoid of ornaments, while the Bodhisattva on the other side

is Vajrapāṇi who has the usual ornamentation and vajra in the left hand.

The ascetic Bodhisattva here has jaṭāmukuṭa hair arrangement decorated with a hair band, in the front of which is an elaborate floral design. In the right hand he holds a chauri and ajina is drawn over the left shoulder. All such features are indicative of the image being either Maitreya or Avalokiteśvara according to the iconographical tradition of Western Deccan since he does not hold any attribute in the left hand. Among other examples of the same type, (57) the best is seen on the facade of Cave No. 26, (fig. 188). Except the pralambapādāsana of the central Buddha, the triad has the same composition, i.e., Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi. The ascetic Bodhisattva on the right hand side of the Buddha is with jaṭāmukuṭa, ajina on the right shoulder, chauri in the right hand and left hand is kept akimbo without any attribute. Despite the absence of any attribute such an image has been generally regarded as Avalokiteśvara with the following assumptions. Firstly it is believed that Avalokiteśvara conventionally appears on the right side of the Buddhist triad. Secondly, Avalokiteśvara also has ascetic features, such as devoidance of ornaments and ajina on the shoulder. Lastly, Avalokiteśvara is considered as the most popular Bodhisattva in this region. None of these, however, seem to be indicative of it being Avalokiteśvara; since the first two are also applicable for Maitreya. The last assumption, even

if we agree with it on the face value does not make sense after realizing the facts which go against such a theory.

On the contrary, there are a few definite evidences for the identification of the 'empty handed' images being Maitreya. Firstly, we have an example of Maitreya with the 'empty hand' from Sarnath, where the deity is seen as an attendant (fig. 144). As we have mentioned it is only Maitreya in Gupta Sarnath school who has been invariably shown in the ascetic feature, whereas Avalokiteśvara had been characterized by the bodhisattva ornamentation and padma in hand. Secondly, there are many representation of the Buddhist triad with the composition of Padmapāṇi, Buddha and the ascetic Bodhisattva with 'empty hand'. If we do not deny the conventionally accepted fact that two Bodhisattva attendants of the Buddhist triad necessarily represent two different Bodhisattvas, the 'empty handed' Bodhisattva pairing with Padmapāṇi can never possibly be Avalokiteśvara. In all probability, the right hand figure in fig. 188 is Maitreya, for there is only Maitreya other than Padmapāṇi who has the ascetic features in Western Deccan.

Thus, it can be summarized that Maitreya image at Ajanta is characterized by ascetic features and the most important attribute that is associated with him is kamaṇḍalu. Forming the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi in the Buddhist triad, these type of Maitreya might have developed at Ajanta in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. and spread to other Buddhist sites in

Western Deccan, mainly Aurangabad and Kanheri, but not to Ellora, Nasik and Karla.

#### V-4-B EARLY PHASE OF AURANGABAD

The majority of Bodhisattva images found at Aurangabad, especially those in the Cave Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 5 are characterized by the similar features that are observed at Ajanta. The main figures of the shrine of the Cave Nos. 2, 3, and 5, and the dvārapāla Bodhisattva in the Cave Nos. 2 and 3 seem to be belonging to the earliest phase at Aurangabad; most probably contemporary with Bagn and the earliest Mahāyāna period sculptures at Ajanta. The large number of depictions of the Buddhist triad carved in relief on the walls of the above caves seem to have been added later, perhaps during the early sixth century i.e., contemporary to the late phase of Ajanta. The Cave Nos. 6, 7 and 9 belong to the Tantric phase and this does not seem to have any artistic connection with Ajanta anymore.

Among the large number of Bodhisattva images found at Aurangabad, the representation of Maitreya is very rare while the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi gain greater popularity(58). Perhaps the earliest representation of Maitreya at this site, if not the earliest in Western Deccan, is the standing image at the right side of the Buddha in the shrine of Cave No. 3 (fig. 189). The attribute here is the kamaṇḍalu which is kept in his left

hand. In the right hand a chauri can be seen. The other features observed are however totally unexpected, and are never seen either at Sarnath or at Ajanta. He wears a crown, in front of which is the representation of the emblematic Buddha. The jaṭāmukuta hair type is seen projecting above the crown. The long hair hang down over the shoulders. The most important is the ornamented disposition which consists of a pair of earrings, necklace, armlets, and bracelets.

It is observed that such ornated Bodhisattva Maitreya type is very commonly seen in the late phase of Buddhist art at Ellora, the date of which may be the early eighth century A.D. However, there are few problematic issues to date the above image contemporary to this phase of Ellora. The stylistic features of the image under consideration and the type of cave in which the image is carved do not allow for such a late dating, but an earlier dating sometime contemporary to the earliest Mahāyāna period of Ajanta seems more plausible(59). In the iconographical features too, there are a number of differences between the above image and the ornated Bodhisattva Maitreya images at Ellora. Firstly, the appearance of the emblematic Buddha image in the headdress of Maitreya does not occur during the post-Gupta period. This can be seen only during the Kushana and Gupta periods, and was followed by the artists of Western Deccan during the initial stage of Mahāyāna activity. This feature was taken by the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, but

never occur in Tantric period of Ellora. Secondly, the kamaṇḍalu, which are the most important attribute of Maitreya is never seen being carried by the ornated Bodhisattva Maitreya of Tantric phase of Ellora, which is replaced by the nāgakesara flower.

Thus, the above image of Maitreya could be understood in connection with related examples outside Western Deccan. During the Kushan period in Mathura and Gandhara, Maitreya image invariably had been shown with the Bodhisattva ornaments, and a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand, and we also have a few images of Maitreya having the emblematic Buddha in the headdress. To trace the origin of the earliest Maitreya image at Aurangabad, we may compare it with the figs. 40 and 41 of Kushana Mathura, the fig. 137 of Gupta period Mathura, and the fig. 155 of Bagh Maitreya. The cave temples of Ajanta, too, has yielded a few such images as in the figs. 175-178. From the figs 40 and 41, one may see the the general iconographical similarity, i.e. crown, emblematic image of the Buddha, ornaments, and kamaṇḍalu. The fig. 137 shows very similar types of ornaments as in the Aurangabad Maitreya image. Moreover, the treatment of the clinging garments, especially the absence of sash and the foldless dhoti, fits in well with that of Aurangabad image. The fig. 155 and the exemplified images from Ajanta, although are devoid of ornaments, may be compared with the Aurangabad Maitreya for its similarity in jaṭāmukuta, the emblematic Buddha in it, and the kamaṇḍalu in the left hand.

The most striking comparisons between the fig. 175 of Ajanta and the present Maitreya image of Aurangabad (fig. 189) are noticed in the type of headgear and the way in which the kamaṇḍalu is held. Comparing all the above images we can possibly conclude that the origin of the ornated Maitreya image at Aurangabad can be traced back to the Kushana Mathura school. Whereas the contemporary type of ascetic Maitreya with the emblematic Buddha in front of Jaṭāmukuta as seen in the Maitreya images of Bagh and Ajanta might have been added as a result of the influence from Gupta Sarnath.

Another interesting Maitreya image that belongs to this period is seen on the right side of the shrine entrance, of Cave No. 2 (fig. 190). This dvārapāla Maitreya image may be easily mistaken to be Avalokiteśvara due to its features that are more close to the general iconographical features of ascetic Avalokiteśvara in Western Deccan. The image is characterized by the jaṭāmukuta without any ornaments, but has an ajina on the left shoulder. All these features are applicable to Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya commonly. In addition to these he has a tiny seated Buddha on the head, not in front of the jaṭāmukuta but is seated on the top. The right hand is kept downwards in varada mudrā and holds a round object, most probably a jata mālā. He holds the a long stem of the lotus on the top of which is the small seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā, the lower portion of the stem is supported by a male figure, possibly Virudhaka(60). All

these features suggests almost undoubtedly its identity as Avalokiteśvara, and the presence of emblematic Buddha particularly if we read it as an ideal characteristic of Avalokiteśvara in Western Deccan. However, such reading needs to be reconsidered which becomes crucial when we consider the left side dvārapāla of the shrine entrance. On the opposite side to the above Bodhisattva dvārapāla is another Bodhisattva holding a lotus, on top of which can again be seen a small seated Buddha(fig. 191). The lower portion of the stem here is supported by a male nāga figure, most probably Virūpāksha(61). This dvārapāla Bodhisattva differs from his counter part(fig. 190) mainly in the overall ornamentation since this image has crown, earrings, necklace, armlets and bracelets. His left hand is kept on the sash-knot, a feature that is not seen in the counterpart Bodhisattva. It seems almost impossible to identify these two Bodhisattvas, if we approach them with the established knowledge of the Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan. Perhaps the best clue that can help us to read these images is the dvārapāla iconography at Bagh which has close connection with the Gupta Sarnath idiom and differ basically from Western Deccan particularly with regard to the iconography of Avalokiteśvara.

The Maitreya image of Bagh (fig. 155) is certainly comparable to the dvārapāla Bodhisattva having the ascetic features(fig. 190). Both of them have the following <sup>m</sup>common characteristics; an emblematic Buddha image in the hair



arrangement, unadorned jaṭāmukuta, a japa mālā in the right hand and placement of the image on the right side of the shrine entrance. The difference is however noticeable in the left hand, when the Bagh Maitreya holds a kamaṇḍalu the Aurangabad image holds the stem of a lotus. Such differences can be understood as a result of solving certain technical problem that occurs frequently in the Buddhist iconography of India.

The dvārapāla Bodhisattva on the left side of the shrine entrance (fig. 191) of Aurangabad and the Avalokiteśvara of the fig. 156 from Bagh matches very well with each other. They have the following iconographical features in common: Both of them have elaborate hair-do and ornamentation. Their right hands hold padma; in the form of a long stem in the Aurangabad figure and as a bunch of lotus in Bagh. In both the figures, the left hand holds no attribute but are placed near the left side of the hip. More striking similarity that connects these two dvārapālas closely to each other is the shirascakra, the halo-like decoration, which is part of the hair-do. This feature is not observed in their counterparts (figs. 155 and 190).

Thus it is almost certain that the dvārapāla Bodhisattva standing on the right side of the shrine entrance of the Cave No. 2, Aurangabad (fig. 190) is none other than Maitreya and his counterpart dvārapāla (fig. 191) is Avalokiteśvara. The comparison of the dvārapālas from Aurangabad and Bagh suggests a strong artistic relation

between these two sites and according to the stylistic comparison, the Aurangabad dvārapālas may date slightly later than that of Bagh. They are most likely contemporaneous with the earliest Mahāyāna sculpture of Ajanta, i.e., the last quarter of the fifth century A.D.

A number of the Buddhist triads that are seen in relief on the wall of the cave Nos. 1, 2 and 5, must have been added much later after the main activity of Mahāyāna sculpture of Ajanta ceased, i.e., around A.D. 500. In them, developed features of Ajanta iconography are observed which are as follows:

Firstly, the Avalokiteśvara images are attributed with the ascetic form and hold stem of padma in the left hand. Secondly, the Maitreya images too have the same ascetic features and the left hand either holds kamaṇḍalu or shows the 'empty hand'. Thirdly, the composition of the triads follow the same features as that of Ajanta, i.e., Avalokiteśvara-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi or Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi combination. Perhaps, the earliest of them may be observed in the Cave No. 5.

On the left side shrine wall of this same Cave has the triad with the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi (fig. 192) where Maitreya has the typical ascetic features and holds a chauri in the right hand and a kamaṇḍalu in the left. The inner side walls of the same shrine is occupied by another similar group with identical composition, (fig. 193). The Maitreya image standing on the usual side of the

triad, however, has no kamaṇḍalu, but shows the 'empty hand' and has the ajina on the left shoulder. The outer wall of the cave also is decorated with seven groups of the Buddhist triads and two of them show Maitreya with a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand. Judging from both the stylistic and iconographical features of the sculpture, the Cave no, 5 may be dated to the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. contemporary with the early Mahāyāna sculpture of Ajanta.

Another interesting image is observed in the cave between the Cave Nos. 5 and 4, where Maitreya is shown in a group of Buddha's Prajñās (fig.194) He stands at the right end of the group, from the viewer's point, while the right end is the standing Buddha image in varada mudrā. He has jaṭāmukuta and <sup>is</sup> devoid of ornamentation and holds a japa mālā in the right hand, while the left holds a kamaṇḍalu. Grunwadel missuggested the identification of this image as Avalokiteśvara and later scholars followed his reading (62). The role of Maitreya and Śākyamuni Buddha attending the female goddesses or Buddha's Prajñās here cannot be determined correctly at the present state of our knowledge.

It is conclusive that the iconographical programme at Aurangabad may have developed following the Gupta Sarnath tradition which was followed by the impact of Ajanta tradition. The impact of Ajanta tradition is not only observed by the Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi composition but also by the number of Vajrapāṇi-Buddha-Padmapāṇi groups. The Avalokiteśvara image here carries with him the clear

shape of the stupa which cannot be seen at Ajanta. This feature might have been borrowed from other Buddhist sites like Nasik and Kanheri. The later Tantric caves at Aurangabad hardly have any images of Maitreya, but we shall discuss whatever is relevant in a later context due to their distinct iconographical features.

#### V-4-C. EARLY PHASE OF KANHERI

Across Western Deccan, it is at Kanheri that Ajanta tradition has been followed, particularly with regard to the Maitreya images. The oldest of the group may be the one on the facade of Cave No. 3 (fig. 195). The Buddha is shown seated in pralambapādāsana with hands in dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, typically in the style of Ajanta. Maitreya is shown on the right side of the Buddha and holds a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand. The counter Bodhisattva is represented with bodhisattva ornamentation and a crown. His left hand is placed on the sash-knot and does not seem to hold vajra in the right. Another type of Maitreya found here is on the same facade (fig. 196), where he is shown with a japa mālā in the right hand which is raised to the shoulder level and the left hand holds a kamaṇḍalu. It is interesting to compare it with the Maitreya image from Bagh (fig. 155), and two Maitreya images from Ajanta (figs. 185 and 186). The Maitreya image of the fig. 155 is seen with a japa mālā in the hand which is lowered down in varada mudrā

and stands stiffly, whereas, the fig. 185 and 186 of Ajanta are presented in a slight tribhanga posture. Almost matching type of Maitreya images have been found on the facade of the Caitya hall at Karla (see fig. 215), however, the iconographical programme at Kanheri seems to be more closely connected with that of Ajanta than that of Karla and Nasik. Many images of Litany Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, seen in samabhaṅga postures seen both at Ajanta and Kanheri may be a clue for the connection

There are three more groups of Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi triad at Kanheri, all of which have the Maitreya image placed on the left side of the Buddha. Among them the best preserved is seen on the entrance wall of Cave No. 93(fig. 197) (63). Maitreya is paired by a crowned Bodhisattva, whose left hand is placed on the sash-knot. Maitreya has a stūpa emblem in front of the jaṭāmukuta, wears an ajina in the hand at a much lower position than the usual. A kamaṇḍalu, held in the left hand suggests the image as Maitreya. Stylistically the representation seems to belong to a slightly later period than the fig. 196, most probably the first half of the sixth century A.D. when the stupa emblem has not yet been properly used to signify Maitreya. Indeed most of the padma holding Bodhisattvas at Kanheri carry the stūpa in the jaṭāmukuta as is also the case at Aurangabad.

