

Cave Architecture of Western India

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It is a well-known fact that the developments and changes brought about in a culture are very much reflected in its creative art as well, and architecture is no exception. Each culture makes its own specific contribution to architectural creativity according to its level of knowledge, perception, aspiration, requirements, assets, resources, skills and capacity. But architectural creations of each culture contain at least one distinct feature in its art of building, which makes it stand apart from the rest, and which also helps in fixing the chronology. To quote Percy Brown, '... with the Greeks, architecture was refined perfection; Roman buildings are remarkable for their scientific contribution; French Gothic reveals a condition of passionate energy; while Italian Renaissance reflects the scholarship of its time. In the same way, the outstanding quality of the architecture of India is its spiritual content.' Undoubtedly, such architectural achievements help us to reconstruct much of our past; not only religious history, but also the history of science, technology, polity and overall social/cultural set-up of the time in which they were created.

Several efforts have been made to define architecture in its true sense, but the definition given by James Fergusson is important from the point of view of Indian architecture. James Fergusson, whose pioneering efforts and contribution to the study of Indian architecture is commendable, said 'A true architecture is the one, which possess the following three properties:

1. The architecture should be functional, i.e. it should serve the purpose for which it is created.
2. It should be original in conception, as well as in execution.
3. It should be aesthetically appealing.'

From the above viewpoint, the Indian architecture, especially the rock-cut caves, is the 'true architecture.' The Indian cave architecture is functional, original and also charming. It is devoid of any imitation.

As far as the cave or rock-cut architecture of western part of India is concerned, the development can be seen in three broad phases, viz. Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina. The earliest are the Buddhist caves, some of which were converted to Brahmanical caves along with the creation of indigenous ones, and finally the Jaina caves came up. The activity of rock-cut architecture in the western India started sometime in the 2nd century B.C. and ended up in the 15th-16th century A.D.

The Beginning:

The earliest evidence of rock-cut architecture in India comes from Bihar, where the first attempt was made in granite rock at Barabar near Gaya. Known as Lomaśarṣi Cave, the inscription of Daśaratha here takes it back to the Mauryan

times. The granite is an extremely hard rock and very difficult to cut. Therefore, only the minimum and required elements were cut and carved. Instead of providing the entrance on the front, it was opened at the side, as it was easy to do so. Inside, there is a circular portion at the back, which is separated from the rest with a wall. A *stūpa* or some object of worship was placed there, as a circumambulatory path is there. The word used for this cave in the inscription is *Varṣāniṣadya*, i.e. a temporary halt during the rainy season, with a *caityagrha* (place of worship) inside.

The imitation of the plan of Barabar Cave is to be seen in the Mahākāla Cave near Andheri in Mumbai. A round room with a hall in the front is carved out with *jālakas* (grilled windows) to admit light. There is a simple *stūpa* inside and the cave is dated to 2nd century B.C.

Situation of the Caves:

As already mentioned, the earliest evidence of rock-cut architecture in the western India is found in form of Buddhist caves. We are well aware that round about 2nd century B.C., Buddhism became the leading religion and continued for several centuries thereafter. Trade and commerce flourished during the period, and *sārvabhāva* (trading community) became the basic followers of Buddhism. Therefore, trade played a vital role in the spread of Buddhism and most of the Buddhist caves are found to be situated on the trade routes. Buddhism was also responsible to bring urbanization in Maharashtra. In fact, the process of urbanization and spread of Buddhism through trade went hand in hand and *bhikṣus* (monks) became the medium.

Trade became vigorous after 50 A.D. Precious and semi-precious stones, like carnelian, chalcedony, jasper, etc. found in the western part of India, along with sandalwood, monkeys and crows were some important items, which gave boost to the trade in this part of the country. The caves are situated on the trade-routes leading to the *ghats* from where the goods were exported and imported.

