

## CHAPTER: VI - CONCLUSION

Comparative study of Buddhist art of western India, is the study of the Buddhist rock-cut caves, sculptures, paintings particularly of Gujarat and Maharashtra. In this research the study is based on Art and Iconography in relation to Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana phases. India is the birthplace of Buddhism and the several Buddhist schools of art have been developed which I have discussed in the fourth chapter. Most probably, these traditions of art would have been introduced to western India with the formal adoption and spread of Buddhism in the third century BC. There are certain characteristics common to all the arts, though in the present study my focus is mainly on the 'plastic art'. Though art has not been referred in words in the texts, the evidence of the sole surviving monuments and artefacts would be significant to establish it.

Western India has a long history of classical Buddhist rock-cut-cave architecture, sculpture and mural painting tradition, which belong to the style of different art schools of ancient India starting at least from the second century BC or fifth century CE and has continued upto the twelfth century CE. These art treasures survive at a large number of sites of western India.

The term "Western India" is referred here to Gujarat and Maharashtra. This region has been bestowed with the masterpieces of Buddhist art. We have discussed in previous chapters the history of the region and the advent of Buddhism in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC in western India, eg. Buddhist art of Gujarat and Maharashtra, various Art schools of ancient India e.g. Mathura, Gandhara, Amaravati, Sarnath and western Indian schools of art and Buddhist art and iconography of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Buddhist Art has been discussed here under rock-cut cave art, paintings, and sculptures. Western India has a great treasure of art whether these are rock – cut caves of Gujarat viz. Khambalida, uparkot, khaprakodia, kadiadunger, talaja, sana etc. or of Maharashtra viz. Kanheri, Karle, Bedsa, Bhaja, Aurangabad caves, Ajanta, Ellora, Kondane, Junnar, Mahad, Kondivite, Kuda, Pandavleni etc. Architectural art is also seen in the form of Buddhist monasteries of bricks in the region. The Paintings of Ajanta not only convey unique insight about the culture, life style and the prevalent

stories of ancient India but also are a milestone in the history of development of art in the world.

Gupta age can be called the Golden age of a great cultural evolution in India. After a century of decline in the rock-cut architectural form of art Vakatakas were the precursor of an extraordinary renaissance in rock-cut architecture by the excavation of these caves in western India. Architects and excavators, employed on these sites, had to recover the technique that had partly lost to living memories. In this consequence craftsmen were totally unfamiliar with the procedures and technique to both laying out and excavating the caves from the flawed basaltic scrap of western India. Thus simple rock-cut caves belong to early Hinayana phase in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The earliest evidence, for Buddhism in Gujarat, is found in Saurashtra. It is noticed that even though sites continue to come up within Saurashtra, other regions of Gujarat are gradually incorporated into the sacred landscape which is continuously being demarcated with the aid of monumental architecture. Interestingly in this region, the earliest spread of these sites outside the Saurashtra region occurs towards the southern Gujarat. The Buddhist site in southern Gujarat is Kadia Dungar. A concentration of Buddhist sites can be noticed in and around the site of Junagadh.

Diversity and continuous growth were inherent features of religious developments in the region. This research took into consideration only a part of the data based on architecture. Comprising of architectural remains as architecture is too vast subject to discuss here. Thus, I concentrated on the Buddhist art and salient artistic and beautiful features of architecture. The region also has a vast number of sculptures scattered at different sites. An analysis of these sculptural remains has been undertaken to further demonstrate diversity in types of sacred sites, existence of various sacred sites not available in the archaeological records and diversity in deities worshipped within different areas of Gujarat.

In Gujarat pertaining to sculptural remains, sculptures has been clearly identified as 'Buddhist'. The settlement pattern has been looked at with the aid of archaeological and inscriptional data. Also in looking for the support base of the religious sites it must be taken into consideration that Gujarat was economically viable and the support came, in all probabilities, from various social groups rather than the royalty.