According to the Nasik tradition, Padmapāṇi, when paired with the bejewelled Bodhisattva rather than Maitreya,

does have a Buddha figure in the jaṭāmukuta. At Kanheri no representation of the triad group composed of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi appears, which is the most popular type at Nasik. This situation leaves us feel doubtful about the supposed iconographic connection between Kanheri and Nasik or Karla.

Thus, the iconographical programme seen at Kanheri is closely related to that of Ajanta and Aurangabad. And as in the case of Aurangabad, the artist of Kanheri seems to have emphasized the cult of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara more than that of Maitreya.

#### V-5. THE MIDDLE PHASE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAITREYA ICONOGRAPHY IN WESTERN DECCAN

##### V-5-A. NASIK

The middle phase in the development of Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan seems to have lasted roughly a century from the beginning to the end of the sixth century A.D. The best sculptures belonging to this period are found at Nasik. There are only five caves that have Mahāyāna sculptures here(64). Around six dozens Bodhisattva images have been found at this site and two dozen of them are seen in Buddhist triad type. Despite the small number of Bodhisattva images, Nasik reveals a few important features

which will help us to solve some controversial problems in the study of Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan.

The iconographical characteristics of Maitreya and other Bodhisattvas at Nasik are as follows:

- a) Maitreya appears only with ascetic features and the emblematic stūpa in the jaṭāmukuta is clearly seen without any of the ornamentation.
- b) He is either empty handed or has a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand.
- c) In the later phase Maitreya carries the stem of a flower which can be interpreted as prototype of nāgakesara flower.
- d) Avalokiteśvara also appears with the same ascetic features as Maitreya, but has a lotus as his attribute.
- e) Avalokiteśvara has in front of his jaṭāmukuta either a stupa or a small seated Buddha image.
- f) The above two Bodhisattvas never have ornamentations.
- g) Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva has the general features that are more or less similar to those found in other sites.

Above all, what is most important at Nasik is that it provides us the most unusual composition of the Buddhist triad, Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara. Among the Buddhist sites of the Western Deccan, the maximum number of such triad groups are observed at Nasik and Karla. Nearly two thirds of the Buddhist triad groups available in Nasik is the one of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara (65). The earliest of its kind is shown on the inner wall of the

Cave No. 2 (fig. 198). Surprisingly, the Buddha here is flanked by two identical ascetic Bodhisattvas, except for the padma in the left hand of the Bodhisattva who stands on the left side. Both have jaṭāmukuta hair-do and are devoid of ornaments. The Bodhisattva with the padma in the hand is none other than Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara, and the counterpart Bodhisattva should be identified as Maitreya for there is no other Bodhisattva, except Maitreya and Padmapāṇi who have the ascetic features in the history of Buddhist iconography in India. As referred earlier, already by the second half of the fifth century A.D. at Sarnath, Maitreya has been represented in the ascetic features without any other specific attribute. Another most notable feature in these two Bodhisattvas is the presence of the emblematic stupa in front of the jaṭāmukuta. The shape of the stūpa is more clearly seen in the jaṭāmukuta of the Avalokiteśvara image (fig. 199) in the triad represented on the left side wall of the same cave. Here too, the Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha is the ascetic Bodhisattva Maitreya with the 'empty hand' like that of the previous example.

Some may argue that the stūpa shape of Avalokiteśvara is not very clear and the identification of Maitreya for the 'empty handed' image as Maitreya is merely a guess. To clear such a doubt, Nasik provides us with a wonderful example of the Buddhist triad with good iconographical clarity. The triad is placed on the inner wall of Cave No. 16 (fig. 200). The Bodhisattva on the right side of the



Buddha is clearly recognizable as Maitreya by the ascetic features and more importantly a kamaṇḍalu is visible in the left hand (fig. 201). On the other hand, the Bodhisattva on the other side of the Buddha is recognized as Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara by his traditional attribute of lotus flower in the left hand (fig. 202). Both of them have undoubtedly a stūpa in front of the jaṭāmukuta. On the left side wall of the same cave is another Buddhist triad, in which Maitreya is represented on the left side of the Buddha. He is shown with the 'empty hand' (fig. 203) and a stūpa is clearly visible in front of the jaṭāmukuta. The counter Bodhisattva is presented as an ornated Bodhisattva with crown and the left hand carries no object. Evidently we have here Maitreya and Avlokiteśvara carrying the emblematic stūpa in front of their hair arrangements. This fact allows no room for those who believe that the emblematic stūpa is the representation of Kasyapa's stūpa and is the most characteristic feature of Maitreya. At least in the early phase of its development the stūpa was never meant to have specific relation with Maitreya, but was commonly used for both Maitreya and Padmapāṇi as observed earlier.

Many scholars have contributed their ideas on the symbolism of stūpa in the headdress of Maitreya; as Getty suggested, "the stūpa in the crown of Maitreya is thought to refer to the belief that a stūpa on Mount Kukkuṭapāda near Bodh Gaya covers a spot where Kasyapa Buddha is lying. When Maitreya leaves the Tushita realm, he will go<sup>to</sup> the mountain,

which will open by magic and Kasyapa will give him the garments of a Buddha"(66). G. Bhattacharyya has questioned such a meaning with the evidence of the Divyādāna, which gives an account of the Gurpadaka hill of the *bīksu* Kāśyapa, but mentions no reason for Maitreya carrying the emblem of stūpa(67). He has suggested that "Kukkuṭapādāgiri-legend has nothing to do with the stūpa which Maitreya carries in his crown or jaṭā. On the other hand, the large jewel or the 'tapering tenon' provided by the Gandharan artists in the headdress or ornament of Maitreya and other Bodhisattvas developed, perhaps out of confusion, in the hands of later Indian artists into a stūpa"(68). G. Bhattacharyya's first argument that the stūpa of Maitreya does not represent the stūpa of Kāśyapa as most of the scholars believed seems very convincing even though his interpretation based on the text does not seem to be a probable one(69).

The above conclusion of G. Bhattacharyya becomes clear from the study of Bodhisattva iconography at Nasik, since we have earlier analysed that the stūpa design first appeared in the headdress of both Maitreya and Padmapāṇi and was never specifically associated with Maitreya alone. This leads to a supposition that the stūpa represents anything else but Kāśyapa's stūpa.

G. Bhattacharyya has also suggested that the stūpa derived its origin from the tapering tenon of the Maitreya image of the Gandhara school. He, however, seems to have over-estimated the importance of Gandhara sculpture and this

view does not seem to hold true(70). On the contrary, this emblem seems to have been introduced almost exclusively by the artists of the Western Deccan, particularly at Nasik, on the basis of the tradition of stūpa worship that flourished in this region, even long before Mahāyāna Buddhism became active here.

Bhattacharyya gives yet another explanation for the symbolism of the stūpa when he states that "The stūpa in his crown or jaṭā is now a parallel to the figures of the kulesa (or jinas or tathāgatas), either representing the eternal dharmakāya or parinirvāṇa of the previous Buddhas"(71). However, there arises two questions: the first is why Maitreya does not have a Buddha figure instead of the stūpa, if it was meant to represent the eternal dharmakāya(72). The second question is what the stūpa in the headdress of Avalokiteśvara is meant to represent, if the same in the case of Maitreya represents the parinirvāṇa of the previous Buddhas.

On the basis of the present knowledge there is no relevant evidence to prove the connection between the cult of Avalokiteśvara and parinirvāṇa of the past Buddhas, whereas the symbolism of the stūpa should be studied in the context of both Padmapāṇi and Maitreya, since it is in their iconography that the stūpa was first introduced as an emblem. In all probabilities, the stūpa may be symbolizing Śākyamuni Buddha's parinirvāṇa, from the time onwards Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi took an active part in the propagation

of Buddhism. Conceptually the actual cult of Maitreya as a future Buddha also began after the parinirvāṇa of Śākyamuni Buddha. In other words, stūpa is a symbolic representation indicating the succession of Padmapāṇi and the coming of Maitreya after Śākyamuni Buddha.

The place of the origin of the emblematic stūpa for both Maitreya and Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara might be most probably at Nasik. This assumption is made after considering following criteria: Firstly, the representation of Maitreya with stūpa that we mentioned earlier in the context of Nasik are rare at Kanheri and Aurangabad, while at Ellora, Maitreya is mostly represented in the later ornated form. At Nasik, on the other hand, these two Bodhisattvas with stūpa seem to have gained popularity. It should be noted that Avalokiteśvara with stūpa in front of his hairdo is not only observed at Nasik but also at Kanheri, Aurangabad and the early caves of Ellora. If at all there are Avalokiteśvara or Maitreya images at Ajanta having this emblem they would be work of later period. Kanheri seems to be the place where this type of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara gained popularity. The second reason for the 'Nasik origin' is that at this site we can trace the consistent development of the emblematic stūpa and Buddha. In the first phase of the iconographical programme at Nasik the stūpa is used for both the Bodhisattvas as noticed earlier, whereas in the second phase, Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara is attributed with the Buddha image as an

emblem, while Maitreya retained the stūpa. The emblematic Buddha in front of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara however, does invariably appear with dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, whereas in the last phase where the Tantric influence is observable, it seems to have the dhyani mudrā, which is the typical mudrā of Amitābha Buddha. Looking back at the general iconographical features of Maitreya, it was either the kamaṇḍalu or the 'empty hand' that characterized the early phase at Nasik. In the second phase, when Avalokiteśvara took the emblematic image of the Buddha, Maitreya appears with a japa mālā or a flower in hand. Finally, in the last phase we see Maitreya having japa mālā in hand and a stem of a flower on the other hand.

The typical group of the second phase is observable mainly in Cave No. 23-4 and 23-5, two cells at the extreme left side of of Cave No. 23. In the cell 23-5 is a Buddhist triad; on the left hand side of the standing Buddha is the image of Maitreya with a stūpa in front of the jaṭāmukuta and the usual ascetic features (fig. 204), and on the other side of the Buddha stands Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (fig. 205). The latter has a Buddha figure with the hands in dharmachakra pravartana mudrā in front of the jaṭāmukuta and holds a lotus flower in the left hand. An almost replica of this triad is observed on the right side wall of Cave. 23-4, and the opposite wall has another triad, in which the above two Bodhisattvas, with identical features interchange their position; i.e., Avalokiteśvara on the right side of

the Buddha and Maitreya on the left. In all the above cases the attribute of Maitreya is not traceable, since the lower part from the waist level of the images are left uncarved.

On the inner side wall of the same cave is another Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi triad (fig. 206 and 207), with somewhat unusual attributes in the hands of the two Bodhisattvas. Maitreya (fig. 206), who stands on the right side of the Buddha, holds a small flower in the right hand and a kamaṇḍalu in the left, while maintaining the traditional ascetic features and a stupa in the jaṭāmukuta. The image of Avalokiteśvara (fig. 207), on the other hand, is shown with a japa mālā in the right hand which is raised in the form of abhaya mudrā and a padma in the left hand in addition to the usual ascetic feature and an emblematic Buddha in the jaṭāmukuta.

The small flower in the hand of Maitreya would be, according to Tantric sādhana, none other than champa or nāgakesara flower. The flower in the hand of the fig. 206 however, does not confirm its shape with the later type of nāgakesara buds in the hand of Maitreya images of Pala period. It is very interesting to compare it with a real nāgachampā flower (fig. 208), which is small in size and does not have a long stem. When we take into consideration that even Vajrapāṇi also carries such flower as seen in the hand of dvārapāla-Vajrapāṇi in front of the Cave No. 23-1 at Nasik a complicated problem arises.

Furthermore, there are two images of Maitreya holding

what looks like a stem without flower, a feature which had never been noticed before. Perhaps the broken stem of flower in the Maitreya image of the Gupta Sarnath (fig. 145), could be an exceptional case. The Buddhist triad of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara (fig. 209) in cave 20-2 has the seated Buddha in pralambapādāsana with dharmachakra pravartana mudrā and two ascetic Bodhisattva attendants at both the sides. The differences between the two Bodhisattvas are in the kind of emblem in front of the jaṭāmukuta and in the object held in their left hands. Avalokiteśvara standing on the left side of the Buddha has an emblematic figure of Amitābhā in front of jaṭāmukuta and holds a fully opened lotus flower in the left hand. His counter Bodhisattva Maitreya (fig. 210), while maintaining the ascetic feature and a stūpa in front of the jaṭāmukuta, holds a chauri in the right hand and in the left a long stem that emerges out from the ground, passing through the left hand and the arms, ending at a point little above the left shoulder. One may think that the tip of the stem is broken from the lotus flower.

The same case is observed in the attribute held by the left hand of the dvārapāla Bodhisattva (fig. 211), shown on the left side wall of the entrance of the Cave No. 23-1. Except the japa mālā in the right hand, the Bodhisattva here shows almost identical iconographical features with the previous example where the type of the stem held by the left hand of the image reveals even more clearly its difference

from that of the lotus flower of Avalokiteśvara. In both the cases, there is no trace of any broken mark around the tip of the stem.

