

## SYNOPSIS

The proposed research work entitled Comparative Study of Buddhist Art and Iconography of Western India “with special reference to Gujarat” is an attempt to explain Buddhist Art and Iconography of western India from comparative point of view by evaluating all the excavated Buddhist sites of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Buddhist art and iconography is for those sculptures, paintings, monuments and other pieces of art which were mainly used for the purpose of propagating Buddhism. Gujarat consists a major portion of Buddhist culture and art what might be called as the “Buddhist element” .

Research on Buddhism is not new , it goes back to 1822 A.D. when it was first noticed by Major James Tod on his visit to Girinar .To begin with the Buddhist remains the Rock -Inscription of Junagardh Girnar is without exception ,the most interesting antiquity in the province. A large number of Stupa , viharas , inscriptions , chatyagrihas and sculptures of archaeological evidences have been found in Gujarat . Excavations in Vadnagar region reveal the presence of Buddhism in Gujarat . A lot of work has been done on Buddhism in Gujarat . Hinayana , Mahayana both streams of Buddhism have flourished and influenced the culture of Gujarat . Some literary sources and accounts of foreign pilgrims also throw light upon Buddhism of that era in the Province.

It is generally believed that most of the early Buddhist rock –cut temples of western India belonging to the Hinayana Sect were excavated during the period when the Satavahanas were ruling over this region. The origin and home of Satavahanas is one of the most vexing problems in the ancient history of India. Amidst the conglomeration of evidence, it is extremely difficult to come to a firm conclusion from the available source materials, ie, literary, epigraphic, and numismatic which are important. The earliest ruler of the Deccan were evidently the Mauryas.

The verified political history of Gujarat begins with the Mauryan dynasty ( c. 315 B.C.). The oldest record, an epigraph in Junagadh district, is the rock inscription of Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman containing the valuable information about Surashtra that was administered by Vaisya Pusyagupta the governor of the king Chandragupta Maurya . Further information of Mauryan rule

in Gujarat is inscribed in Girinar rock edict . According to the inscription , Ashoka sent Dharmarakshit ( a yavan ) to Aparantaka ( Gujarat ) as a missionary to expound the Buddhist doctrines . According to Pattavatthu , while Ashoka was making all efforts for the propagation of Buddhism his feudatory chief of Saurashtra, Pingalaka came to him and after some agreements he was converted to Buddhism. According to Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, Yavan Dharmrakshit was the preacher of

Buddhism in Aparanta , ie western India. Moreover Ashoka had ordered an allowance of 1000 million coins for the propagation of Buddhism in Aparanta.

Coins as the evidential record indicate that Indo- Greek kings from Bactria established their rule over north – west India in the post Mauryan period . Strabo (50 B.C. – 25 A.D. ) mentions about Menander's conquest of Sigerdis ( Sagar – dvipa or Kachchha) and Saraostus ( Saurashtra ) . Silver and copper coins with inscription found in larger numbers from Gujarat indicate their belonging to Bactrian kings Apollodotus and probably Kadphises dated 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.

Junagadh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman I ( 150 A.D. ) is very important for the political and social information of that period . In the epigraph he was introduced as the ruler of Anupa , Surashtra , Nivrt , East and West Akara , Avanti , Svabhra , Aparanta , Maru , Kutch , Sindh , Sauvira , Nisada , Kukura etc., though these territories had been conquered by Satvahanas and retrieved by Western Kshatrapas of Kardamaka family . The Andhau inscription in Kutch dated to 89 A.D. is the earliest evidence for the rule of Western Kshatrapas in Gujarat. One of the most important Buddhist monuments of Gujarat, Devnimori, was constructed at the time of this dynasty.

Anartta – Surashtra were the main lands of Gujarat and a joint administrative unit during this period . The silver – copper coins of Kshatrapas show that they were the worshippers of sun and fire .The inscription written on the coins - *Rajno Mahakshatrapasa -----Sri Sarva Bhattarakasa* throws light on Sarve Bhattarakasa the successor of Western Kshatrapas . He acquired the territories of Gujarat in 400

A.D. from Western Kshatrapas and lost them to Kumargupta 1 in about 415 A.D. Probably he was the predecessor of the Maitrakas of Valabhi .