Whereas Ajanta, Kanheri and other Buddhist centres were active centres of Buddhism and trade, and art during the fifth and sixth centuries, the caves of Gujarat were serving as a centre of social works. These Buddhist centres can only be comprehended by a detailed and analytical comparison of the two, particularly in the context of styles, techniques, themes, social contexts and the material culture etc. of the Sculptures and murals.

When attention is focussed on the styles and subject of the sculpture of Gujarat, it is, obvious to notice that like earlier traditions all these sites are devoid of Buddha images except Khambhalida.

Artist introduced new modes of Buddhist sculpture in Uparkot caves probably for the first time. Uparkot caves have been ornamented with the figures of *mithuna* or couples in different attitudes and in partitioning them with architectural, vegetation or other novel motifs. The form of stylisation that set in the walls of the khambhalida caves show the liveliness and spontaneity.

Significant differences exist between these sculptures although, the sculptures at Khambhalida caves unlike those at Ajanta are in a poor state of preservation to comment upon with certain art subjects. Keeping in mind the condition of the sculptural remnants at the site is identical with the works at Ajanta. But compositionally weak unlike at the caves of Maharashtra as they are simple and without decoration. This clearly indicates that there are some differences in style even among the Buddhist art of other Indian sites.

The artist or the incumbent of the monasteries wished to leave no doubt about the identity of the legends. But, it is to be noted that due to their bad state of preservation any stylistic analysis of the sculptural forms of Gujarat's Buddhist sites is not trouble-free unlike the case of the sites of Maharashtra.

However, it is noteworthy that there being no obvious narrative Artwork, the most important factor in relation to their style is each figure or group of two, which remains isolated unlike sculptures of Maharashtra. It is apparent that in the fragmentary sculpture at Khambhalida also has a certain similarity of the depiction of Buddhist deities prevails specially in the Buddha and other larger figures. But, it has to be admitted that as in the case of the caves of Maharashtra, the Buddhist deities have

been presented with their *mandals* or with their companion deities similarly, as at Ajanta, Ellora, Kanheri and Aurangabad caves.

The artists were not given the opportunity to show their skill in composition and in the carving of the human figure in various attitudes unlike in those of Maharashtra sites. Besides the shrine, the figures in these later period sculptures are arranged according to the importance of the characters and the central position was allocated to the most important figure as in the case of Maharashtra. Proportion also depended on the importance of the object of the faith and this is noticeable that the figures of the Bodhisattvas, Tara and deities in large size are carved in the classical realm and are parallel to the iconographic parameter given in the texts of Buddhist icons.

A careful observation of the remains of stupa and pillars at Khamhalida ensures us that these pillars and stupa would have been carved with other sculptural motives like those of Maharashtra.

However, the most distinctive characteristics of these sculpture's style are the fundamental attributes have been given not only to the chief deity but to the companion deities also.

It is these varied representations of the material culture in the art that can provide invaluable insights into cultural and religious interaction in society.

Thus, the Buddhist cultural milieu that moulded the artistic traditions of western India continues to be an under-researched theme. In this study, an attempt has been made to provide some indicators of this Buddhist religious or cultural history of Gujarat, but this is a subject that is largely outside the scope of this thesis and requires greater attention.

The casket containing relics of Buddha from Devnimori and Boria stupa are made with care and finish. Though metal works of art in Gujarat are rare yet the bronze Images from Bhuj are very good example of metal sculpture. In Gujarat metallic work of art belong to the pre-Gupta period. The relics found in the Sopara mound show, that in the second century after Christ Sopara had workers of considerable skill and taste. The bricks are of excellent material and the large stone coffer is carefully made, the lines are clear and exact, and the surface is skilfully smoothed. The crystal casket

is also prettily shaped and highly finished. The brass gods are excellent castings, sharper and truer than modern Hindu brassware. The skill of the gold and silver smiths is shown in the finely stamped silver coin, in the variety and grate of the gold flowers, and in the shape and tracery of the small central gold casket.