From the fact that each of the stem-holding Bodhisattvas is paired with Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara, we can be sure of their identity as Maitreya, since he is the only one who could have ascetic features other than Avalokiteśvara. Consequently, we are forced to name the stem like object in connection with nāgakesara flower or nāgachampā tree which is the only available object other than the known attributes in connection with Maitreya at the present state of our knowledge. Looking at the real nāgachampā tree, we find a number of small branches growing out from the main trunk (fig. 212). It is possible to think whether or not the stem-like object in the sculptural representation is meant to represent the small branches of the nāgachampā tree, under which Maitreya is believed to be achieving enlightenment in the future. It is also possible that this stem-like design has been derived and modified from the lotus flower which was the most popular attribute of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara. Whatever the case may be, the importance of the above images of Maitreya is that the representation of nāgakesara flower in these is different from that of the Tantric period, where remained unsettled still the early seventh century A.D. in Western Deccan.

The dvārapala Maitreya images can be placed in the last phase of the iconographical development of Nasik; this phase



is characterized by the introduction of Tantric elements which might have come into Western Deccan in the early seventh century A.D. A male figure besides the dvārapāla Maitreya is the outcome of the Tantric influence and must be Brikuṭi(fig. 211). The counter dvarapala Bodhisattva is Avalokitesvara carrying an emblematic Buddha in front of the jaṭāmukuta and a japa mālā in the right hand and a padma in the left. The emblematic Buddha here in the jaṭāmukuta of Avalokiteśvara displays his hand in dhyāna mudrā. The dvārapāla Avalokiteśvara is accompanied here by a goddess, most probably Tārā.

Thus, the representation of Maitreya at Nasik tells us three important points: Firstly, the emblematic stūpa was used for both Maitreya and Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara in the first phase of the iconographical programme. Secondly, it is in the later phase that the Maitreya and the Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara are attributed with a stūpa and a small Buddha as their respective emblems. In the last phase, Maitreya appeared with a new attribute which can be considered as the prototype of the Tantric nāgakesara flower. The first phase might have started around the early sixth century A.D. and the latest phase might have ended some time shortly after the beginning of the seventh century or still later when the Tantric Buddhism influenced artistic activity here(73).

There seems to be no other Buddhist sites having such a close affinity other than that of the Mahāyāna sculptures at Karla(74), and that of Nasik. The iconographical programme followed at Karla is almost parallel to that found at Nasik. All the Buddhist triad groups noticed here show the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara that has been also found at Nasik. Despite its prominence at Karla, such triad composition can be considered to have been developed at Nasik first. The above hypothesis is mainly based on the fact that Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara here carries the emblematic Buddha image in front of the jaṭāmukuṭa; such characteristic has been observed in the second phase of the iconographical development of the Padmapāṇi at Nasik.

The most clear example of such triad group at Karla is represented on the lower facade wall of caitya temple (fig. 213). Both the Bodhisattva attendants are shown with jaṭāmukuṭa and other ascetic features and a japa mālā in each of their right hands. The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha, however, has a stūpa in front of the jaṭāmukuṭa and a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand. He is therefore identifiable as Bodhisattva Maitreya, whereas the other Bodhisattva has an emblematic Buddha and a stem of lotus flower in the left hand. It is noteworthy that the small Buddha figure in the jaṭāmukuṭa of Avalokiteśvara is shown with dharmacakra pravartana mudrā. As was the case in

Nasik, Maitreya at Karle is often represented with a japa mālā in hand, as seen on the wall of the same chaitya hall (fig. 214). Here, Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara is represented on the right side of the Buddha while Maitreya is shown on the other side. Undoubtedly, Maitreya is also represented with the 'empty hand' type (fig. 215), while maintaining the other features described above. The right hand of Maitreya here is brought to the left shoulder holding a chaurī, while the left hand is kept akimbo.

Thus, the Mahāyāna sculpture at Karle should be understood in connection with the iconographical programme of Nasik and a relative chronology of the two could be arrived at. It appears that the Mahāyāna sculptures at Karle was contemporary to the middle phase of Nasik sculptures, whose date may be ascribed to the middle of the sixth century A.D.

#### V-5-C. EARLY CAVES AT ELLORA

R.S. Gupte who studied the iconography of the Buddhist caves of Ellora, states that "the chief cognizance of Maitreya is the chaitya he wears in the crown"(75). With the above notion on one hand and kamaṇḍalu as another important attribute of Maitreya on the other hand, he counted twenty-six sculptures of Maitreya at Ellora. The major limitation in his reading, however, is that he neither tried to read Maitreya iconography in terms of iconological

sense nor in chronological order. He seems to have overlooked the fact that there are different phases in the development of Buddhist iconography in Ellora.

In Cave No. 2, one of the earliest Buddhist caves at Ellora, there are over a dozen of Buddhist triad groups in the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara, carved on the outer and inner sides of the entrance hall. As was the case at Nasik, both the Bodhisattvas here also are seen in the ascetic features with jaṭāmukuṭa hairdo. For instance the triad group carved on the side wall of the window (fig. 216) is seen with the seated Buddha in pralambapādāsana and dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, flanked by two ascetic Bodhisattvas: Maitreya having a chauri in the right hand and probably a kamaṇḍalu in the left, while Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara with a japa mālā in the right hand and a lotus flower in the left. Maitreya here has a stūpa in front of the jaṭāmukuṭa and Avalokiteśvara has a Buddha on it. Except the above triad, other triads are shown in the composition of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara-Buddha-Maitreya. The triad carved below the above exemplified triad is the one of such groups (fig. 217). Here, the image of Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara is shown on the right side of the Buddha, while Maitreya is represented on the other side. A small Buddha image is clearly seen in the jaṭāmukuṭa of Avalokiteśvara who has a japa mālā in the right hand and a stem of lotus in the left. The image of Maitreya on the other hand, is shown with a stūpa in front of the

jaṭāmukuta; the right hand is kept akimbo without any attribute, while a chauri is held in the left hand.

Evidently, these Maitreya images with ascetic features certainly belong to an earlier period than the major group of Buddhist sculptures at Ellora which is logically contemporary to the second phase of iconographical development at Nasik or the Mahāyāna sculpture of Karla(76).

#### V-5-D. AURANGABAD

Strictly speaking, there is no representation of Buddhist triad with the composition of the 'Nasik tradition', at Aurangabad. Only a few variations of a such type are noticeable.

The group of seven Mānushi Buddhas illustrated in fig. 168, is flanked by the image of Padmapāṇi on the extreme right of the group and the image of Maitreya or Vajrapāṇi on the other end. The Bodhisattva attendants flanking the multiple Buddhas are also observed on the facade of Caitya grha, Cave No. 26, Ajanta, where the two Bodhisattvas are Maitreya and Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi(77).

In another version, all the three deities Avalokiteśvara, Buddha and Maitreya are represented in padmāsana; three such cases are found in Cave No. 2. The most clear group is observed on the right side wall of the cave (fig. 218). At the centre is the Buddha in dharmacakra pravartana mudrā. The figure on the right side holds a flower-like

object in the left hand and on the left side of the Buddha is Maitreya in dhyāna mudrā. Each of the Bodhisattvas has the jaṭāmukuta with a stūpa on it and wear sanghati in the open mode. A similar group is on the other side wall of the hall and also inside the shrine of the same cave(78).

Apparently, there seems to have been no direct relationship during the early phase between Aurangabad and other sides following the 'Nasik tradition'. As has been discussed earlier, Aurangabad kept its own iconographical characteristic while the basic traits followed the Western Deccan iconographical programme in general.

#### V-6. THE LATER PHASE IN THE EVOLUTION OF MAITREYA ICONOGRAPHY IN WESTERN DECCAN

##### V-6-A. ELLORA

A dramatic change in the Maitreya iconography took place sometime after the initial phase of the Buddhist activity at Ellora. The ascetic type of Maitreya images, which had been the dominant type all over Western Deccan is now replaced by the ornated type.

There had been three main different features of the ascetic type, and a new type of Maitreya iconography developed at Ellora during late seventh century of early eighth century A.D. The first notable feature of this new type is the absence of the kamaṇḍalu(79), which had been the

most characteristic attribute of Maitreya images since the commencement of the tradition of making the Maitreya images from Kushana times. The second is the introduction (or the revival) of the bodhisattva ornamentation that had been popular in Mathura and Gandhara schools of art, and was relatively absent subsequently. The third is the introduction of the nāgakesara flower that had been already noticed in the Maitreya images Nasik.

At Ellora with slight variations the above characteristics remain as the fundamental iconographical traits of Maitreya for over a century. The variations of Maitreya images at Ellora could be divided into two different groups; the early group (Cave Nos. 2-10) and the later group (Cave Nos. 11-12) which shows marked transformation in iconography(80). The Maitreya image type can also be divided according to the differences in attributes; such as Maitreya with nāgakesara flower and Maitreya with the 'empty hand', etc. The image can also be divided into three groups on the basis of the placement of images; Maitreya as an attendant of the Buddha, Maitreya as a dvārapāla and Maitreya along with other Bodhisattvas. Considering the general nature of iconographical tradition at Ellora and the purpose of our study, the Maitreya iconography at Ellora may be studied on the basis of the last category that<sup>is</sup> namely on the basis of the placement of Maitreya images.

## MAITREYA AS AN ATTENDANT OF THE BUDDHA

At Ellora, whenever Maitreya appears as an attendant of the Buddha, he generally carries a chauri in the right hand, but in some cases he carries nāgakesara flower instead of chauri. His left hand is almost invariably kept on the sash-knot on the left side of the hip. His hair is arranged in jaṭāmukuta which gradually evolved to become taller and more elaborate. His ornaments consists of earrings, necklace, armlets and bracelets and wears dhoti indicated generally by a simple line around the waist and a sash worn loosely around the hip. His feet are always bare. Although Maitreya here has the emblematic stūpa in front of the jaṭāmukuta, the stūpa is not the chief identification mark as R.S. Gupte points out (81). In Ellora the stūpa is used not only for Maitreya, but also is found used for by Padmapāṇi, Vajrapāṇi and also for 'yet-to-be identified Bodhisattva'. As is often mistaken, Gupte too misreads the stūpa without proper study of the its shape. One of such misreading of Gupte is the Bodhisattva attendant on the left side of the Buddha in Cave No. 5 (fig. 219). He identified this image as Maitreya saying that "In his mukuta is a caitya"(82). The design in front of the jaṭāmukuta, however, does not allow easy reading as a stūpa in comparison with the general shape known to us.

Another serious problem in the identification of Maitreya is the pre-occupation that Maitreya always wears a



crown(83). With this assumption, Gupta identifies the Bodhisattva attendant on the left side of the Buddha in Cave No. 3 as Maitreya (fig. 220)(84). It is difficult to understand what might have led him to make such a conclusion. As we have studied, Maitreya does not appear with a crown when he is represented as an attendant of the Buddha, whereas he does have a crown when he is represented singularly or along with a group of the Seven Past Mānushi Buddhas.

The reason to oppose the suggestion of Maitreya having crown is clear since certain traditional iconographical characteristics remained fundamental despite the modification made after Tantric influence; for instance, the jaṭāmukuta of Avalokiteśvara which remained throughout Buddhist activities at Ellora. It is very likely that the later images of Maitreya in the Cave Nos. 11 and 12 are shown with the modified jaṭāmukuta with decorations around it, but never totally got changed into a crown. Thus, at Ellora the identification of the Maitreya image should be with special care since the characteristics of Maitreya mentioned above are shared by other Bodhisattva images as well.

To certain extent, the development of the Maitreya image from the ascetic type to the ornate type is traceable at Ellora. The early type can be observed in the Buddhist triad (fig. 221), on the verandah wall of Cave No. 2, Ellora. Maitreya here, while maintaining the traditional

jaṭāmukuta and the emblematic stūpa on it, is adorned with ornamentation and a sash around the hip. His right hand holds the usual chauri, while the left hand is kept on the sash knot. His counter Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi is shown with a crown, ornaments, a chauri in the right hand and a vajra in the left.

The identification of the previous image as Maitreya(85), is based on the following relative evidences. Firstly, during this time in the iconographical development of Buddhist art at Ellora, Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara is never shown with ornaments; it is in the later caves like Cave Nos. 11 and 12 that Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara images appear as an ornated Bodhisattva. Secondly, Avalokiteśvara invariably carries a lotus flower in the left hand, whereas Maitreya does not necessarily always carry any attribute, but shows the 'empty-hand'. Thirdly, it cannot be Vajrapāṇi since the image is paired with Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva. Fourthly, there are sculptural evidences of Maitreya having ornaments from previous stage of development. The left side Bodhisattva attendant (fig. 189), in the shrine of Cave No. 3, Aurangabad, is clearly recognizable as Maitreya with kamaṇḍalu in the left hand, and with the bodhisattva-ornamentation. This image has been already discussed earlier as related to the early tradition of Maitreya iconography of Kushan Mathura. We have also noted that this image has no direct connection with the later ornated Maitreya images of Ellora(86). Considering all the above

points and also in the context of ornated Maitreya images found at Ellora, the present image could most probably be said as one of the earliest Maitreya images with the bodhisattva ornamentation in Western Deccan.

Another example of this type of Maitreya image is found in the triad on the inner wall of the chamber, attached to the right side of the Cave 4 (fig. 222). The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha has the identical features with the Maitreya image that we have discussed above. The jaṭāmukuṭa and the stūpa on it are intact and clear. The broken right arm might have been in abhaya mudrā and the left hand can be seen placed on the sash knot. The Bodhisattva on the other side has an elaborate crown and is adorned with ornamentations. His left hand rests on the head of a dwarf. The right hand is broken, but it might have been raised up to the level of left chest. Surprisingly, R.S. Gupte identifies this image as Maitreya, mainly based on his reading, "In his mukuṭa is a caitya"(87). He left no remark on the identification of the other Bodhisattva, which in fact is none other than Maitreya. The Bodhisattva which Gupte identified as Maitreya is infact Vajrapāṇi, possibly with the personified vajra in the form of a dwarf(88).

Almost identical triad group is observed in Cave No. 2 (fig. 223). The Maitreya image, standing on the right side of the Buddha, is depicted with yajñopavita in addition to the features mentioned in the previous examples. He has the

jaṭāmukūṭa while the counterpart Bodhisattva has an elaborate headgear and besides him is a dwarf figure which we have identified as a personified vajra in the previous case.