Choice of Region:

The earliest attempt of rock-cut architecture was made in Bihar in the Mauryan period. Although beautifully done, the granite rock was not found suitable for this purpose as it took great deal of extra-effort to cut through them. *Sārvabhāva* and *bhikṣus* going to the western part of India came across igneous rocks, which were found to be suitable for easy carving, and that is why, a large number of rock-cut caves came up along the west coast of India. Some scholars opine that rock-cut architecture was adopted due to contact with the Greeks and Persians, but it is important to note that early Buddhist architecture was done by the common people and not by the kings or rulers.

Geographical features of Maharashtra are quite peculiar. On one side is the coast, which is called Konkana (*aparānta*) and Sahayādri Ghats are the range of peaks running along the west coast that are sometimes as high as 5000 feet. On the other side are the quick-flowing rivers. On one hand, the coastal region receives a heavy rainfall

(300 to 400 inches) during the rainy season; while on the other hand, there is not a single drop of water to drink during the summer. Because of such geological features, the rocks here became porous and brittle, and ideal for carving.

Choice of Sites:

The criteria of selection of sites to carve out the caves was chiefly based on the following three considerations:

1. **Water :** Water being the basic need of life, the carvers of the caves were careful to look for the perennial supply of water near the caves. The site for making *vihāras* (dwelling place of *bhikṣus*) was particularly chosen in such a manner that there used to be a natural spring at the foot of the cave or hill. The tanks were also made inside the cave to collect the rainwater. They were used for bathing and natural spring for drinking purposes. The first cave at any site was cut close to such *poḍi* (water-system) and then the series of cave expanded on both the sides.
2. **Quality of Rock :** Another consideration to choose a site for carving out the cave was to see that the quality of rock was good enough for perfect carving and also ensuring the longevity of the cave.
3. **Habitation :** Care was further taken to see that the caves were not far off from the villages, because *bhikṣus*/devotees largely depended upon them for food.

Chronology:

Fergusson and Burgess established the chronology based on the development of form and style of the rock-cut architecture. Their Relative Chronology is quite reliable and today also stands the test of time. Important guides to establish the chronological sequence of the caves are as below:

1. Timber was the inherent material used for building purpose in the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan times. Hence, earlier caves closely copy the wooden prototype, which gradually changes with the time.
2. Greater inclination of the colonnade represents closer relationship with its wooden prototype, which becomes upright with the time.
3. The columns in earlier caves are the copies of plain wooden posts with no base or capital. Subsequently, each member of the pillar is carved and elaborated.
4. Provisions for fixing more wooden members are found to be made in the earlier caves. Later, the designs were hewn out of the rock itself to gradually get rid of wooden attachments.
5. The horseshoe shaped arch on the facade of earlier Buddhist caves are with collars (outward projection) on both the sides at the lower end, which becomes more round with the passage of time.
6. Earlier caves have vaulted roofs, which gradually become flat.

7. The *stūpas* in earlier caves are simple semi-circular domes. Later on these tend to become more and more cylindrical and elongated.

Studies:

The scholars have tried to observe and understand the western Indian cave architecture from the following four angles:

1. Study of the development of form and style of the rock-cut architecture.
2. Study of the reasons acting behind the creation of caves in such a big way in the region.
3. Detailed study of each cave in individual, termed as 'Microstudy'.
4. Regional study to know about the factors, which influenced, guided and controlled the carvers to carve the caves in a particular fashion in a particular region.

The Technique:

While carving a shape out of a hill, it is always feasible to start from the top, as the construction of plinth is not required in this case. Our ancient carvers did the same. They started carving from the top; cleared the window on the facade; proceeded downwards making general outline of the whole structure; and finally inside. The best example to understand the technique is available at Ajanta, where the facade of one of the caves is complete, but the finishing could not be done inside, which is incomplete. The implements used for carving the rocks were chisel, hammer and pickaxe for broad cuttings.

At Barabar Caves in Bihar, the floor and walls of the granite rock were polished with the famous Mauryan-polish to admit light through reflection. But in western India, the rock is igneous which could not be polished. Hence, the creators of the caves thought of another source of light. We find that there is always an oblong verandah for any cave. Water was poured in that verandah so that the light got reflected automatically inside the cave.