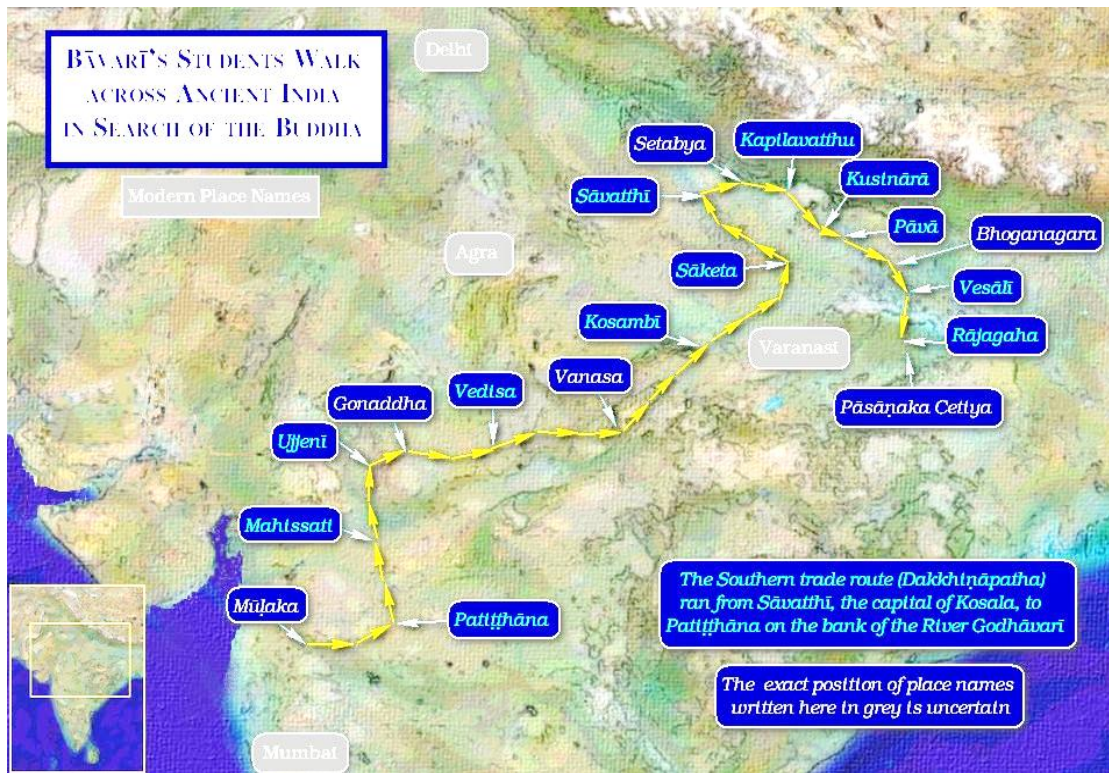
This research is focused on the Buddhist sculptural art and rock-cut cave art of Gujarat. In this research, I analysed the art and Iconography of Buddhist deities. In Khambhalida caves there are two life-size sculptures of Avalokiteshwara Padmapani with his *mandala* and the other is studied according to the iconographic descriptions like Manjusri with his mandala. I noticed that this cave must have had a other sculptures as well in its stupa and also pillars as a few fragments are still visible.

Further in continuation, I analysed Tara images from Gujarat. These images are also with mandala. I have given the details of these accompanying deities in Vth chapter.

Thus, in the context of above study, the present research, while by no means a final frame work, but will serve as a humble stepping-stone towards the recognition of Buddhist art of Gujarat while comparing the Buddhist art of western India with that of Maharashtra.



