

## Ajantā Cave 8 : Historiography and Fresh Look on the First Mahāyāna Śailagr̥ha

Dr. Rajesh K. Singh

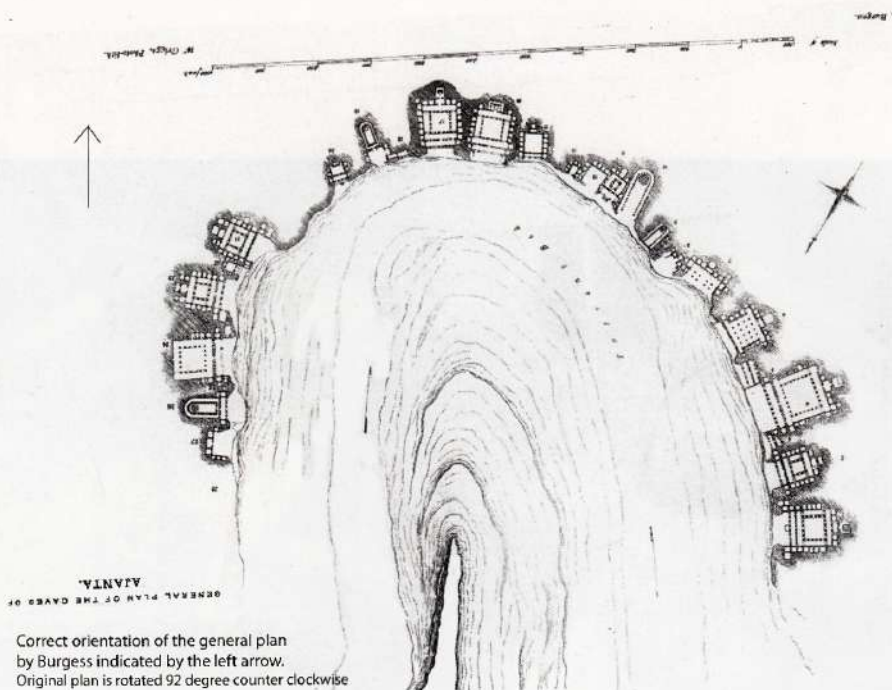
Ajantā Cave No. 8 has seen the acclaim for trailblazing, abandonment, neglect, abuse, and restitution of its pride as a remarkable initiative of its times-in that order (figs. 3-4).<sup>1</sup> If chronology is the bedrock of history, let us find out where the *śailagr̥ha*<sup>2</sup> (edifice of rock) was situated in the history of time, how its journey began on a positive note and subsequently met with terrible hiccups, then a long spell of misfortune, and how recognition ultimately dawned upon it againover the course of time.

The *śailagr̥ha* is located next to the Hīnayāna *chaityagr̥ha*, No. 9. For illustrating the location of the *śailagr̥has* on the site, the General Plan of Burgess (1883) is popularly referred to (fig. 1). However, it has come to the notice of the present researcher that the compass arrow (seen on the right) is inaccurately placed. There is an error even in the curve of the scarp. These rather *generic* errors have precolated in a number of other publications and the research on Ajanta has been qualitatively compromised ever since. To correct the orientaiton, I have placed an arrow on the left of the Plan to show the cardinal north (upwards); for this, the Plan of Burgess has been rotated by 92 degree, counter-clockwise. There are different assessments regarding the date of Cave 8's excavation :