Earlier caves were the copies of wooden constructions. Hence, the people carving rocks were termed as *śelavaḍḍhakīs*, meaning stone-carpenters. *Śela* stands for stone and *vaḍḍhaki* means carpenter, i.e. combination of the 'concept of a carpenter' and 'skill of a carver'. The *śilpīs* (carvers) working on a cave were divided into the following four categories:

1. Simple worker, who did the plain cutting of rocks.
2. Carver, who gave shape to the things.
3. Sculptor, who created figures and forms.
4. Architect, who did the planning and supervision.

Patronage:

Patronage was the prime reason for which the cave architecture developed in such a big way in the western part of India. Aśoka gave patronage to Buddhism, and it

went on top and flourished in the Mauryan Empire. But curiously enough, the early monuments related to Buddhism were by the common people. The king's contribution came later. For example, early Buddhist caves at Bhaja, Karle and Bedsa do not show the evidence of royal patronage at all. People became prosperous and wealthy due to flourishing trade, and therefore, they were capable enough to erect monuments by themselves. The process of urbanization had already started which also gave boost to this activity. Inscriptions in many caves carry vital information and throw ample light on the patronage. For example, donor of a big temple at Karle was a *śreṣṭhī* (merchant) from Vaijayanti. Inscriptions also inform about similar donors who donated for the construction to the supervisor, like *bhūtapāla*, from the patron side who looked after the construction. People came from different parts of the country for donation. Not only Buddhists, but Brāhmaṇas and Kṣattriyas also came forward and made considerable contribution in the creation of caves.

Important Cave Sites:

Some important rock-cut sites in western India are Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta, Aurangabad, Bhaja, Karle, Bedsa, Kondane, Kanheri, Pitalakhora, Junnar, Dharashiva, Nasik, Panhalekaji, Pune, Mumbai, Jalgaon, Rameshwar, Badami, Bag, Ter, Parasambe, Patur, Boreghat, Shelaravadi, Rajagir, Chandrapur, Jogeshwari, Nagapur, Bhandara, etc.

Buddhist Caves:

When we study the development of Buddhist cave architecture from the 2nd century B.C. to 12th century A.D., we actually study the development of Buddhism itself, as the changes coming about in the ideas, concepts, beliefs, rituals, philosophy, etc. within the religion are all very much reflected in its creative art as well. The Vedic religion, i.e. the early phase of Hinduism/Brahmanism, was mainly *yajña* (sacrifice) oriented. At one time, the complexities of *yajñas* reached such a height that it became almost impossible for a common man to follow them. Hence, these became restricted to a handful of people in the society and went beyond the reach of common people, who were then bound to look after some other option, which could be easy to follow and fetch them the same virtues and objectives in life.

In the atmosphere of such confusion and chaos all over India, thinkers like Mahāvira and Buddha emerged. They showed simple path to the general public, which could lead them to the same goal as attained by performing complex *yajñas*. The ideas and preaching of both the great seers appealed to the mass and they grabbed them with both the hands. In the time to follow, Buddhism received the royal patronage of Emperor Aśoka of the Mauryan dynasty and it went on top. The traders became the followers of Buddhism and played a vital role in spreading it, and the activity of the creation of caves began as a part of this movement. The development of Buddhist cave architecture can be seen in three phases, viz., Theravāda/Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna/Tantrayāna, of which, the Hīnayāna caves are the earliest.

Two forms of Buddhist architecture developed according to the requirements

of the *bhikṣus*, viz. *caitya* and *vihāra*. The ancient Buddhist literature talks about five types of *leṇa* (shelter) that are ideal for the monks to live in, whether moving or staying. These are as below:

1. *Aḍḍiyoka*: A type of hut.
2. *Vihāra*: A small individual cave or cell.
3. *Prāsāda*: A multi-storied building.
4. *Harmikā*: A multi-storied building with a conical apex.
5. *Gumfā*: A cave accommodating several monks at a time.