Fig.6.1, Bhuddist sites of India



**Fig.6.2, Advent of Bhuddism in Western India**



**Fig.6.3, Buddhist sites of Gujarat**



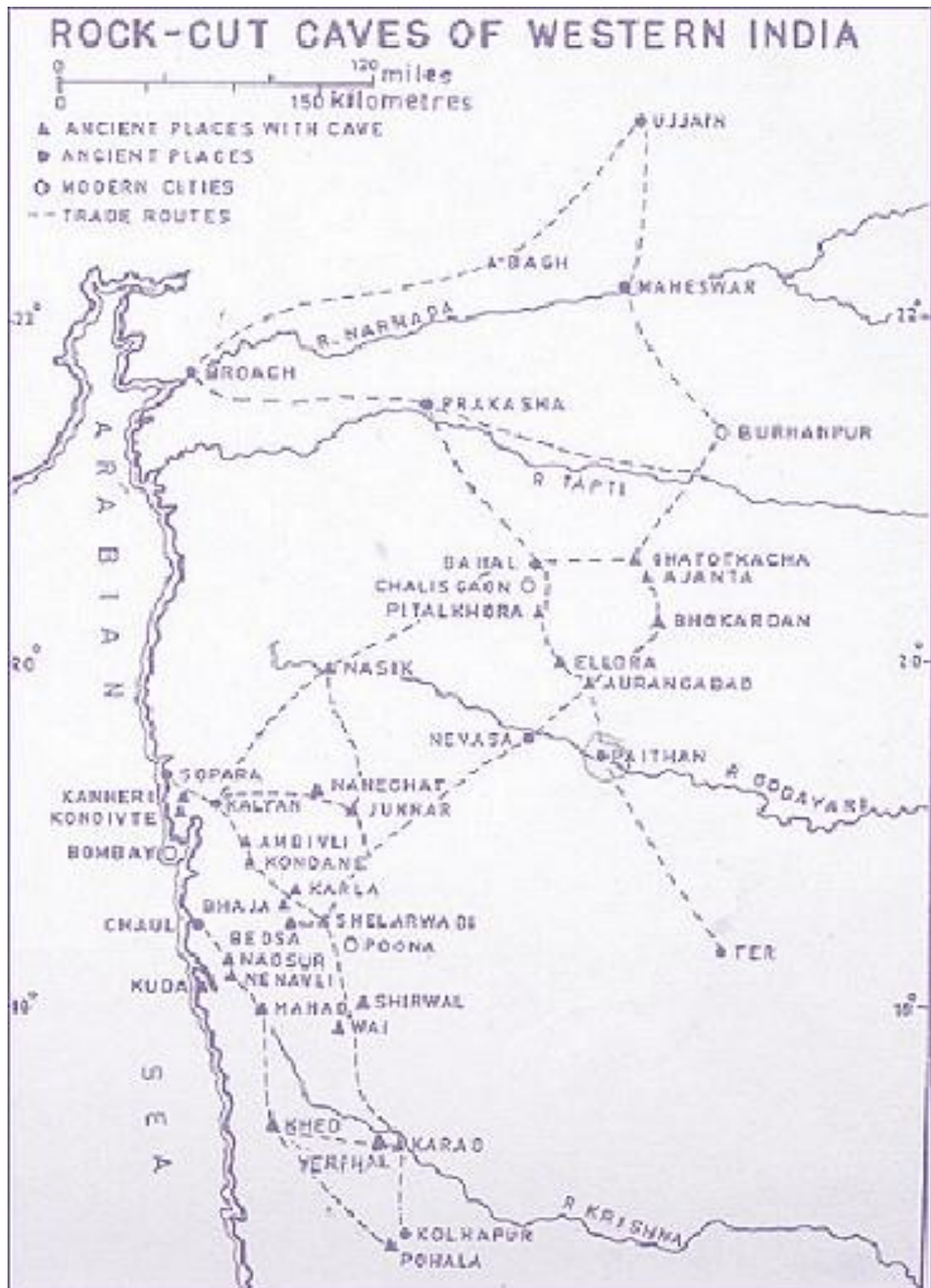


Fig.6.4, Buddhist sites in Maharashtra