Epigraphic records and the hoard of gold and silver coins are informative for the Gupta's political status in the Western India especially in Gujarat and Madhyadesh . Kumargupta acquired the territories of Gujarat from Bhattaraka .Skandagupta , the son of Kumargupta also had control over Gujarat as he carved an inscription on rock in Junagadh that is dated 456 - 58 A.D. Girinagara was the headquarter of the province . Through the inscription on the coinage of Gupta's, they are assumed as the follower of Bhagvat sect. After Skandagupta ( 450 -68 A.D.) Guptas lost their control over territories of Gujarat .

Other contemporary dynasty during the Gupta period has been traced ruling in the South Gujarat . The source of this information are Pardi Plates and silver coins found in south Gujarat and Maharashtra . The dynasty is called Traikutakas .The dynasty ruled in the region of south Gujarat probably present day Surat with the capital Aniruddhapura in ( 415 -492 A.D.) The Kanheri copper - plate dated (494 – 495 A.D. ) records of a Buddhist chaitya attributed to the king of Traikutaka dynasty. Probably Vakataka king Harisena ( 475 – 500 A.D.) won the Traikutakas region . Traikutakas were the followers of Bhagvata Dharma as inscribed in their coins .

Sarva Bhattaraka the founder of the Maitraka dynasty of the Kingdom of Valabhi established his sway in Gujarat after the death of Skandagupta the emperor of Magadh . Copper – plate inscriptions and Chinese travelers Huein – Tsang and I-Tsing' accounts are the main source of their history . Huein – Tsang tells that the Maitraka king Siladitya I built a Buddhist temple which was extremely artistic in structure and ornamental . The reign of Mairaka dynasty is dated c. 470 -788 A.D. Two grant edicts were given to the Buddhist Viharas at Valabhi ( now known as Valeh near Bhavnagar ) in c. 640 A.D. by Dhruvasena II the most famous Maitraka king of Valabhi . In this period Huein –Tsang noted gradual decline of Buddhism in Gujarat as the same as elsewhere in India .

Many other contemporary kingdoms of Maitrakas were also ruling in Surashtra. As the Palitana plates were also discovered along with those of the

Maitrakas. These plates belong to the Garulaka kings. Ghumli copper - plates the plates of Jaika II dated 915 A.D. inform us about Saindhav dynasty. Thus Gujarat was divided in several kingdoms .

Iconometry or Talmana is a concise account of measurements of Indian images as given in the *Agams* and other authoritative works with illustrative drawings. The Iconometry of Gujarat's Buddhist art has been compared with the Iconometry of Buddhist art of other sites of western India . This work is the study of Gujarat's Buddhist iconography through the rules of Indian iconometry. Many Buddhist sites exhibit varied assemblages consisting sculptures and artifacts coins and inscriptions. Indian tradition of Rock-cut architecture can be seen in Konkan strips, its adjoining Sahyadriyan belt, Maval strip and in Gujarat. More than 1200 caves were carved in about 70 centres Many of them are bestowed with inscriptions. The caves of western India have an extra ordinary appeal and aura.

The paintings of the Ajanta caves, the sculptures of the Ellora caves and the chaitya grihas and viharas of Kanheri, Bhaja, Karle, Bedsa, Junnar caves (six known groups of caves viz. Tulja Leni, Ganesh Leni, Amba - Ambalika, Bhimashankar, Bhut Leni and Shivneri), Pitalkhora, Nashik Pandav Leni and Aurangabad Buddhist caves are the Buddhist sites of Maharashtra. Art lovers will always continue to be spell bound to see them. During the Kshatrapa epoch in c. 200-400 century A.D. many caves have been carved. The most important among these excavations in Gujarat are the caves at Junagadh, Sana, Talaja, Dhank, Jhinjurihara and those at Khambalida. Many of these belong to the Kshatrapa period.