With the rise of Mahāyāna sect around 1st-2nd century A.D., a new tradition of teaching and learning sprang-up in Buddhism. Bhaja and Kanheri became the important centres of learning, and did not remain merely the places of worship and dwelling of *bhikṣus* anymore. They became residential places of the *ācāryas* (teachers) as well, and therefore, new and separate caves/cells had to be created and added in and around the existing ones. The *vihāra* at Bedsa is apsidal in shape with cells on both the sides. It is unique in the sense that this shape was associated only with the *caityas*.

General plan of the *caitya* or *caityagrha*, also referred to as *gandhakuṭī* or *mahāgandhakuṭī* in the ancient Buddhist literature, is apsidal with entrance only on the front. The facade of the cave is marked by a huge arched window to admit light inside. The colonnades inside separate the nave with the side aisles, which form the circumambulatory path. A *stūpa* is placed at the apsidal end of the *caitya*. The *stūpas* are of four types which are as below:

1. *Śārīrika/Dhātugarbha-stūpa* containing relics of the Master.
2. *Auddeśika-stūpa* erected in the memory of an important event of Buddha's life.
3. *Pāribhogika-stūpa* erected on the articles used by the Buddha.
4. *Kāmya*—a votive *stūpa*.

The *caityas* are of various sizes, depending upon the requirement of the time as also on the space available. *Caityas* at Pitalakhora had maximum number of wooden members. The fronton of the arch shows lot of holes made to fix the decorated wooden attachments. Even arches in some caves were given wooden support. Some early caves at Kondane, Boreghat, Karle, Bhaja, Shelaravadi etc. show evidences of wooden planks used for covering the entire wall, as the carvers probably realized that the rock was too soft and would give away. At some places, even the ceilings of the caves were given wooden support. At Bedsa, no provision for any wooden attachment is seen, except for the parasol over the *stūpa* inside. Later, even the parasol was carved out of rock in the ceiling itself, the example of which could be seen at Junnar.

Initially, the columns inside the *caityas* were plain posts. Gradually, they acquired base and capital as well and carving began on them with four auspicious

animals, viz. elephant, lion, bull and horse. Later with the rise of Mahāyāna phase, the decoration of the pillars increased and various auspicious motifs, designs and figurines were carved.

With the new concept of divinities being like the king, the idea of *prāsāda* developed and multi-storied buildings were carved out, initially in relief and then in original. A row of elephants carved in a *caitya* at Pitalakhora gave it the name of *Hastinakha-prāsāda*. Similarly, the change in the form of worship and increasing number of devotees resulted in the introduction of courtyard, the first evidence of which can be seen in Aurangabad. Ajanta is known not only for its beautiful architecture and sculptures, but also for its fantastic frescoes depicting various *jātaka* stories and life-events of Lord Buddha.

A general idea is that the caves only with *stūpa* and no image of Buddha are the Hīnayāna caves, while the caves with both *stūpa* and Buddha-image are the Mahāyāna caves. But microstudies have revealed that it is not necessarily be so. The best example can be taken that of Sri Lanka, where inspite of being Hīnayāna Buddhists, people every much worship the images of Buddha. In fact, there are about eighteen sects of Hīnayāna, like Lokottaravāda, Mahāsāṃghika, Aparasāiliya, Pūrvasāiliya, Sarvāstivāda, etc., and Mahāyāna ideas emerged from these sects only. Earlier, the belief was that once Buddha attained *nirvāṇa*, he became super-natural, i.e., God who need not be represented in human form. But the term *lokottaravāda* itself suggests that Buddha was a super human being who is for the people, and therefore, he can be represented in human form. This idea developed, and hence, we find the Sarvāstivādins making the first images of Buddha at Mathurā and other places. Therefore, some of the sects within the Hīnayāna itself were very much forward in making Buddha-images. Whenever we come across a Buddha-image at Ajanta in earlier period, Buddha is shown with two attendants, i.e., Padmapāṇi (holding a lotus) and Vajrapāṇi (holding a thunderbolt). This representation of Buddha is accepted in Hīnayāna also. But when we find images like that of Tārā, we are sure that it is a Mahāyāna cave.