This type of Maitreya image is also paired with Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist triad, as seen in Cave No. 2 (fig. 224 and 225). Certain images in this cave have been noticed earlier as having comparable to Nasik cave sculptures with regard to the triad composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Avalokiteśvara. The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha is Avalokiteśvara with the established features of ascetic type Bodhisattva (fig. 224). His counterpart Bodhisattva (fig. 225), is adorned with ornamentations while the hair arrangement can clearly be read as jaṭāmukūṭa as also found in the Avalokiteśvara image standing on the other side of the Buddha. This image does not however show any attribute, but the left hand is placed on the sash-knot. The image may not easily be understood as Maitreya, since the majority of Maitreya images outside Ellora are found having ascetic features. Thus, for the identification of such images, we are totally depended on the following three factors: To begin with, Maitreya does have a jaṭāmukūṭa hair arrangement, however it may be elaborated or even crowned. Secondly, in front of the hair arrangement or on the decorative hair band is the emblematic stūpa sometimes with a rectangular dome or sometimes with a round dome. Lastly, it is distinguished from Avalokiteśvara with the

ornamentation and the absence of padma in the hand. The first two characteristics are the distinguishable features from other Bodhisattva type except Avalokiteśvara. The counterpart Bodhisattva of Avalokiteśvara has all the above characteristics; the jaṭāmukuṭa and a stūpa design in front of the hair-do. According to the iconographical scheme followed at Ellora, this ornated Bodhisattva is most probably Bodhisattva Maitreya which might have been got introduced now for the first time in Ellora. It may be worth remembering that the Maitreya image from Aurangabad(fig. 189) has very close resemblance with the above Maitreya image(fig. 225). However the former belong to an early date, i.e. late fifth century A.D. and the latter to the early seventh century A.D. To give such an early date for the fig. 189 is based on the assumption that the appearance of the emblematic Buddha image and the Kamaṇḍalu is the characteristic to the given date, where as these two features disappear when Tantrayāna influence enters Ellora. Thus, the ornated type of Maitreya images at Ellora might have developed with a different conceptual basis which will be discussed later on.

There seems to have been a general tendency at Ellora to treat the jaṭāmukuṭa to assume taller form with more decorations, and the nāgakesara flower also begins appear in the hand of Maitreya at this point. The most curious problem at this stage in the development of the iconographical programme of Ellora Buddhist sculptures is

the iconographical similarity between the Maitreya images and the other ornated Bodhisattvas. When vajra is seen in hand, the figure is generally regarded as Vajrapāṇi and when the flower is observed then figure is considered as Mañjuśrī. As for example two dvārapāla Bodhisattvas (fig. 226) in Cave 12 (second floor) shows almost identical features except their attributes; both have jaṭāmukuta and the bodhisattva ornamentation. The one the right is recognizable as Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara for he holds a padma in the left hand, and the other Bodhisattva as Vajrapāṇi for he holds vajra in his right hand. Avalokiteśvara having ornamentation and the Vajrapāṇi having jaṭāmukuta hair-arrangement are unusual features which developed in the later part of Bodhisattva iconography in Western Deccan. The problem gets more complicated when there is no attribute in hand, or when both the Bodhisattvas are in a pair and hold a flower each in their hands.

R.S. Gupte certainly faced this problem when he dealt with the Buddhist triad in the shrine of Cave No. 6 (fig. 227). The Buddha image here is flanked by two attendants having identical features; each of them having a tall and decorated jaṭāmukuta with stūpa design on it and identical ornamentation, a chauri in their right hands and the left hands placed on the sash knot. R.S. Gupte concluded that both of them are Maitreya (89). Such a conclusion seems to be farfetched since traditionally the Bodhisattva attendants differ from one another in their identities.

There are two suggestive clues to identify the above Bodhisattva attendants. Firstly, at Ellora we have three different types of Bodhisattvas, whose hair-do is arranged in the elaborate jaṭāmukuṭa; i.e. Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya and Vajrapāṇi. Since none of the above Bodhisattva attendants carry a padma in their hands, the attendants of the above triad must be Maitreya-Vajrapāṇi pair. Secondly, there are a certain rules that are followed in the arrangement of Bodhisattva attendants at Ellora; almost invariably Maitreya stands on the left side of the Buddha and Vajrapāṇi stands on the right side of the Buddha when they are paired. Hence, the Bodhisattva on the left of the Buddha must be Maitreya and the one standing on the right side of the Buddha would be Vajrapāṇi(90).

One of the most important images of Maitreya at Ellora is the Buddhist triad (fig. 228) occupying the inner wall of the chapel at the left side of the Cave No. 8. Both the Bodhisattvas here, look alike and are characterized by elaborate hair arrangements, heavy ornamentations, and a sash around their hips. In the hand of Bodhisattva standing on the right side of the Buddha is a small flower, instead of the traditional chauri whereas the Bodhisattva standing on the other side has a vajra in the hand.

Despite similar iconographical features in both the Bodhisattvas, the one on the left of the Buddha can be recognized as Vajrapāṇi, while the other Bodhisattva with a flower can be either Maitreya or Mañjushrī. Due to the fact

that this Bodhisattva with the flower has jaṭāmukuta hair arrangement, may indicate his identity as Maitreya and the flower could be the nāgakesara or the champā flower. This possibility becomes more definite when we compare this image with the Maitreya image from Nasik (fig. 207). Although lacking kamaṇḍalu in the left hand and the ornamentation of the fig. 206, the flower they hold in the right hands are identical.

Thus, it is most probable that the artists of Ellora discarded kamaṇḍalu while introducing Bodhisattva ornaments for Maitreya. There can be two ways of interpreting the reason for this change. Firstly, kamaṇḍalu which had been attributed to the ascetic type Maitreya images do not match with the newly ornated type of Maitreya's personality. Such interpretation is possible only if the kamaṇḍalu was meant to represent the water bottle of ascetics. Secondly, Maitreya's status became reduced by bearing the bodhisattva ornamentations from the Mānushi Bodhisattva who has his own right as a Future Buddha to the ordinary Bodhisattva. Consequently, kamaṇḍalu which was meant to symbolize the source of the Dharma disappeared from the hand of the Maitreya images at Ellora.

Eventually, Maitreya came to be attributed with a flower which is the prototype of the proper nāgakesara flower in Pala period. The fully established type of this flower is observed only in the later sculptures at Ellora, mostly in Cave No. 12, which might have been carved around



the middle of the eighth century A.D.

#### MAITREYA AS A DVĀRAPĀLA

The next important placement where Maitreya images appear is on the gateways of the shrine as a dvarapala. This role of Maitreya seems to be particularly important at Ellora and needs special attention for its function.

The function of dvārapāla is generally understood as a guardian of a particular realm in the religion. Already in the Hīnayāna phase, at Sanchi and Barhut there are prototype dvārapālas in the form of Yakshas and in Western India they appeared as warriors (at Pitalkhora) or as lotus bearers (at Kanheri and Nasik). With the introduction of the Mahāyāna Buddhism in Western Deccan, such dvārapālas become extremely important. We have already observed the Bodhisattva dvārapālas in the Cave Nos. 20(fig.211) and 23-1 at Nasik and they became almost essential figures at Ellora and Aurangabad. There is, however, no way to analyse the connection between the dvārapālas of Hīnayāna phase and the later dvārapālas of the Manāyāna phase. In this regard, mention should be made that the dvārapāla Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist cave temples at Ellora seem to have close affinity with the dvārapālas noticed in the Brāhmanical caves in the same site.

The general features of Bodhisattva dvārapālas are more or less the same as the features of the Buddha attendants we

have studied above. Some of the characteristics of the dvārapālas which are different from that of Bodhisattva attendants at Ellora are the absence of chauri and the introduction of female attendants. There are twelve pairs of dvārapālas at Ellora where Maitreya appears in half of them. In four cases he is paired with Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara (in Cave Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 6); in one the counter Bodhisattva is broken (in front of the chamber at the right side of Cave No. 5) and in one he is represented with Mañjuśrī (in Cave No. 12).

The standard type of Maitreya as a dvārapāla is seen on the right side of the shrine entrance of Cave 2 (fig. 229). His hair-do is much more elaborate compared to that of the fig. 228, but the top part clearly reveal jaṭāmukuta. It is a question whether the flower in the hand of Maitreya is a representation of nāgakesara flower as illustrated in the fig. 208. On his right is a goddess, with a flower in the right hand and the left hand on the head of a dwarf.

In the case of Maitreya image on the left side of the entrance of the shrine of Cave No.5(fig. 230), he is flanked by two goddesses holding a flower each in their hands. The identification of the two goddesses is conjectural since we have no textual information regarding the female deity in relationship with Maitreya. Getty informs that "In Mahāyāna countries, Maitreya is found in a triad with Gautama Buddha and Avalokiteśvara; and is also accompanied by the two goddesses Kurukulla and Bhrukuti." (91) The link between

Maitreya and the above two goddesses is however, not traceable in the Buddhist literature.

On the contrary they are deeply associated with Amitābhā Buddha; and are indeed the two of the three female divinities that emanate from the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābhā(92). Kurukulla also called Red-Tara is the goddess of wealth(93). On the other hand, Bhrukuti is Yellow-Tara and is the goddess that frowns(94). Thus, it is very unlikely that the two female figures attending Maitreya represents Kurukulla and Bhrukuti(95). Unfortunately, there seems be no definite evidence for the identification of female attendants of Maitreya within the presently available materials(96).

A curious question in this regard is whether these female attendants represent specific deities of Tantrayāna Buddhism or are they simple attendants like that of the chauri bearers of early Kushana Mathura, without any specificity to the particular Bodhisattvas. This question sounds farfetched in the context where we have already defined them as goddesses. There are, however, some reasons behind such a question. Firstly, the female attendants of dvārapāla have more or less the same features, like the flower in hand. Secondly, there is a close resemblance between the female attendants of the dvārapāla and that of Brāhmanical caves at the same site(97). The last evidence eventually leads us to assume that the female attendants are popularly represented along with the dvārapāla figures of both Brāhmanical and Buddhist cave temples at Ellora,

probably without much cultic significance.

The dvārapāla on the right side of the entrance of the shrine of Cave No. 6 is Maitreya (fig. 231) attended by a female figure on his right and a male figure on the left. On the right side of the female figure is a small dwarf is also seen. The broken left hand of the female attendant might have been kept upwards and must have held a flower. The male figure wears an elaborate headgear, and both his hands are locked into each other on the chest. Such a female and male figure on either sides of dvārapāla has been generally regarded as Mamiki-Krodhacandratilaka pair(98); Prajñāpāramita and Maria pair for Vajrapāṇi and Lokeśvara (99), Tara and Khasarpana Lokeśvara for Avalokiteśvara dvārapāla(100). For the reason made before, the identification of the pair along with Maitreya awaits future investigation.

Another important element in this Maitreya image is the unusual attribute that is held in his right hand; it is a twig of willow tree and not a flower(101). As far as the Bodhisattva iconography is concerned, such attribute is related to none of the Bodhisattvas we know. For regarding the image as Maitreya we may presume that it represents the twig of the nāgachampā tree (see fig. 160). It is very likely to be so, if we consider the fact that nāgakesara as an attribute of Maitreya had not yet been finally fixed in the sculptural representation during this period of Western Deccan. It is worth observing again that the attribute of

Maitreya images, the fig. 142 from Gupta Sarnath, the figs. 206, 210 and 211 from Nasik and the present image of Maitreya (fig. 231), all of which differ from one another. Thus, we need to take special care while studying the types of Maitreya's attribute during this period.

In this regard, the dvārapāla (fig. 232), on the left of the main shrine door, in the ground floor of Cave No. 12, commands special attention in two ways. Firstly, he is shown in a seated posture which is an unusual feature for a dvārapāla figure. Secondly, the attribute in his left hand depicts a similar form that is often called as nāgakesara flower which is noticed in the hands of Maitreya images of the Pala-Sena period. Despite the obvious similarity between the object held by this dvārapāla and the Maitreya images of Pala period, the identification of the present Bodhisattva had confused many scholars of Buddhist iconography(102). The reason for such confusion may be due to the unusual hair style and also the belief that the ascetic Maitreya is the popular type in Western Deccan. A close examination of the hair arrangement however, reveals that it is somewhat an elaborate type of jaṭāmukuta, although now it is in a badly worn out condition. Needless to mention again that ornamentations are an important feature of Maitreya images in Ellora.

What is important here is the type of the so-called nāgakesara flower or nāgachampā flower. A study of the actual nāgachampā tree, reveals that the object in the hand

of the above seated dvārapāla closely resembles the nāgachampā buds (fig. 233) each of which will be bloomed into flowers as seen in the fig. 208. In a tree of the same (fig. 233), the stalks of buds grow out of the main trunk (fig. 212). Evidently, the object in the hand of the above image and most of the later Tantric period images should be called nāgakesara buds rather than nāgachampā flower(103). In the iconographical programme, the type of small flower of nāgakesara precedes the one of nāgakesara buds. In sculptural representation, the stalk is generally elongated as seen here, and so also in the Maitreya images of the Pala-Sena period. On the basis of the above analysis, we can safely identify this dvārapāla as Maitreya. His broken right hand might have been placed near the right side of the chest with the palm turned outwards. His counter dvārapālā is Mañjusrī who holds the stem of a lotus flower, on which is placed the 'book' or the 'manuscript' symbolizing wisdom. In Cave Nos. 11 and 12 also, Maitreya with this type of nāgakesara buds often appears in a group of Bodhisattvas or in the Buddha maṇḍala.

#### MAITREYA IN A GROUP OF BODHISATTVAS

From around the beginning of the eighth century A.D. onwards, Maitreya appears along with the newly introduced Bodhisattvas of Tantrayāna Buddhism, whereas, his role as an attendant of the Buddha becomes remarkably reduced in the

iconographic programme of Buddhist art at Ellora(104). Markedly, the Bodhisattva groups and the Buddha maṇḍala appear in the Cave Nos. 11 and 12 at Ellora, and the iconographical characteristics of Maitreya images remain the same as the latest features that we have studied above.

These are as follows:

- a) Maitreya images of later Buddhist caves at Ellora have invariably elaborate hair-do with a clear trace of jaṭāmukuta. It is different from the crown type that is seen on the head of other Bodhisattvas.
- b) The emblematic stūpa appears in front of the hair arrangement, but one should be cautious in reading the stūpa since similar design, in rare occasion is also carried at least by Mañjusrī and Vajrapāṇi.
- c) Along with the introduction of the bodhisattva ornamentation, the kamaṇḍalu now disappeared completely from the hand of Maitreya.
- d) After the initial stage of having different types of nāgakesra flower, Maitreya now carries proper nāgakesara buds.