### **Major objectives of Research**

- (1) Define different Buddhist art traditions of Western India.
- (2) Identify the development of Rock-cut cave art in relation with Buddhist art.
- (3) Identify the provenance, iconometry of Buddhist images.
- (4) Attempt to recognize the similarities / differences between Gujarat and western indian Buddhist Art and Iconography.
- (5) Identify particular Buddhist art traits in Gujarat.
- (6) Compare the results with major studied sites of Western India to appreciate the level of standardization on Buddhist art tradition.

(7) A proposed model for understanding specialization on Buddhist art and iconography.

With the above purpose the following write up shows division of the thesis in to 6 chapters. They are:

### **Chapter I - Introduction**

This chapter will outline the significance of the research work. It will include of the geographical importance of Western India, history of Gujarat and western India, the major objectives of the study, its background and significance. It will discuss the ideas used in formulating the research problem and define it.

### **Chapter II - Sources of Buddhism in Gujarat and Western India.**

It deals with Literary traditions, Accounts of foreign travellers, Archaeological finds. Charts showing early Buddhist establishments in Gujarat, Buddhist sites of Western India and maps. The chapter also deals with the archaeological campaigns in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Vadnagar excavation, Devnimori excavations and Rock-cut caves of western india. The chapter deals with the Technical terms employed in the work. Iconometry of Buddhist art pieces will be studied in the sequence.

### **Chapter III - History of Buddhism in Western India**

In this chapter Buddhism in Western India will be reviewed.

### **Chapter IV - Mathura and Gandhar school of Art**

The influence of these art schools on Buddhist art and Iconography of Western India and Gujarat has been studied which also deals with ancient schools of indian art Mathura, Gandhar, Sarnath and Amarawati etc. These schools of art influenced art and sculpture of India. Chronologically symbolic representation, Pre Kanishka transition, the Kanishka phase; Emergence of Gandhara traits; the Huvishka phase; furtherence of Gandhra impact; Huvishka' II<sub>nd</sub> phase; Late Kushana phase; controversy about Style and Date; Post Kushana Pre Gupta phase; Gupta phase achme, the Buddhist Pantheon have been studied.

## **Chapter V - Comparative study of Buddhist Art and Iconography of Western India**

This chapter exclusively gives the result of the research on Buddhist art and Iconography of Western India followed by a detailed discussion. This discussion includes (1) When was the Buddha image introduced? (2) How and where did the Buddha figure evolved? (3) Contribution of Mathura and Gandhara to the evolution of Buddha image and (4) The development of Buddhist art and Iconography in Maharashtra and Gujarat as Rock-Cut- Caves, Stupas Viharas, Mandapas, Pillers, Paintings and sculptures that are examined comparatively under the study.

## **Chapter VI - Conclusion**

## STATEMENT - 1

(statement giving the data, on which the research work is based, the discovery of new outlook and facts of art and iconography of western India, observed by other art scholars and how work tends to help the general advancement of knowledge. The Buddhist art in Western India was mainly understood by the explorations carried out at different parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat.)

Fieldwork methods : The field work methods that this work used, were developed and tested during a two month pilot study during summer season of 2014, where I relocated and re-recorded more than thirty important groups of caves belong to early Hinayana phase to late Hinayana Phase and many other Buddhist sites in Maharashtra and Gujarat. This field work allowed for on -the- ground assessment of site accessibility, preservation and quality, provided an invaluable reference from which to plan future fieldwork and enabled me to establish a professional relationship with the concerned department of Archaeology and Antiquities and Museums and a rapport with local authorities needed for continued research in this region.

Site selection: The first step has been to develop methods, identify potential Buddhist sites from the kinds of data typically recorded by traditional surveys.