Mahāyāna, earlier known as Śrāvakayāna, came up with the new concepts of Bodhisattva, Avalokīteśvara and Maitreya. Earlier idea was to become a *bhikṣu* and attain *nirvāṇa* for oneself only. But this was not the idea of Buddha himself. Hence, a branch emerged which believed that the one capable of attaining *nirvāṇa* himself should see that others also get it. This was the real idea propagated by Lord Buddha and he exactly did that himself in form of Bodhisattva, in his previous births. This concept gained ground and worship of Bodhisattva became strong in the Mahāyāna phase. Even great *ācāryas* were depicted as Bodhisattvas, and thus, the first images were made of Śākyamuni as Bodhisattva. Then arose the concept of future Buddha, i.e. Maitreya who is meditating in heaven at present. Before he comes, there is Avalokīteśvara to look after. The female divinities also crept in, like Tārā, who became the god of the sailors helping them to cross the ocean safely, as trade was very

vigorous. The idea strengthened around 3rd-4th century A.D. that there should be a god to help, and thus, the pantheon grew in a big way. All these new concepts and ideas are reflected in the cave architecture of Mahāyāna phase in western India, where *bhakti* (devotion) became prominent.

Vajrayāna/Tantrayāna was the third sect of Buddhism. The fundamental principles of Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna were not different, as Tantrayāna assimilated all the doctrines of Mahāyāna. The difference was in the development of the rituals. Tantrayāna stressed on the three *satyas* (truths), viz. *pratyakṣa* (seen), *paratantra* (inferred) and *parikalpita* (imagined). In accordance with these *satyas*, the idea of Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Rūpakāya/Nirmāṇakāya developed. The Dharmakāya, called the *jina*, is the head of the pantheon. The *jinās* are of five types, viz. Virocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi and Akṣobhya, which are parallel to five *skandhas*, viz. *rūpa* (bodily forms), *vedanā* (sensation), *saṃjñā* (perception), *saṃskāra* (aggregate of beings) and *viññāna* (consciousness or thought faculty). Then again there are five *ādi-Buddhas* or *jinās* or *tathāgatas*, like the five *karmendriyas* or five *mahābhūtas*. The symbolism of five is very important in all the Tantrayāna themes.

In Mahāyāna, Bodhisattvas are prominent and they have their independent cults, like Avalokiteśvara and Tārā are depicted as an independent divinity. But then we find that these developed figures also become attendants of *ādi-Buddhas*, which is Tantrayāna. The plans of the caves also change accordingly. Now there is more than one cell according to the number of divinities, making the pantheon bigger and more complex. Now, dance also becomes a part of the worship as divinity is also regarded as a king. The five *mudrās* (gestures), viz. *dhyāna*, *bhūmisparśa*, *pravacana*, *abhaya* and *varada*, are now transformed into *ādi-jina*, and thus, they become Akṣobhya, one step above Bodhisattva. Therefore, in architecture, *darbāralena* was now added, which is an oblong platform where sixty persons can sit on both the sides. On three sides are residential cells. Earlier, the cells remained empty, but now *maṇḍalas* are depicted. In the front is a porch, then a hall, and sanctum at the end. The five *jinās* and other divinities were also associated with different colours signifying different properties. Another feature of Tantrayāna caves was that identical cylindrical votive *stūpas* were put up in mass everywhere in, out, near, around and even on top of the cave/hill.

The pantheon grew so much that the cells were now not used for living, but to places images of various divinities of various *maṇḍalas*. Need for three stories was thus felt to accommodate so many divinities. In caves 11 and 12 at Ellora, all the three stories are depicted within one shrine. The evidence shows that several Hinayāna caves were converted to Mahāyāna and then to Tantrayāna caves. Roots of Buddhism dried out by the 7th-8th century A.D. in western India, although the Tantrayāna caves continued upto 11th-12th century A.D. The complexities in Buddhism became a predominant feature and it got confined only to the upper class of the society. Consequently, the common people once again reverted back to Brahmanism.