With all the above features the Bodhisattva Maitreya is represented thrice where he is shown along with seven other Bodhisattvas (in Cave No. 12); twice in a group of six Bodhisattvas (Cave No. 11); and once in a group of three Bodhisattvas and three female deities (Cave No. 11). He also appears six times in Buddha maṇḍalas (all in Cave No. 11 and 12) and several times in a row of Bodhisattvas generally

eight in number (also in Cave Nos. 11 and 12). In all these cases Maitreya either carry a nāgakesara flower or a stalk of nāgakesara buds(105).

There are three shrines in the second floor of Cave No. 11. In the left shrine Maitreya is represented on the extreme right among three standing Bodhisattvas carved on the left wall. His headgear is represented uniquely with a jaṭāmukuta(fig. 234) while the other Bodhisattvas are shown with a high conical crown. In front of the hair arrangement of Maitreya is a stūpa. His right hand carries a small flower which undoubtedly is a nāgakesara flower. The presence of the particular flower type leads the attribution of a date to the sculpture earlier than the Buddha maṇḍala in which Maitreya is represented with the stalk of nāgakesara buds. Above each Bodhisattva, three on the same wall and another three on the opposite wall, are representations of the Dhyāni Buddhas in separate compartments.

Almost the same arrangement is found in the shrine on the right side opposite to the above shrine. Here too, Maitreya (fig. 235) is represented standing on the extreme right among three Bodhisattvas on the left wall. His hair is arranged in jaṭāmukuta with a stūpa in front of it. The nāgakesara flower is held in the left hand here, whereas the previous image of Maitreya has the same in the right hand.

In the main shrine of the second floor of Cave No. 12, we see a standing image of Maitreya (fig. 236) in a group of



Bodhisattvas, four on each side of the shrine wall. He is the fourth from the left among the four Bodhisattvas represented on the left wall. Here, too, he is the only one having jaṭāmukūṭa hair arrangement while seven Bodhisattva images are shown with the conical headgear. The emblematic stūpa is carved in front of the jaṭāmukūṭa. His right hand holds a small object which understandably is a nāgakesara flower, while the left hand is kept akimbo.

In the shrine of the first floor (ground floor) of the Cave No. 12 are a group of eight Bodhisattvas, four on each side of the shrine walls. Here, all the Bodhisattvas are seated in ardhaparyāṅkāśana. The third from the left among four seated Bodhisattvas on the left side of the wall is Maitreya (fig. 237). His right hand is kept on the right knee, while the left hand is kept behind the folded left leg and holds a stalk of nāgakesara buds. The type of nāgakesara buds is very similar to the natural buds (see the fig. 233), compared to that of the dvārapāla Maitreya of the fig. 232. The type of nāgakesara buds is a strong evidence for the image (or the entire group of images in the shrine) being contemporary to the Buddha maṇḍala.

In the noverian maṇḍala, he is always shown on the top of the extreme right of the scheme. Like in the case of other Bodhisattvas, he is shown seated in the ardhaparyāṅkāśana on a lotus seat. Among all the six noverian maṇḍala at Ellora, Maitreya holds a stalk of nāgakesara buds in the left hand. Such a maṇḍala may be the

latest among the Buddhist sculpture at Ellora, even if we consider only the nāgakesara-buds in the iconographical programme of Buddhist Ellora apart from the stylistic considerations. The biggest, and perhaps the well carved maṇḍala must be the one in the third corridor of the ground floor of Cave No. 12. Maitreya, (fig. 238) is represented on the right end of the uppermost row in the maṇḍala. The jaṭāmukuta hair arrangement cannot be used as an indication of Maitreya, since many Bodhisattvas here have jaṭāmukuta. The only possible indication for identifying this image as Maitreya is the nāgakesara-buds held in the left hand of the image.

At this point of our study, it is necessary to ask the question regarding the role of Maitreya in the group of Bodhisattvas or in the Buddha maṇḍala. To get to the answer it is essential to know the identities of the Bodhisattvas who accompany Maitreya.

Bunjin Nanjio suggests that the eight Bodhisattva in noverian maṇḍala are the eight great principal sons of Buddha and reads them, starting from the top row to the bottom row, from right to left as Durgatiparisodhana, Akasagarbha, Kshitigarbha, Sāmantabhadra, the Buddha triad, Mahasthanaprapta, Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara and Manjusri(106). R.S. Gupte suggests the names of the eight Bodhisattvas represented in the maṇḍala as follows; Rakta-Lokeśvara, Sthiracakra, Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Jnanaketu, Lokanatha and Mañjusrī(107). Lokesh Chandra, on

the other hand, suggests their names as Manjuḥosa, Kṣhitigarbha, Akasagarbha, Sarva-nivaraṇa-ṣaṅkambhin, Avalokiteśvara, Sāmantabhadra, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī(108). Lokesh Chandra argues that the Buddha maṇḍalās at Ellora "thus are the early form of the Abhisambodhi Vairocana maṇḍala which pertains to the school of Yoga-tantras." (109) All of the above suggestions, however, seems to have problems somewhere or the other. The suggestion made by Bunyin Nanjio does not go along with the iconography seen in the sculptural representations. Except Mañjuśrī, none of his identification seems to hold true. The problem in R.S. Gupte's suggestion is that no such maṇḍala has been found in the Buddhist literature. On the other hand, the maṇḍala suggested by Lokesh Chandra reveals that the arrangement is different from that of the sculptural representation. Moreover, according to the Sino Japanese tradition that he followed, the central Buddha is the Abhisambhodi Vairocana and should have the abhaya mudrā(110). Even though all the noverian maṇḍalās are shown with the central Buddha in dhyāna mudrā(111), there are still some maṇḍalās with the Buddha in bhūmiśpasa mudrā(112).

Considering textual descriptions on Bodhisattva iconography the most probable identification of the Bodhisattvas in the Buddha maṇḍala seems to be the group of the eight principal Bodhisattvas which go close to Lokesh Chandra's suggestion. Only his suggestion regarding the arrangement of the upper Bodhisattva group has to be

changed(113). Thus, the most suggestive identification of the Bodhisattva images in the maṇḍala (for instance figs. 239 and 240) is as follows (reading from left to the right and top to bottom);

Ākāśagarbha(114), Sāmantabhadra(115), Maitreya,  
Avalokiteśvara, (The Buddhist triad), Vajrapāṇi,  
Sarvanivāraṇaviskambin(116), Kshitigarba(117), Mañjuśrī.

With one exception all the five maṇḍalās found at Ellora are arranged in the above composition(118). The exceptional case is observed in the second floor of Cave No. 12 (fig. 241). This is the smallest and simplest maṇḍala at Ellora. On top row is Avalokiteśvara-Buddha-Manjushri; the middle row may represent Aksagarbha(?)-Kshitigarba(?)-Maitreya; and the bottom row may represent Sarvani-varanaviskambin -Sāmantabhadra -Vajrapāṇi. Such irregularity in the arrangement may suggest the date of the maṇḍala found in Cave 12 as earlier than the other maṇḍālas. Above one maṇḍala (fig. 240) is a group of three goddesses whose identification await further research in connection with the Buddha maṇḍala.

These eight Bodhisattvas also appear in the Buddhist shrine where the Buddhist triad appears on the backwall and two groups of Bodhisattvas appear on both the sides of the shrine wall. Due to the difference in the arrangement between the Buddha maṇḍala and the shrine arrangement, the previous scholars fail to connect both of them into one identical group.

In the left shrine of the second floor of Cave No. 11 we find a representation of the Buddhist triad and six Bodhisattvas. The Buddhist triad group on the inner wall of the shrine is identical with the composition of a row of Buddha maṇḍala i.e., Avalokiteśvara-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi. The Bodhisattvas on the left side wall are again arranged parallel to the Bodhisattvas in the upper row of the Buddha maṇḍala, i.e., Ākāśagarbha-Sāmantabhadra-Maitreya (fig. 242). On the other side wall, we find three Bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī-Kṣhitigarbha-Sarvanivāraṇaviskambhin (fig. 243), the group which is arranged in the lower row of the Buddha maṇḍala. Thus, it is obvious that this shrine is a three dimensional form of the Buddha maṇḍala with the same eight Bodhisattvas that we have named in the Buddha maṇḍala (119).

The main shrine in the ground floor of Cave No. 12, too, reveals an identical group of eight Bodhisattvas but arranged somewhat differently from that of the above shrine. Here, an image of Buddha in dharmacakra pravartana mudrā solely occupies the inner wall, while the left side of the shrine wall is occupied by four seated Bodhisattvas (fig. 244) and the other side wall by other group of four Bodhisattvas (fig. 245). Although it looks different from that of the previous shrine, the basic arrangement remain the same. The innermost Bodhisattva on the left shrine of the wall is Avalokiteśvara, while the innermost Bodhisattva on the right side of the shrine wall is Vajrapāṇi. These two Bodhisattvas actually belong to the main Buddha, so to

derive a composition of the Avalokiteśvara-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi triad which is equibalanced to the middle row of the Buddha maṇḍala. The other three Bodhisattvas except the image of Avalokiteśvara whose head is damaged (fig. 244) on the left side of the shrine wall, are Akasagarbha-Samantabhadra-Maitreya, the group which is shown on the upper row of the Buddha maṇḍala. The Bodhisattvas on the right side of the shrine wall (fig. 245) are (reading from the left): Vajrapāṇi which has been taken as a part of the central Buddhist group and then Kshitigarbha(?)-Mañjuśrī-Sarvanivāraṇaviskambhin(?)(120).

In this connection, an interesting observation has been made by A. Getty. According to her, there are eight Bodhisattvas, all of which are identical with our group represented "on either sides of an important divinity" in the Northern Buddhist countries(121). However, the system of the arrangement does not confirm with the groups observed at Ellora(122).

A confusion may arise when we look at the arrangement of Bodhisattvas in the main shrine of the second floor, Cave No. 12. Here, two Bodhisattvas appear in addition to the previous groups of Bodhisattvas, while the rest of the Bodhisattvas are arranged in the same way with the left shrine of the second floor of Cave No. 2 (see the figs. 242 and 243). The inner wall of the shrine is occupied by a huge seated Buddha in bhūmiśparśa mudrā and two Bodhisattva attendants, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, and this triad

corresponds to that of the middle row of the Buddha maṇḍala. On the left side wall of the shrine is four standing Bodhisattvas, except the left most Bodhisattva other three Bodhisattvas are Akṣagarbha-Sāmantabhada-Maitreya (fig. 246), the group of which is found in the top row of the Buddha mandala (see fig. 240 and 241). On the right side wall is another group of four Bodhisattvas; except the rightmost Bodhisattva, others are Mañjusrī-Kṣitigarba-Sarvanivārṇaviskambin group (fig. 247). The two Bodhisattvas are unidentifiable at the present state of our knowledge, but others are undoubtedly comparable to the Bodhisattva arrangement of the noverian maṇḍala.

The main Buddha images in the above mentioned shrines are depicted either with bhūmisparśa mudrā as in the left and right shrines of the second floor, Cave No. 11, or dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, as in the shrine of the first floor, Cave No. 12. According to Tantric tradition, the bhūmisparśa mudrā is related with the Dhyāni Buddha, Aksobhya and the dharmacakra with that of Vairocara. If we accept the fact that the above examples of Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist shrine as three dimensional representation of the maṇḍala, we have here three types of mudrā of the central Buddha; i.e., dhyāna mudrā, bhūmisparśa mudrā and dharmacakra pravartana mudrā. Thus the identification of the central Buddha as Vairocara needs more careful study(123). What is certain at this moment is that these eight Dhyāni Bodhisattvas in the shrines are the same

Bodhisattvas of the Buddha maṇḍala.

Concerning the role of Maitreya in such groups of eight Bodhisattvas it is evident that now only one Mānushī Bodhisattva, that is Maitreya, become one of the innumerable Dhyāni Bodhisattvas of the Tantric Buddhism(124).

Maitreya even appears in a group of three Bodhisattvas and three Śaktīs in the chamber at the right end of the verandah of the second floor, Cave No. 11. He stands on the right wall of the chamber, the first from the inner side of the chamber among three standing Bodhisattvas(125). Maitreya also appears with Avalokiteśvara and Jambhala (fig. 248) on the left side of the shrine wall of Cave no. 6. In the middle is a seated Jambhala in ardha-paryankasana, on his left is Avalokiteśvara with a japa mālā in the right hand and a lotus flower in the left, on the other side of the Jambhala is Maitreya with nāgakesara flower in the right hand. It is difficult to speculate the meaning of such triad. The probable suggestion may be that the three images represent Mercy, Wealth, Wisdom which every earthly being wishes to acquire.

The above survey of Maitreya images at Ellora reveals the following points: Firstly, Maitreya here took the bodhisattva ornamentation breaking the popular tradition of ascetic type of Maitreya in Western Deccan. Secondly, the change does not seem to have been the artistic revival of the Maitreya iconography of Kushana period, but was due to the change in the belief system. Thirdly, the emphasis on



Maitreya here, seems have been reduced to one of the eight principal Bodhisattvas. Fourthly, the cause for such a change is due to the introduction of Tantric Buddhism as we have observed. This later type of Maitreya image is also found at other Buddhist sites such as Aurangabad, Kanheri and even at Ajanta where the sculptural activity is believed to have ended by the late fifth or early sixth century A.D.(126).

#### V-6-B. THE LATER PHASE OF AURANGABAD

The Cave Nos. 6, 7, and 9, at Aurangabad reveal a strong influence of Tantrayāna Buddhism, as is indicated by the sculptural representation of female goddesses and multiple handed deities. The Bodhisattva iconography of these caves at Aurangabad is an extraordinarily complicated subject and the reading of Maitreya image of this site require somewhat different methodology from the one so far followed.