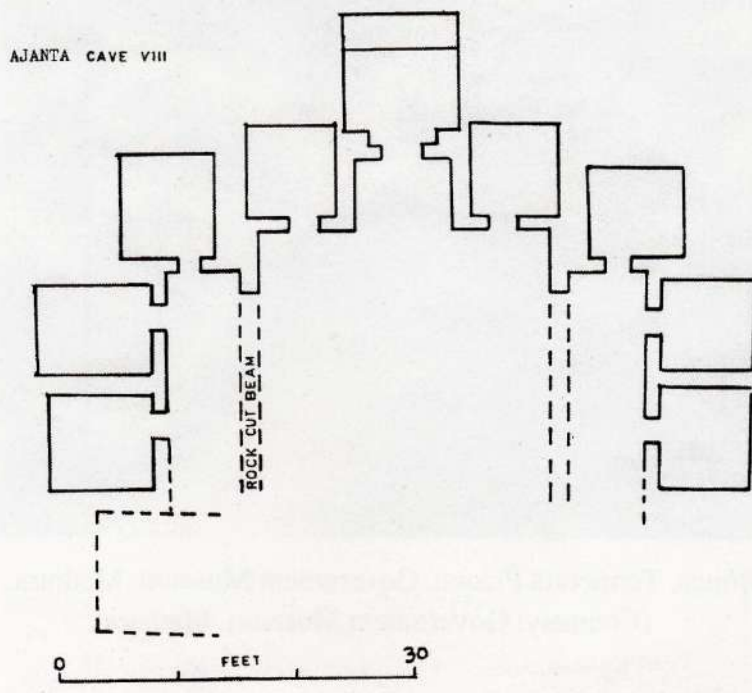
2 <sup>nd</sup> c. CE-1 <sup>st</sup> c. CE	James Fergusson and J. Burgess <sup>3</sup>
Mahāyāna period	Suresh Vasant Jadhav <sup>4</sup>
Late 4 <sup>th</sup> c. CE	M. K. Dhavalikar <sup>5</sup>
Circa 462-475 CE	Walter M. Spink <sup>6</sup>

Perhaps, the most agreeable date is proposed by Walter Spink. The variation in dating warrants a review of the edifice as well as that of the latest studies and data available.

Our latest understanding is that the *śailagr̥ha* was the first one to have begun in the 'Mahāyāna'/'Late Hīnayāna,'/'Vākāṭaka' period; and this 'first' was not just



**10.1:** General Plan of the Caves of Ajanta, Correct orientation of the general plan by Burgess indicated by the left arrow



**10.2:** Ajanta Cave VIII

on the Ajantā hill, but also a 'first' in the context of the whole of South Asia from the third to fifth century CE. The excavation of the *vihāra* can be reckoned as an important *event* in the history of rockcut architecture. In the context of Buddhist theology and architecture, it can be described as a *turning point*.

I begin with the reference of Fergusson and Burgess who for the first time described the edifice, albeit within a paragraph. Actually, there was a blunder contained in their description due to which the edifice had to suffer from neglect and abuse throughout the twentieth century. I subsequently discuss the essay by Jadhav who for the first time identified the importance of the *śailagr̥ha*. Thereafter, I discuss the essay by Dhavalikar wherein he has highlighted some aspects toward which experts had never paid sufficient attention. Afterwards, I present the views of Spink whose in depth research is perhaps most compelling. Then I shall present my own views on various unexplored aspects of the *śailagr̥ha*, and also respond to the debate on some crucial points.

Due to the research by above scholars, the *śailagr̥ha* is now being duly recognized as belonging to the 'Mahāyāna' or Vākāṭaka' period. It is also now well established that it was the first notable initiative in the history of rock cut architecture as far as the period after the 'lull' (late 3<sup>rd</sup>-mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. CE) is concerned. What is remarkable, as suggested by Spink is that most of the workers and artisans (at least of Phase I) were beginners in the art and science of rock-cut architecture.

The above views have been written, which I would like to endorse by adding more facts and arguments. Additionally, I would like to propose that :

1. *Śailagr̥ha* No. 8 is the one that launched the revival of rock-cut architecture in the subcontinent.

2. The edifice is not necessarily the 'missing link' from shrine-less to shrine-d *vihāras* as proposed by Jadhav and Dhavalikar, since the missing link may not have been just one, but any or all of these: the Kanheri shrine with wooden Buddha image (now removed), or Ajantā Cave No. 8, or 11, or 26.<sup>7</sup>

3. Phase I of the *vihāra* may be dated to circa 461 CE if a slight re-adjustment to Spink's chronology of Ajantā (c. 462-478 CE) is possible.<sup>8</sup>

4. The layout or ground plan of Phase I might have been quite different from what is seen today; it might have been similar to Ajantā Cave No. 13 or 15A or Nasik Cave-4 or 19.