Brahmanical Caves:

When we consider the Brahmanical rock-cut architecture, we actually cover the caves/temples of the three main sects, i.e. Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta, and also the various cults associated with them. The discoveries made in about the last ten years reveal that the Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava-Śākta architecture does not start with Ellora or Elephanta, as thought earlier, but even goes beyond. The researches done by the Nagpur University and Maharashtra State Archaeology Department disclose that the Brahmanical rock-cut architecture goes beyond 550 A.D., although they are not as refined as Elephanta or even the early Buddhist caves. They are very simple and somewhat primitive type. The reason could be that where Buddhism was followed by the wealthy class of society and lot of patronage was available for the creation of caves; Brahmanism was followed by the masses and most of the early caves are situated in the tribal districts of western India. Although these caves are simple and primitive type, but they provide a different dimension altogether in understanding the development of rock-cut architecture in India.

When we consider the Brahmanical rock-cut architecture or sculptures of western India, we find that Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism dominated over Śāktism; but when we try to trace the antiquity of image worship, then we are bound to accept that female divinities dominated and were given more importance. Male divinities were generally depicted in form of emblems, like a *liṅga* instead of an image of Śiva or a *garuḍadhvaja* instead of an image of Viṣṇu. But this was not the case with female divinities, as discs with the depiction of mother-goddesses with trees are obtained from the pre-Mauryan times, and tradition of making of mother-goddess figurines can be traced back to even Mohan-jo-daro period. The terracotta mother-goddess figurines were quite common and found in abundance.

The early caves in western India are dedicated to divinities like Śiva, Narasimha, Devī, seven-mothers, Lajjā-Gaurī, Pārvatī, etc. and they are mainly situated in the tribal districts. They are very simple in form with niches to place Śivaliṅga and other images. Some of the caves are so small that one cannot even enter the cave. Two inter-connected caves at Patur have simple pillars, verandahs and hall. In one of the sanctums at the backside, a Śivaliṅga was placed, while an image of Umā was placed in the other, which is now preserved in the Central Museum, Nagpur. The cave has seven sockets, probably to hold seven-mothers. It is to be noted that in any cave of Śiva, including Ellora and Elephanta, seven-mother goddesses were shown.

A cave in Chandrapur district contained two images, one of four-armed Viṣṇu and the other of *rājapuruṣa*. Hardly three or four persons can stand inside. The other three sides have platforms with eight notches, probably for mother-goddess images. Gaṇeśa, Narasimha, Skandha-Kārttikeya, *yakṣa* and Śivaliṅga are also there. The cave from outside has no architectural features, but the inside is fully sculptured. The Buddhist *bhikṣus* lived in groups and they developed their own style of *vihāras* for dwelling, but the Brāhmaṇa *sanyāsīs* (hermits) preferred to move alone and not in

groups, although here, we find a few cells beside the cave mentioned above. Peculiar feature is that the cave has domical ceiling. The caves of Dharashiv are not much known, but they are unique in the sense that they have *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* scenes depicted in them, a tradition which continued in the later Cālukyan temples.

Mention should also be made of another group of three caves at Parasambe in Kolhapur district. These three caves are unique, as they are monolithic. The carving is done in three big boulders, which must have rolled down the hill nearby. Resting in a small rivulet, these boulders are big enough (approximately 25×15×20 ft.) to have complete shrines stylistically carved in them. They have beautifully done *kūṭa-śikhara* and *śāla-śikhara*, *maṇḍapa*, *garbhagrha*, octagonal *stūpikā*, square pillars, beams, rafters, octagonal notch, etc., all carved in one single boulder. Curiously enough, there are no images inside, but niches are carved on the outer surface having Śivaliṅgas, Nandī, Narasiṃha, Lajjā-Gaurī, Gaṇeśa, conch-shell, etc. carved in them.