The most problematic phenomena in the study of Bodhisattva iconography here is the indistinctive features of Bodhisattvas except Avalokitesvara. On both the sides of the inner wall of the main hall in Cave No. 9 are two dvārapāla Bodhisattvas having almost identical features (fig. 249 is on the left side and the fig. 250 is on the right)(127). Each of them has elaborate hair-do, the type of which differs from jaṭāmukuta or conical type. Both are

ornated with identical ornamentations and a sash around the hip. Moreover, each of them has a small flower in the right hand and the left hand is on the sash knot. Perhaps the only difference between them is the radiating nimbus-like decoration behind the head of the fig. 249, while the other Bodhisattvas does not have it. This feature has been observed in the Padmapāṇi image from Sanchi (fig. 139), and also at Bagh (fig. 156), and in the Cave No. 2 at Aurangabad itself (fig. 191). Thus, comparing this pair with the dvārapāla pair in Cave No. 2, (the figs. 190 and 191), we may be tempted to identify the fig. 249 as Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya for the fig. 250. But, the problem for such identification is that there is a long time gap between this pair carved in Tantric period, and the pair in the Cave No. 2, which was considered as one of the earliest in Aurangabad sculpture, during which period Avalokiteśvara appeared with ornamentations and Maitreya appeared in ascetic features. Moreover, the Avalokiteśvara images of Tantric period at Aurangabad seem to have neither ornamentations nor a flower, but appears in ascetic form with long stem of lotus.

In Cave No. 7, is another pair of dvārapāla Bodhisattvas, the one on the left side is Astamahābhaya tārāṇa form of Avalokiteśvara (fig. 251), and the other Bodhisattva is shown with the identical feature as in the fig. 250. Huntington suggests Vajrapāṇi-Maṅjuśrī for the Bodhisattva (fig. 252) on the other side of the entrance (128).

The confusion arises more when we look at another pair of dvārapāla Bodhisattvas in Cave No. 6 (fig. 253 for the dvarapala on the left side and fig. 254 for the dvārapāla the right). As was the case in the dvārapāla pair in Cave No. 9, at Aurangabad both the Bodhisattvas here are almost identical to each other with whole features similar to the Bodhisattva on of the fig. 250. Here, however, the ruffled halo like decoration which is seen behind the head of the left side Bodhisattva in Cave 9 (fig. 249) is absent and the right side Bodhisattva holds an additional object, vajra, in his left hand. Huntington is of the opinion that the left side Bodhisattva (fig. 253), represents Avalokiteśvara and the Bodhisattva on the other side (fig. 254), represents Vajrapāṇi(129). His reading of Avalokiteśvara, however is questionable with the same reason mentioned earlier that the Avalokiteśvara images of this period do not have ornamentation and holds a long stem of lotus. Similarly, his reading of 'Padmapāṇi' and 'Vajrapāṇi' for the two Bodhisattvas in front of inner side cells of the cave (fig. 255 for the left cell and fig. 256 for the other cell) is questionable(130). As shown here, except the image of Avalokiteśvara of fig. 251, all the images have similar iconographical features with elaborate hair-do, heavy ornamentations, small flower(s) in hand and the other hand on the sash knot.

Even though it is not with absolute evidence, the present researcher is of the opinion that the Bodhisattva

pair in the figs. 255 and 256 represent Maitreya-Vajrapāṇi pair with following relative evidence. Firstly, Maitreya images of this period do have ornamentation and often carry a small flower as in the case of fig. 228, 229, 230, 234, 235, and 236. Secondly, Maitreya is often paired with Vajrapāṇi in identical position as shown in the figs. 221, 222, and 223. It is worthy to note the stūpa design in front of the left side Bodhisattva whom we identify as Maitreya. For the fig. 253 and 254, too, we can suggest the same name with the same reasons given above. The Bodhisattva on the right side (fig. 254), clearly holds a vajra in the left hand. The figs. 251 and 252 can be suggested as Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya pair with the following criteria. Firstly, there is no presently available evidence that the image with the "empty hand" represents Vajrapāṇi who is generally identifiable when there is a vajra in hand as in fig. 254. Secondly, Maitreya often appears as a dvārapāla on the right side of shrine entrance pairing with Avalokiteśvara on the other side. The Maitreya images seen in the figs. 229, 230 and 231 are all paired with Avalokiteśvara and are seen with a small flower in their right hand and the 'empty left hand'. The subsidiary attendant of Maitreya illustrated in the fig. 231 are much in the same way as that in the fig. 252. For the identification of the fig. 249 and 250, we still need more careful investigation and may not be easily decipherable at the present moment. What we can presume is that they

represent two different Bodhisattva and neither of them represents Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

According to the iconographical programme shown at Buddhist Ellora, both Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya with the bodhisattva ornamentation appear only during later phase of the development which is around the beginning of the eighth century A.D., which is too late a date for the Aurangabad sculptures. The Tantric phase of Aurangabad may be roughly contemporary with the middle phase of Buddhist Ellora that fall into the first half of the seventh century A.D. The figs. 219 to 231 are the examples of this period at Ellora.

Perhaps, the most clear example that reveals the characteristic features of Ellora triad at Aurangabad is the one carved on the right side wall of the hall located at the left most side of the Cave No. 9 (fig. 257). Here, the Buddha is flanked by two Bodhisattvas whose features are almost identical with Maitreya Vajrapāṇi pair of the figs. 221-223 at Ellora. The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha has the jaṭāmukuṭa in front of which is a prominent stūpa. He is adorned with ornamentation and has the 'empty left hand', both of which are characteristics of Maitreya images at Ellora. Along with the features of the Buddha, seated in padmāsana and dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, this triad goes almost perfectly well with that of the fig. 221, both in style and iconographical features.

Despite the existence of certain examples that reveal close relationship between Aurangabad and the Buddhist art

of Ellora, there are localized stylistic and iconographical features at Aurangabad which we have observed so far. Thus, the artists who worked at Aurangabad might have belonged to different artisan guild from that of Ellora, however they might have shared a common artistic tradition.

#### V-6-C. THE LATER PHASE OF AJANTA:

Despite the theory that the sculptural activity of Ajanta ended by the end of the fifth or the early sixth century A.D., the later developed type of Maitreya, that we have assigned to the early seventh century A.D. is in fact seen at Ajanta.

There are two side chambers in front of the chaitya hall No. 19 at Ajanta and in each of them is the Buddhist triad that attracts special attention. The triad in the left side of the chamber is seen with the Buddha at the centre and two bejewelled Bodhisattva on either sides (fig. 258). What is curious here is that the Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha has usual iconographical features of Maitreya, i.e., jaṭāmukuta and japa mālā in the hand and also ornamentations which is never seen in the early phase of iconographical programme at Ajanta. The dominant type of Maitreya during this period was the ascetic type, devoid of the bodhisattva ornamentations.

The triad in the chamber opposite to the above is also composed with similar Bodhisattvas (fig. 259); the one on

the right side of the Buddha has the jaṭāmukuta hair arrangement and ornamentations, the Bodhisattva on the other side has crown and ornamentations. The above Bodhisattva with jaṭāmukuta in both the triad groups cannot be Avalokiteśvara for they have no lotus in their hands, but most probably they are Maitreya with the later developed features especially, the ornamentation. The treatment of the flying couples which are comparable with those of Ellora, may also suggest their later date(131).

Another controversial triad group is observed in the left side cell outside the varandah, on the second floor of Cave No. 6 (fig. 260 and 261). Here both the Bodhisattvas have elaborate hair arrangement with jaṭāmukuta and have bodhisattva ornamentations. Due to the absence of any attribute in their hands, the identification of them are extremely difficult. The probable name for them, most probably would be Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi(?) Maitreya pair. The doubt about the identification of Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, however lead us to conclude that the figure could be Avalokiteśvara; for the Avalokiteśvara in the opposite cell demonstrates ascetic feature clearly, which is very different from the above image. Although the identification of Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha(fig. 260) has some problem, the one on the other side(fig. 261) seems to be Maitreya for he has jaṭāmukuta hair arrangement and the long hair hanging down on the shoulders. It seems improbable that the sculptural activity ceased along with

the fall of Vakataka dynasty at Ajanta, on the contrary it can be perceived that religious activity still continued at the site. There could have always been chances of the adoption of new iconography, even though it might have been in meagre scale. The above examples could be such later adaptations.

#### V-6-D. THE LATER PHASE AT KANHERI

As in the case at Aurangabad and Ajanta, the identification of the ornated Bodhisattva Maitreya at Kanheri, where Tantric Buddhism has left its clear impact, is by no means easy, whereas Avalokiteśvara images here often show the latest feature, namely the Bodhisattva ornamentation. Here, the only discernible feature of the late Maitreya image type may be that of jaṭāmukuta.

The Buddhist triad on the left side wall of Cave No. 67 is composed of Maitreya-Buddha-Avalokiteśvara (fig. 262). Both the Bodhisattvas here are shown with jaṭāmukuta and ornamentation and hold chauri in their right hands. The left hand of Maitreya is kept on the sash-knot without any attribute, while Avalokiteśvara holds a stem of padma in the left hand. The ornamentation of Avalokiteśvara undoubtedly suggests its late date, contemporary with Cave No. 11 and 12 at Ellora.

Except the above images it is extremely difficult to trace any more of ornated Bodhisattva Maitreya at Kanheri.



The rarity of such image type seems to suggest the unpopularity of this deity in this site.

Lastly, it is interesting to observe a Buddhist triad which has uncommon Bodhisattva figures in it (fig. 263). The Buddha seated in pralambapādāsana with dharmacakra pravartana mudrā, is flanked by two Bodhisattvas, each of whom has a stem of padma in their left hands. The Bodhisattva on the left side of the Buddha is clearly recognizable as Avalokiteśvara with the ascetic features i.e., jaṭāmukuta and no ornamentation. The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha, on the other hand, is characterized by kingly attire, and he too holds the same kind of padma as his counter Bodhisattva. The type of crown he wears is certainly uncommon to any of the Bodhisattvas known to us from this region and padma with the long stem has never been associated with any of the Bodhisattvas other than Avalokiteśvara.

Perhaps, the identification of this unusual image may be confirmed by comparing the fig. 162 having Maitreya image in it, whose identification is certain since it is placed along with the seven past Manūshi Buddhas. The flower in the hand of Maitreya here is almost duplication of the flower in hands of Bodhisattva attendant under discussion and such closeness nevertheless permit to read the Bodhisattva attendant as Maitreya. The crown type with triśikha also help the above reading. The date of the late phase of Kanheri sculpture is of speculation since the

iconographical scheme applied here is quite haphazard; often later sculptures carry the earlier features. For instance, the ornated type of Avalokitesvara here does have the emblematic stūpa which generally appears with the ascetic type of Avalokitesvara according to the iconographical programme seen at Nasik and Ellora. The ascetic type of Avalokitesvara also co-exist along with the introduction of the ornated type of Avalokitesvara. Thus one must be very cautious while interpreting the Maitreya images and its chronology at Kanheri.

None of the above sites; Aurangabad, Ajanta and Kanheri have Maitreya images with nāgakesara-buds that is popularly seen in the last phase of Buddhist sculptures at Ellora. To a large extent the ornated type of Maitreya images found outside Ellora may be dated to the seventh century A.D.

To conclude, the study of Maitreya images in Western Deccan reveals various stages of development. First stage is characterized by the strong influence of Gupta Sarnath tradition with the emphasis on ascetic features and this was seen centred at Ajanta. As seen in the Maitreya image at Aurangabad (fig. 189), the impact of Gupta period Mathura is also felt to a certain extent.

With the coming of ascetic type of Avalokitesvara the Bodhisattva iconography of Western Deccan gain its own characteristics. Perhaps, the highest achievement of the Deccan artists is the introduction of the emblematic stūpa which was initially meant for the ascetic Bodhisattvas,

namely Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara. The stūpa became Maitreya's specific emblem, when Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara took the figure of Amitābha Buddha instead of the stūpa as is observable at Nasik. Admittedly, the reading of the stūpa as an indication of its beholder being Maitreya needs cautious consideration in Western Deccan. Similarly, ascetic feature of Maitreya and Padmapāṇi should be understood in terms of relative sequence. Maitreya appears in the ascetic feature, following Sarnath tradition, until the coming of the Tantric Buddhism.

One should not predict that the ascetic feature as a characteristics of Avalokiteśvara while discarding the same feature for Maitreya. In this context, the general belief that the kamaṇḍalu in the art of Western Deccan is more closely associated with Avalokiteśvara needs to be revised; throughout the first and the second phases, the kamaṇḍalu had maintained its importance except when he is represented as the eighth Mānushi Buddha. It is only in the last phase that the kamaṇḍalu was replaced by the nāgakesara flower at Ellora. On the contrary, only a few images of Padmapāṇi show the kamaṇḍalu, however it never appears singularly but always with the combination of lotus flower.

The iconography of Maitreya changed dramatically from the ascetic Bodhisattva to the bejewelled Bodhisattva with the coming of Tantric Buddhism in Western Deccan. The chief centre of this last stage is seen at Ellora. The great invention of this period is the nāgakesara-buds which reveal

a close link between Ellora and the Eastern India during Pala-Sena period.

Before concluding the chapter, it is worth noting the possible date of the introduction of Tāntric Buddhism into Western Deccan. R.S. Gupte gives the credit for spreading Tantra in Western India to Mahasiddha Saraha, also known as Sarahapada or Rahulabhadra(132). He suggests the middle of the later half of the seventh century A.D. for the coming of Tantric tradition into Western Deccan(133). However, it is impossible to deny the existence of Tāntric elements in Western Deccan before the coming of Mahāsiddha Saraha. It is hard to believe that a visit of one religious guru with a new ideal could influence the entire region of Western Deccan, where, according to Gupte's supposition, knew no mystic Tantricism.

The Buddhist of Western Deccan most probably were aware of the new ideal long before Saraha's visit; it might have undergone gradual development, secret learning, careful experience and final adoption. Such changes were not only limited to Buddhism but was a pan-Indian religious movement. From the end of Gupta period onwards, most of the religions in India came into contact with ideas of magic and sexual mysticism and became theistic.

The experimental stage might have taken place around the end of the sixth or the early seventh century A.D., the last phase of Nasik and Aurangabad, the middle phase of Kanheri and the early phase of Ellora may belong to this

period. The characteristics of this phase is the adoption of female śaktīs for the already existing Bodhisattvas.

Saraha's visit to this region might have provoked the practice of Tantric Buddhism greatly. In sculpture a number of Bodhisattvas, goddesses and elaborate Buddhist maṇḍalas came to be introduced during the first half of the eighth century A.D. as seen in Cave Nos. 11 and 12 at Ellora. The iconographical characteristics of the Buddhist images in the above two caves are quite close to those of the Tantric images of Pala Sena period.