- (1) After visiting the Buddhist sites of western India and observation of artifacts obtained from the sites Buddhist art as stupas, viharas, pillars, rock-cut-cave, chaityas, sculptures and paintings have been studied comparatively and chronologically.
- (2) The study of viharas and Mandapas indicates towards a change in its layout like the chaitya grihas . There is a distinct change in the plan of viharas too.
- (3) The analysis shows the use of wood at Ajanta, Karle and Bhaja. The other caves such as Kanheri has sockets probably for wooden-door frame.
- (4) Rock-cut caves have been compared and analysed according to their plan as to which phase of Buddhism they belonged i.e. early and late Hinayana and Mahayana phase. The most important difference in the layout of an early and late Hinayana chaitya-griha is that the former is apsidal on plan, a vaulted roof and pillars, whereas the latter is quadrangular in plan, has a flat roof and an astylar.

- (5) The main characteristics of the Hinayana monastic establishments are - chaitya-griha, the congregation halls and viharas, monastic and habitation quarters for residents.
- (6) A careful analysis of the pillars of rock-cut caves have been done from the artistic point of view. The motifs, carving of animals and figures on them have been compared.
- (7) The walls of Buddhist caves are ornamented with the sculptures of celestial beings, animal forms, Buddhist deities and their consorts, couples and everyday themes including dancers, musicians, military procession scenes from royal court, apsaras and others somewhere in a narrative way in Maharashtra.
- (8) Facades of chaitya halls have been studied and compared according to their decorative figural sculptures. Half lotus medallion within the chaitya- arch relief, the triskelion, swastika, and four and six petalled series of rosetts on the facades of the caves are noticeable for the study.
- (9) The ornamentations of the sculptures is worth evaluating from the artistic point of view. Though from Gujarat it is unfortunate to notice the intricacy of ornaments due to soft stone's decay. Yet I traced them for their carving.
- (10) The apparels were presented by the series of folds carved on the figures yet the elegant forms were not hidden under these clothes especially in Karle and in Ajanta.
- (11) The displayed elements of robustness and lively have been studied from the human figures of the Buddhist sites of western India.
- (12) The expressions on the faces of the sculptures and paintings of the Buddhist caves were devoid of any pleasurable material and undisturbed by the worldly affairs.
- (13) The development of intricate carving and expressions of sculpture has been analysed chronologically. One of the main features of Buddha sculptures during Gupta age is the balance between the beautiful poses and the spiritual expressions.
- (14) For the study of Buddhist iconography the identification, description and the interpretation of the content of Buddhist images have been done.
- (15) The iconography of the specific Buddhist figures such as various Buddha figures in different mudras, Padmapani Avalokiteshwar, Vajrapani, Buddhist deities, Nagaraja, mithuna, female figures and cherubs has been analysed and compared.



- (16) Uparkot caves of Junagadh in Gujarat are important and interesting on account of its plan and decorative motifs and sculptures. Khambalida caves in Rajkot have been evaluated for its bodhisatvas' images.

## STATEMENT - II

(This statement indicates the sources of information and the extent to which the thesis is based on the work of others and the portion of the thesis claimed as original)

The study is based on Buddhist Art and Iconography of Western India through visit of Buddhist sites of western India and observation of artifacts conserved in Museums. The published books, articles and unpublished research works proved a great help for the enhancement of knowledge about the subject. Extensive survey and documentation of monuments, photography and preparation of sketches of individual feature of the sculptures, reviewing all the available literature and documents relevant to the proposed research, visit of museums to have first hand knowledge about regional Buddhist art and their chronological development. Material portrayed in the monumental arts has been studied and compared to the actual specimens found in the archaeological excavation.

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The portion claimed as original in the thesis is chapter V, a comparative study of Buddhist art and iconography of western India with special reference to Gujarat. The artifacts have been studied from the Buddhist sites of the concerned region. The intricate art pieces and other forms of art such as architecture (especially cave art), sculpture, images, paintings, pillars etc. have been examined for the analysis, interpretation and comparison. The result of the study is the original feature of the thesis. Thus the methodology applied for the research is based on observation and examination of the material available in the Buddhist sites and museums of western India.