Round about 2nd century B.C., emerged Lakuliśa who, according to Śaiva mythology, was a human being and 28th *avatāra* (incarnation) of Śiva, and considered to be the first *ācārya* of the Lakuliśa or Pāśupata cult. According to Pāśupata philosophy, one can be near to Īśvara (God) or similar to Īśvara, but cannot be Īśvara himself. For this, five *śaktis* (powers) are required, viz. *icchā*, *jñāna*, *kriyā*, *tirodhāna* and *anugraha*. There are five forms of Śiva, viz. Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna. These five forms are not only associated with the five *śaktis*, but also with the five elements, viz. *agni* (fire), *jala* (water), *vāyu* (air), *pṛthvī* (earth) and *ākāśa* (space). In western India, along with Mahāyāna Buddhism, this Lakuliśa or Pāśupata cult of Śaivism became very popular and powerful among the mass. Thus, we find that numerous monuments connected with this cult came up in western India along with Mahāyāna monuments. Pāśupata monuments are quite easy to identify because Lakuliśa with *daṇḍa* (staff) and *akṣamālā* (rosary) is depicted on the front lintel itself, along with his four disciples, viz. Kauśika, Gārgya, Mitraka and Kauruṣya.

Unlike Buddhist *caityas* and *vihāras*, the Brahmanical temples were cut from the three sides, and hence, three entrances are provided on three open sides. The main shrine was called *sarvatobhadra*, wherein the Śivaliṅga was placed. The shrine at Jogeshwari has four doors. There is no depiction outside, but inside there is an image of Māheśvara with three heads (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) called *Trimūrti*. There are eight scenes depicted on the eight corners of the shrine, viz. Lakuliśa, Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāśa, Śiva and Pārvatī playing dice, Ardhanārīśvara-Śiva, Trimūrti, Kalyāṇasundara, Gajāsura-saṃhāra and Dancing Śiva. This iconographic scheme is very important as Śiva was worshipped in different forms. This scheme can be witnessed at Elephanta also where the execution is simply outstanding.

There were three types of Śiva-worship, viz. *sakala* (bodily manifestation, i.e. image of Śiva); *niṣkala* (without any bodily form, i.e. Śivaliṅga) and *sakala-niṣkala* (Śivaliṅga with human face, including Īśāna). *Liṅga*, as well as image-worship of Śiva was important in Pāśupata cult, and therefore, both were given equal importance in the Pāśupata monuments.

Pāśupata caves at Ellora, Elephanta, Ter and other places establish that this Śaiva cult spread so fast during the 4th-5th century A.D. that from western India, it went to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa as well. It is very significant because all these were strong regions where Buddhism was developing. The vigorous movement of this cult culminated in Deccan in the form of a great monolithic temple, which is known as the Kailāśa Temple at Ellora (Cave No. 16). It can undeniably be termed as a 'wonder' of ancient Indian architecture, where the rock was cut from all the four sides for the first time. The words fall short in describing this masterpiece work.

One very important aspect of Tantrayāna Buddhism was that there were always references to things which had double-meaning. The real meaning used to be the philosophical one, which people gradually forgot and they adopted the other meaning. They turned to *vāmācāra*. All these created a very bad religious atmosphere all over India. In the protest of *vāmācāra*, another cult of Śaivism emerged in western India around 8th-9th century A.D. known as the Nāthapantha. Founded by Matsyendranātha, this movement was given a vigorous shape by Gorakhanātha. The first evidence of Nātha caves are found at Panhalekaji, where Tantrayāna caves were transformed into Nātha caves. The Nāthapantha caves are basically Śiva shrines, as Śiva is believed to be the progenitor of this cult. Ādinātha (Śiva) with Pārvatī, Matsyendranātha, Gorakhanātha, Cauraṅginātha, Bhagavatī, Tripurāsundarī, Gaṇeśa, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, etc. are the regular depictions in Nātha caves. Unique feature of these caves is that the designs are carved in *kṣipta-vitāna* (designs coming downward from the level of normal ceiling) and *utkṣipta-vitāna* (designs going upward from the level of normal ceiling). *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* scenes are done in *kṣipta-utkṣipta-vitāna*.