In the context of the general development of iconographic programme, the introduction of Tantric iconography at Ellora; probably is earlier than what Gupte has suggested since according to this study the date for the introduction of the bejewelled type of Maitreya goes back to the early seventh century A.D.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 The important sites for the study of Buddhist iconography in Western Deccan are, Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad, Nasik, Karla, Kanheri, Mahakali, Bagh, Kuda and Mahada.
- 2 The stylistic analysis of Gupta art at Mathura and other centres has received greater attention from important scholars like S. Kramrisch(1933), H. Zimmer(1955), J. Williams (1982), Harle (1974). J. Williams is of the opinion that "By the end of the fourth century A.D. art of Mathura took a change in style; becoming a reflection or evocation of the divinity rather than playing the previous role of icon or actual divine presence. .... and by the middle of fifth century we see a dramatic change in style; it obtains a sense of buoyancy and elevation, benefitting the aloof expression of the face." (1982), p. 30.
- 3 A standing image of Nāga, in the Sanchi Museum is clearly shown with a padma in the right hand and a kamaṇḍalu in the left hand.
- 4 Czuma states that "Bodhisattva figures in the Mathura school have a somewhat different function than they do in Gandhara. They are at least in the earlier phase of Mathura sculpture, equal to deities attending Buddha and are often depicted as worshippers or chauri bearers rather than divinities in their own right." Czuma (1985), p. 75.
- 5 J. Marshall . and A. Foucher(1940), p. 250, pl. 70 a-d.
- 6 After an inscription on the railing of the stūpa dated "dated G.E. 131 (A.D. 450/1)", J. Williams points out "a probable terminus

- given for these images, for it records the donation of a lamp in the place where the four Buddhas are seated." J. Williams (1982), pp. 84-85.
- 7 S. Huntington remarks that "Clearly some differentiation is intended among the figures in spite of their considerable similarity." (1971), p. 57.
  - 8 The most famous example of such triad is on the Kanishka reliquary found at Shah-ji-Dheri, now in the Peshawar Museum (Acc. No. 452).
  - 9 We are, indeed, not in a position to determine whether those pair of attendants, one of whom is shown with a vajra, are of Indra and Brahmā, or the representation of Vajrapāṇi and Padmapāṇi. The Buddhist triad from Ahicchatra, dated to the 32nd year of Kanishka, is shown with a vajra who stands on the right hand side of the Buddha and a Padmapāṇi on the other side. The present researcher is in opinion that the counter attendant of Vajrapāṇi at least in Marhura art, represents Bodhisattva Siddhārtha rather than Brahma, for they wear turban and ornamentation invariably. Such triad groups are illustrated in; Snellgrove (1978), pl. 30, Sharma (1984), Czuma (1985), pl. 12.
  - 10 J. Williams states that "only eight Bodhisattva images from Gupta Sarnath are known throughout the world." (1982), p. 79. Around five-hundred Buddhist images have been found from Gupta Sarnath.
  - 11 Ibid. p. 79. She followed Sahni's identification who read the image on the head as Amogashiddhi on the basis of the gesture, abhaya mudrā.
  - 12 A similar image illustrated in J. Williams (1982), fig. 97, has been identified as Avalokitesvara and is given the year 465-485

A.D. by J. Williams. Other similar type of Avalokiteśvara images are; in the National Museum Delhi (Acc. No. 49.148, and No. 59.527); one perhaps dated later is in the Archeological Museum, Sarnath.

- 13 J. Williams suggests that due to the broken condition the gesture can be read it in three different ways; i.e., abhaya mudrā, bhūmisparśa mudrā, and dhyāna mudrā. It could however, be only abhaya mudrā with one clear evidence, the prominent line of the right thigh; in a small relief such as this clear outer line on the folded leg would not have been possibly seen, if the hand was carved downward either in bhūmisparśa mudrā or in dhyāna mudrā.
- 14 In the case of the fig. 40 the abhaya mudrā of the emblematic Buddha do not necessarily mean the mudrā of Amoghasiddhi, but the teaching gesture.
- 15 Among them, four have the central standing Buddha and most of the others are not in proper stele of the Buddhist triad but a part of the stele depicting the life of Śākyamuni Buddha.
- 16 Similar representation of Bodhisattvas is shown in the standing Buddha image, in the Archeological Museum, Sarnath (Acc. No. 341).
- 17 Similar representation is illustrated in J. Williams' (1982), pl. 259; P. Pal's (1988), p. 43 - fig. 6; Weiner's (1977), pl. 40; also a stele in the Archeological Museum, Sarnath (Acc. No. 261).
- 18 It is rather surprising to have the images of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara on the representation of the Great Miracle of Srāvastī, the legend relate Brahmā and Indra as the two divinities attending the miracle. In the Dharmaguptaka-vinaya informs us



thus; ".... On the fourteenth day, a donor presented a handful of flowers to the Lord, after smelling them, he threw them into air. By the supernatural power of the Buddha, they turned into fourteen thousand pavilions, each with a flower pedestal. In each pavilion there was a seated Buddha. On the left side and the right hand sides were Śakra and Brahma with their hands placed together in veneration. .. ...." Dharmaguptaka-vinaya, LI-950 a. The translation is by Ju-hyung Rhi's (1991), pp. 235-36. Due to such passages, Foucher suggested that the Bodhisattva attendants in the Buddhist triad of Gandhara art as Brahmā and Indra. As his theory holds no more truth the two attendants of the Buddha in the present example cannot be identified as Brahmā and Indra. Moreover, the legendary theory proposed by Soper, that the iconography of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara have been derived from that of Brahmā and Indra is not applicable here.

- 19 Examples of this are; a seated image of Rishabhanatha from Kankalitila, in the Mathura Museum (Acc. No. B. 6); a seated image of Rishabhanatha, in the Mathura Museum (Acc. No. J. 107); a seated image of Tirthankara from Mathura, in the Lucknow Museum (Acc. No. J. 119); a standing Neminātha image from Kankalitila, now in Lucknow Museum (Acc. No. 121).
- 20 M. E. Leese (1991), p. 138.
- 21 The important places where the images of Maitreya are seen with the mālā in hand are Western Deccan, Kashmir, Eastern India, and Tamil country of the later period.
- 22 Mallmann(1948), pp. 266 and 270. Saunders also states that 'the origin of the rosary as an attribute of Avalokiteśvara would seem

to be in the Lotus of the Good Law, where the Bodhisattva Ākasamati, addressing the Buddha, speaks of a wonderful pearl necklace presented to the Bodhisattva Kannon." Saunders (1960), p. 176. He referred Beal's A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese. London, Trubner, 1871 p. 393.

- 23 According to Shingon tradition, "the short rosary of eighteen beads symbolized the Eight arhats and the 108 beads symbolized the 108 passions or the 108 divinities or the 108 knowledges." Saunders (1960), p. 117. See also Soothill's (1937), p. 175 a.
- 24 Saunders (1960), p. 176.
- 25 Nispannayogāvalī. p.6 and 68, Sādhanaṃālā p.560.
- 26 A wonderful comparison comes from Nasik; where the Maitreya are shown with a long stem (of flower?), the tip of the top end terminates without any trace of flower on it. There are illustrated here in figs. 212 and 213.
- 27 There is possibility of its identity as Bodhisattva Siddhārthara, however, we cannot decide on the basis of definite evidences and the present state of our knowledge.
- 28 "Gyaraspur situated 40 kilometres west of Vidisa and located on what was probably a trade route that led north along the Betwa river". J. Williams (1982), p. 158.
- 29 J. Williams suggests the probable date of the works to the late sixth or early seventh century on the basis of paleographical grounds. (1982), p. 164.
- 30 The triad on the western side of the stūpa is composed by the Buddha seated in padmāsana with dharmacakra pravartana mudrā and on the pedestal is a cakra flanked by a deer and a lion at both

the ends. Maitreya stands on the right side of the Buddha. On the other side stands the image of Padmapāṇi holding the stem of lotus in the left hand. His hair is arranged in jaṭāmukuta with a seated Buddha in it. The Buddha image on the eastern side of the stupa is seated in padmāsana with dhyāni mudrā and has a deer and a lion at both the corner. Here, Avalokitesvara stands on the right side of the Buddha, while Maitreya is on the other side. Both the Bodhisattvas are characterized without any ornaments.

- 31 The triad on the southern side of the stūpa is shown with the seated Buddha in varada mudrā seated on a stool. The Bodhisattva on the right side of the Buddha is Padmapāṇi who can be recognized by lotus flower in the left hand. A tiny seated image of the Buddha in dhyāna mudrā is shown in front of the jaṭāmukuta and is usually identified as the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha. The counterpart Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi is characterized by a crown, ornaments and vajra in the right hand. The left hand is damaged, but it might have kept on the sash knot.
- 32 The triad on the northern side of the stūpa has a Buddha in dhyāna mudrā, seated on the lotus seat and flanked by two nāgas. On both sides stands Bodhisattvas. The image on the right side must be Vajrapāṇi judging from the ornaments, and the image on the other side is Padmapāṇi since he has a lotus in the left hand. The Padmapāṇi wears antelope skin, and has a tiny seated Buddha in front of the jaṭāmukuta. He is devoid of any ornaments.
- 33 Vogel (1927), p. 35.
- 34 Ibid. p. 36.
- 35 The figure holding the lotus on the left side wall has restored

head, the elbow of the right hand, and the lower part of the body.  
 He might have originally had a sash around the hip and the left  
 hand might have been placed on sash knot.

36 Vogel (1927), p. 32.

37 Grunwadel (1901), p. 193. fig. 141.

38 Vogel (1927), p. 35.

39 See pp. 116-121.

40 They are; Ajanta - two in the second floor of Cave No.6(fig. 165),  
 one in Cave No. 7, one on the lintel of the main entrance of Cave  
 No.17 (fig. 157), one on the facade of Cave No.19(fig. 158), one  
 in Cave No. 22 (fig. 157). five in Cave No.26(three on the facade,  
 one on the freize of caitya hall and one on the left wall of the  
 hall)(fig. 159); Kanheri-one in Cave No. 2(fig. 162), one in Cave  
 No.3 (fig. 163) one in Cave No. 41 and one in Cave No. 67  
 (fig. 167); Ellora - one on the side wall of the second floor  
 balcony(fig. 167).

41 Maitreya images with the right hand in abhaya mudrā are shown in:  
 Cave No. 2, Kanheri (fig. 162); inside the caitya hall of Cave  
 No. 26, Ajanta (fig. 159); three on the facade of the Cave No. 26,  
 Ajanta.

42 Among them five are illustrated in the figs. 163-167 and the  
 remaining are in Cave No. 6, Ajanta; Cave No. 41, Kanheri.

43 The mudrā of this famous Maitreya image has been inevitably read  
 as dhyāna mudrā, whereas in real. it shows something like varada  
mudrā; the right hand is brought to a little above the right knee  
 and the palm turned upwards. The position of the bracelet around  
 the right wrist clearly indicate the placement of the right hand

near the knee but not the position of dhyaṇa mudrā. The bent fingers of the left hand also support the right hand which is not placed in dhaya<sup>na</sup> mudrā, but in varaḍa mudrā.

- 44 Maitreya's bodhi tree is called either nāgachampā, nāgapushpa and the flower is called nāgakesara or nāgachampā flower in literature. All of them must be referring to, however, an identical tree, which is called nowadays nāgachampā or cannon ball tree.
- 45 The names of the Buddhas are; Vipas'vī, Śikhī, Visvabhū(h), (Krakuchch/andah), Ka(naka)muni, Kāśyapa(h), Śākyamuni(h) and Maitre(yah). Only four names of the bodhi-trees are now extant, Pundarika (for Śikhī), Śirīśaḥ(for Krakuchchhanda), udum(b)a(rah) (for kanakamuni), and nyagro(dhah) (for Kāśyapa). Yazdani(1933). Vol.4. p. 27.
- 46 In our illustration the Maitreya figure is difficult to read, although there is a little trace on right end. Yazdani gives a line drawing of the same, (1933), Vol. 4. pl. I.
- 47 Benerjea (1956), p. 287. This type of crown has often been identified in association with Maitreya images in the Far Eastern countries, especially with the so-called contemplating image of Maitreya.
- 48 S. Gokhale (1991), p. 144.
- 49 This yet-to-be defined Bodhisattva is generally considered as the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, whereas the present researcher is of opinion that it may be the Buddha Siddhartha.
- 50 Nearly seven dozen of the Buddhist triads have been studied from Ajanta. Many of them, especially when it is represented on the facade of the caitya halls, do not show any specific attribute.

The most popular type seems to be Maitreya-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi triad, and the next type seems to be the triad of Padmapāṇi-Buddha-Vajrapāṇi.

- 51 Out of twenty-eight Buddhist triad groups found at Nasik, sixteen cases show the composition of Maitreya-Buddha-Padmapāṇi.
- 52 Fifteen representation of this kind of Buddhist triads have been noticed in Karla.
- 53 According to this chronological scheme, there are a few Bodhisattva groups which can be placed in the earliest group; Padmapāṇi image with a crown and ornamentation (for example, the Buddhist triad inside the shrine of Cave No. 17), and the pair of Bodhisattvas, both having crown and ornamentation (for example, the Buddhist triad in the shrine of Cave No. 1, 7, 20 and 21). There should not be any confusion why Padmapāṇi in Ajanta has two distinctive feature, one with ornaments and the other without any ornaments. It should be understood that there was an initial period before the development of their iconography. As we understand, Padmapāṇi image outside the Western Deccan had been always shown as an ornated figure with padma in hand. Perhaps, the Buddhist triad in Cave Nos. 2 and 4 may belong to the intermediate period between the initial stage and fully developed stage of Ajanta tradition. Generally speaking, all the main images (or triads) of the shrine seem to have older iconographical features than the rest of the images in the caves. Further investigation is needed for proving the above assumptions.
- 54 Ajina on the left shoulder of Maitreya has been also noticed; one in Cave No. 11 and three in Cave No. 26 (small panel above the

- Buddhist triad group on the right side of the wall).
- 55 At Ajanta, ajina is also often seen on the shoulder of Padmapāṇi; one in Cave No. 4 (in the main shrine), three in Cave No. 26 (on the facade, on the outside wall in front of the cave and in the cell attached to the far left side of the cave).
- 56 There are three such cases in Cave No. 6 (two are on the wall of the second floor, one is in the verandah-cell), one in Cave no. 4 (on the verandah wall). The assumption of the later date is made on the following reasons; firstly all the image that could have the image of the Buddha in the hair arrangement is carved below the surface of the wall level. Secondly, the ornated image of Padmapāṇi, which could be placed to an earlier date, does not have the same, but has floral design in the headdress.
- 57 They are; one in Cave No. 4 (on the left wall of the shrine), and some can also be seen on the facade of Cave No. 26.
- 58 The yet-to-be identified Bodhisattva with the 'empty hand' is often paired with Avalokiteśvara or Vajrapāṇi in the Buddhist triad. The Tāntric goddesses are also found in the later phase of Aurangabad caves.
- 59 The closest related caves at Ajanta seem to be the Cave Nos. 2, 6 and 7.
- 60 C. Berkson' suggests the name Virūḍhaka for a male figure. (1987). p. 190.
- 61 Ibid, pl90.
- 62 Grunwadel (1901), p. 193
- 63 Other two similar examples are, one in Cave No. 93 and one in Cave No. 67.