Jaina Caves:

The unique feature of Jainism is that the Jainas maintained legends of their own monuments, which was not there in the early cases of Buddhism and Brahmanism. These legends come from different periods. Jainism is famous for narrative stories and it has maintained a very good tradition of literary records. Jainas of 14th-15th century already knew about the total number of Jaina *tīrthas* and temples all over India. The first Jaina sermon is known as *samavaśaraṇa*, which is conceived as a miracle in the Jaina tradition, and hence, the courtyards in their architecture are executed with the same conception. According to Jaina belief, all the beings are involved in listening to *samavaśaraṇa*, including birds, animals, *devatās*, *gandharvas*, etc. There is a cave group at Dharashiv, where an inscription informs that *Cakravartin* Karaṇḍu of the 6th century A.D. carved two caves in the name of his wife and son.

At Ellora, cave numbers 30 to 34 are the Jaina caves with two stories and courtyards, where replicas of *samavaśaraṇa* are depicted. A *brahmastambha* is to be found in all the Jaina temples. Four *brahmayakṣas* are depicted on the four sides. A beautiful shrine inside has *Indra-sabhā*, as a royal figure seated on an elephant is shown, and *Jagannātha-sabhā*, as Lord Jagannātha is himself a *tīrthānkara*. In the

Jaina tradition, every *tīrthakṣetra* has a *yakṣa* and *yakṣī* as its lords and they are known as *tīrthakṣetrasvāmīs*. They are depicted on the corridor along with Ambikādevī. Above is a gigantic figure of Pārśvanātha.

Chota-Kailāśa is a Jaina cave at Ellora, which is so called because of its smaller dimension in comparison to the main Kailāśa Temple. Cave 32 at Ellora has a 30 feet high *brahmastambha*, four entrances and steps leading to upper hall, where *sarvāṅgabhūti yakṣa* and Ambikādevī are depicted. Then there are two chapels where the niches are decorated with the images of all the *tīrthanīkaras* and other images. *Śikhara* is depicted in relief here. Bāhubali is worshipped by the Digambara Jains. On one side is an image of Pārśvanātha and on the other side is Bāhubali. The caves are done in such a way that from cave 32, one can enter cave 33 at the upper level. The most decorative pillars are in caves 32, 33 and 34.

There is a group of six Jaina caves at Dharashiv. Near a water-tank inside, *sarvatobhadra-pratimā* is placed in the centre and four *tīrthanīkaras* on the four sides. This tradition is found right from the 3rd-4th century A.D. On either side are the *nāga-pratihāras* as Pārśvanātha is associated with *nāga*. There are steps, on either side of which *gaṇas* are depicted on *vedikā*. For the first time here, a *tīrthanīkara* is shown seated in *ardha-padmāsana*.

A new concept is witnessed at Ankaitankai Caves (10th-11th century A.D.) in the Nasik district, where the donors of the caves and members of their families are depicted as attendants at the entrances. These are double-storied caves with beautiful facade, verandah, half-porch, *sabhā-maṇḍapa* and sanctum at the back, with the images of Pārśvanātha, Bāhubali, other *tīrthanīkaras*, *tīrthakṣetrasvāmīs*, Padmāvatī, Ambikādevī, etc.

Devagiri, Thengalavadi, Anjaneri, Chanvar, etc. are the other prominent sites of Jaina caves. In the Chanvar Cave, Ambikādevī was converted to Śitalā-Mātā in the later period. Similarly, Buddha was generally shown in *vajraparayankāsana* and Jinas in loose *padmāsana*. In cave No. 4 at Aurangabad, a *śaṅkha* (one of the attributes of Neminātha) was added to the figure of Buddha in *vajraparayankāsana*, and now the image is worshipped as Neminātha.

Thus, the rock-cut architecture of India is not only a vast subject, but extremely fascinating too, which has the capacity of unfolding even the unknown and untouched aspects of our rich cultural heritage. All the developments and changes that we witness in the Indian architectural activities at the superficial level, actually have deep-rooted meaning as these are the outcome of the beliefs and practices of the common people. To grasp Indian architecture in its true spirit, it is essential to understand Indian people first, because Indian architecture is not a group of lifeless buildings of stones or bricks, but it reflects the sprit of Indian people.

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The paper is mainly based on the lecture-series delivered by Dr. A. P. Jamkhedkar (Mumbai) at Jñāna-Pravāha, Varanasi from December 7 to 15, 2002.