- 64 They are Caves No. 2, 15, 16, 20 and 23. The Cave Nos. 2 and 20 originally were Hīnayāna vihāras which were recarved when Māhāyāna sculptures were introduced in them. The Cave Nos. 15 and 16 are of the small cell type rather than a proper vihāra, and Cave No. 23, too, is irregular type consisting five or six cells. Archeological Survey of India listed Cave No. 23 to a group of cells among which five are noticeable. In the present work, these five cells are numbered from 23-1 from the extreme right cell to the 23-5 for the extreme left cell which is on the eastern side.
- 65 A total of twenty-eight groups of the Buddhist triads have been observed. The exact classification of the Bodhisattva attendants is not possible due to the broken condition of many of the works.
- 66 Getty (1928), p. 23. Here, Getty has confused between Kaśyapa Buddha, the predecessor of Śākyamuni Buddha, and Kaśyapa the disciple of Śākyamuni. According to Hsuang-tsang's passage it is the bhikṣu Kasyapa who is awaiting the coming of Maitreya.
- 67 G. Bhattacharyya (1980), p. 103.
- 68 Ibid. p. 108.
- 69 Ibid. His argument seems not very convincing since there is no reason that the artist need to follow a tradition only if there is secure description in the texts.
- 70 Ibid. None of the examples illustrated in the context of his explanation (figs. 2-5). seems to have tapering tenon which may possibly be confused for the stūpa.
- 71 Ibid. p. 108.
- 72 We have seen quite a few Maitreya images of earlier period having a Buddha figure in headdress. as for example the figs. 37, 145 and



161.

- 73 Furgesson and Burgess (1988) suggested a later age, without specific date and states the similarity of the sculptures at Nasik with that of Aurangabad, Ellora and Ajanta. D. Mitra (1971) roughly suggests the sixth or the seventh century A.D. for the figures of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Nagaraju (1981) suggests the date of the Buddha shrine of Cave No. 20 to about the sixth century on paleological grounds. But the iconographical features of the sculpture undoubtedly suggest a much later date.
- 74 The Mahāyāna sculptures at Karla is mostly later adoptions on the wall of Hīnayāna vihāras or caitya-gr̥has, which might have been originally excavated in the early second century A.D. See D. Mitra (1971), pp. 154-157.
- 75 R.S. Gupte, (1964), p. 70.
- 76 The probable date of these sculptures following the 'Nasik traditional composition has been proposed earlier in this chapter to the middle of the sixth century A.D. Malandra (1988) has proposed the period of 600 to 700 A.D. for the excavation of Ellora while the earlier scholarship followed later period of 450-800 A.D. In both the cases, Cave No. 2 is considered in the early group; which ultimately gives a date of circa 600 or circa 450 for the Cave No. 2. See Malandra (1988), p. 145.
- 77 The exact position of the group is on the left side of the inner wall of the horse-shoe shaped arch. The two Bodhisattvas are seated in padmasāna with their hands in dharmacakra mudrā. Maitreya image is shown on the right side of the Buddha and his

right hand displays abhaya mudrā while the left hand holds a kamāṇḍalu. The counter Bodhisattva is ornated but the vajra is not visible.

- 78 The triad inside the shrine of Cave.2 is represented vertically; the Buddha image on top. Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara at the middle and the Maitreya image at the bottom.
- 79 R. S. Gupte mentions that, "In two sculptures. Maitreya is shown holding a kalāśa in the left hand." He also states that "When he appears in this group of eight Bodhisattvas, he carries the kalāśa or is in the varada or the vitarka mudrā." R.S. Gupte (1964), p. 70. However, he gives no information of the location and the present researcher even after going through the Ellora materials several times has been unable to locate the Maitreya images having the kalāśa, as pointed out by R.S. Gupte.
- 80 This change is obvious in architecture also. This might have taken place some time in the late seventh or in the eighth century A.D., when the Tāntric Buddhism began exercising its impact on art. Such divisions, however, does not take into consideration the frequent practise of reworking by the later artists up on the early excavations.
- 81 Gupte (1964), p. 70. Due to this assumption, more than half of his identification out of the twenty-six images of Maitreya seems to have been wrongly classified and a lot of images of Maitreya have been ignored.
- 82 Ibid. p. 41. Due to the same reason R.S. Gupte identified the Bodhisattva on the right side of the shrine of Cave No. 4. as Maitreya. However. the Bodhisattva on the other side. which he

ignored due to heavy damage, still reveals that it had been very similar to the one on the right side of the Buddha; it is certainly not Avalokitesvara but ornated Bodhisattva. Thus, there is more possibility that the broken figure is that of Maitreya rather than his counterpart. This assumption is based on the conventional belief that when such pair of Bodhisattvas appears then the one on the left side of the Buddha is presumed to be Maitreya.

83 "The chief cognizance of Maitreya is the chaitya he wears in the crown". Ibid. p. 70.

84 There is one more Bodhisattva attendant with similar crown in the shrine of Cave No. 2. The design in front of this crown does not seem to relate to the shape of stūpa.

85 R.S. Gupte gives only a descriptions of the triad but omits the identification of the Bodhisattva attendants. Ibid. p. 36.

86 For more details, see pp. 326-365.

87 It is hard to believe that he ignored the clear representation of the stūpa in the jaṭāmukuta of the Bodhisattva on the right side, while reading the stūpa from the complicated design of the crown in the left side Bodhisattvas.

88 Such personification of āyud<sup>h</sup>apursha is observable from the Gupta period onwards. It could also meant to represent a simple attendant-dwarf. Such dwarfs are often represented beside the attendants of Hindu deities at Ellora.

89 R. S. Gupte (1964), p. 41.

90 The identification of this image as Vajrapāṇi is tentative and needs more careful investigation.

- 91 Getty (1928), p. 24.
- 92 B. Bhattacharyya (1958), pp. 147.
- 93 Getty (1928), p. 126.
- 94 Ibid. p. 124.
- 95 Gupte suggests that the Bodhisattva image on the right wall of the shrine of Cave No. 8 is Maitreya and the female figures on his left is Bhṛkūtī. R.Gupte(1964), p. 112. However, the Sādhana he cited in his work does not match with the figure and he made no explanation about the connection between Maitreya and Bhṛkūtī. On the other hand, it is Avalokiteśvara whom Bhṛkūtī commonly accompanies. In the chamber outside the Cave No. 11., is the image of Bhṛkūtī attending Avalokiteśvara; she is represented with four hands. the attribute that matches with the Sādhanas.
- 96 Some interesting arguments in relation with the identification have been brought out by Huntington in his "Cave six at Aurangabad: A Tantrayāna Monuments?" ed.) Joanna Williams, (1981).
- 97 This statement needs a careful reexamination and awaits further investigation.
- 98 This suggestion is given by Huntington for the attendants of the dvārapāla, whom he identified as Vajrapāṇī. on the left side of the shrine entrance of Cave No. 6. Huntington(1981), p. 50.
- 99 This identification is made for the same Bodhisattva dvārapāla mentioned in the above footnote by C. Berkson (1987). The Caves at Auranagabad, p. 179.
- 100 C. Berkson. (1987).
- 101 According to Mizuno, the willow branch is one of Avalokiteśvara's attribute in Chinese Buddhist art of the sixth century. Mizuno

Seiichi, Chugoku no Kukkyo Bijutsu, Tokyo, 1968, p. 125. However, here Avalokiteśvara is paired with the above images with the willow branch and placed on the other side of the entrance. Thus, the present image cannot be identified as Avalokiteśvara considering the Chinese tradition.

102 R.S. Gupte suggests Mañjusrī for the identification of this image. R.S. Gupte (1964), pl. 3d.

103 On the other hand, the small flower, as shown in the hand of the figs. 206, 228, 229 and 230 may be called better as a nāgakesara or nāgachampā flower.

104 The most popular Bodhisattvas represented as Buddha's attendant during this period are Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi and Mañjusrī; the maximum number of them are seen in Cave 11 and 12, and also some in Cave No. 2 at Ellora. It certainly suggests that Cave No. 2 has been recarved, at least at both the cloisters where new images were carved.

105 R. S. Gupte states that, "When he (Maitreya) appears in this group of eight Bodhisattvas, he carries the kalāśa or is in the varada mudrā or the vitarka mudrā." Such observation is however is due to the misreading of Maitreya iconography. as we have studied that Maitreya images at Ellora are characterized by none of features he discribes.

106 As cited by Grunwadel (1901), p. 196. n.

107 R.S. Gupte (1964). pp. 49-54.

108 L. Chandra, (1979), pp. 134-35. His identification is based on the Aṣṭa-mahābodhisattva-maṇḍala-sūtra from Japan (Nj. 981) and Korea (K. 1304).

- 109 Ibid. p. 135.
- 110 Ibid. p. 135.
- 111 L. Chandra counted seven noverian maṇḍala having the central Buddha with dhyāna mudrā.
- 112 Most of the images representing the Buddha and the eight Bodhisattva group, when they are represented in a row, are shown with the Buddha in bhūmisparśa mudrā; they are mostly in Cave No. 11, Ellora, one of them is illustrated in the fig. 241.
- 113 Lokesh Chandra read the Bodhisattva in the upper row as; Maitreya. Ākāśagarbha and Sāmantabhadra. Ibid. p. 135.
- 114 The Sādhanaṃālā described him as "Khagarbha (Ākāśagarbha) is green as the sky, holds the cintamani jewel in one hand and exhibit the varada mudrā in the other." B. Bhattacharyya (1958), p. 86.
- 115 The Niṣpannayogāvalī describes Sāmantabhadra as is "yellow in colour, shows the varada (boon) in the right hand and holds on the left the sword on lotus." Ibid. p. 83.
- 116 Niṣpannayogāvalī gives description of him as follows; "Sarvanivāraṇaṣkambhī is blue in colour. With his right hand he holds the sword and with the left the banner marked with a double thunderbolt." Ibid. p. 93.
- 117 In the Niṣpannayogāvalī. he is described as; "Kshitigarbha is yellow in colour, shows the earth touching mudrā in the right hand, and a lotus flower with the wish-giving tree (kalpavṛkṣa) in the left." Ibid. p. 85.
- 118 The same composition is observed in the maṇḍalās, other than the above two examples; two in the right side verandah before the step

leading to the second floor of Cave No. 12; one near to the fig. 241.

119 Similar representation is observed in the other shrine opposite to the present shrine in the same cave; but the positions of Akṣagarbha and Sāmantabhadra have been interchanged here.

120 The identification of Kshitigarbha and Sarvanivāraṇaviskambhin could be the other way around. 121 A. Getty, (1928), p. 45.

122 According to her, "the gods on the right are; Avalokiteśvara. Akṣagarbha, Vajrapāṇi and Kshitigarbha; while on the left are; Sarvanivāraṇaviskambhin, Maitreya, Sāmantabhadra and Mañjuśrī."

123 Unfortunately no further suggestions on the identification of the main Buddha can be made by the present researcher whose major aim is not limited to this issue. A further investigation is awaited.

124 The Niṣpannayogāvalī mentions altogether three sets of sixteen Bodhisattvas, two of which are headed by Maitreya. B. Bhattacharyya (1958), pp. 82-83.

125 Other two Bodhisattva companions, and the three female Śaktīs on the left wall of the chamber are not identifiable, since no reliable textural evidences have been found.

126 It is W. Spink who can be considered as the chief figure who vigorously push back the chronology of Mahāyāna caves of Ajanta before the end of the fifth century A.D., more specifically from 462 to 485 A.D. See Spink (1988) pp. 177 to 202 and also (1991), pp. 71-104. On the contrary, Karl Khandalawala (1991) opposed W. Spink's theory and dates Cave Nos. 17 to 20 between circa A.D. 490-505; Cave No. 26 to circa A.D. 508-523; Cave No. 1, to circa

- A.D. 525-540; Cave No. 2 to circa A.D. 530-545; See K. Khandalavala (1991) pp. 105-129. Wayne Begley gives the last activity of Ajanta sculpture around 575, while Shiela Weiner gives still later date.
- 127 Berkson (with the help of D. C. Bhattacharyya) named both Bodhisattvas as Avalokiteśvara. See Berkson (1987), p. 201 nos. 5 and 6. Such identification cannot however be taken into consideration and is refutable for the reason that two dvārapālas traditionally represents two different deities.
- 128 Huntington (1981), p. 51. He also suggests Mamiki for the female attendants and Krodhacandratīlaka for the male attendant.
- 129 Ibid. (1981), p. 50. For the identification of the secondary attendants see pp.
- 130 Huntington (1981), p. 49.
- 131 The similar flying couple is also observed in Cave No. 22, at Ajanta, wherein Maitreya image appears with ascetic features with kamaṇḍalu in the left hand. Such contradictory elements are often observed in almost every time in the study of Buddhist iconography. Further investigation is necessary in this regard.
- 132 R.S. Gupte (1964), p. 146. Gupta states that "Tantrayāna came to Maharashtra through Orissa". Saraha, the great Tāntric guru came to Maharashtra from Orissa and the iconographic tradition he brought to Ellora must have been influenced by that tradition." He also suggests that the Tantrayāna influence travelled from Orissa to Western India through Madhya Pradesh or Andhra Pradesh.
- 133 Ibid. p. 146.