5. The conception of the edifice as a *vihāra* indicates that there must have emerged a need for more dwelling space. Such a need could only be attributed to increase thoroughfare to the site owing to worship activities in the pre-existing *chaityagr̥ha* No. 9 and 10. In other words, we can infer that the hills were not really desolate even during the period of the 'lull;' perhaps the site was never abandoned between its 'Hīnayāna' and 'Mahāyāna' phases.

6. The marks of individual patronage as found in most of the other Mahāyāna *śailagr̥ha* (all of whom are later in date), are not traceable in Phase I of the cave's development. Nevertheless, the possibility of individual patronage cannot be ruled out since we know that most of the later *śailagr̥ha* were patronized by individuals (such as monks, ministers, merchants and kings). There was a new trend in religious benefactions away from the dictates of the *Saṅgha*. The trend may have begun from Cave 8 itself.

7. The site lay in the ancient 'country' or *janapada* of R̥ṣika<sup>9</sup>. Possibly, the R̥ṣika king, or an influential citizen was the benefactor. The king was more directly involved with other excavations, such as Cave No. 17, 18, 19 (and 29 as per Spink)

#### CHANGING ASCRIPTIONS

#### The 'Hīnayāna' ascription

Fergusson and Burgess developed only a paragraph on the cave identifying it as belonging to the 'Hīnayāna' type and period—the identification that perpetuated for nearly a century. Subsequent scholars ignored the cave from serious study perhaps due to the extensive damage it has suffered in course of time, so much so that the original structure was not easy to determine. To make matters worse, the Archaeological Survey (ASI) of India decided to install electric generator machines inside the hall of the cave, using the cave as the site's 'generator room' for nearly half a century. Consequently, the walls and ceiling of the cave are extensively stained with carbon deposits and soot. Three years ago, the generator machines were moved out, and the fate of the *śailagr̥ha* was at last spared from the detrimental effects of its supposed protectors. However, entry to the cave continues to be barred for unknown reasons making it difficult to conduct research unless one is armed with a special letter from the ASI, New Delhi.

The factors responsible for the wrong ascription of Cave 8 to the Hīnayāna

type and period could be numerated as following. The cave is situated next to the Hīnayāna *caityagr̥has* (Cave No. 9 and 10 datable to 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE-1<sup>st</sup> c. CE). The proximity led to the assumption that it is a *vihāra* of the Hīnayāna type and period.<sup>10</sup> The cave's situation on the cliff is on a height similar to those of the Hīnayāna period and type, i.e. on the lowest level. The size of the cave has the same diminutive scale as those of the Hīnayāna *vihāras*. The cave is astylar. Because most Hīnayāna *vihāras* in South Asia are astylar, it was presumed that our cave is of Hīnayāna type and period. No shrine or object of veneration or decoration is apparent. This fact makes it look like a Hīnayāna *vihāras* since the latter were typically halls of residence. Austere practices demanded plain and unpretentious interiors without lavish decorations, whereas most Mahāyāna *vihāras* have shrines, decorations, and architectural elaborations. The facade is perished. The remains loosely resemble a Hīnayāna *vihāras*, which are marked by simplicity and austerity of design focussing primarily on the purpose and function. In the Hīnayāna period, facades were mostly decorated in the case of the *caityagr̥has*. Many specimens show elaborate designs, some in fact resemble like *prāsāda* (palace). Conversely, the facades of Hīnayāna *vihāras* are redolent of simplicity, as the *vihāras* were meant for purely residential aims. Embellishments were introduced only after the *raison d'être* of the *vihāras* was transformed- in the late Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna period- from pure dwelling unit to the dual purpose of dwelling cum worship hall. The presumed (and apparent) lack of paintings and sculptures in Cave 8 also contributed to its ascription to the Hīnayāna period, because most of the *vihāras* of the Mahāyāna period (on the site) show at least some traces of paintings and sculptures, whereas those of the Hīnayāna period do not show this tendency.

### **The 'Mahāyāna' ascription**

Jadhav is the first scholar to have studied the *śailagr̥ha* in detail. He tried to record a proper physical description that was necessary for research and was overdue. He found that the *vihāras* had been wrongly ascribed to the Hīnayāna type and period. He proposed for the first time that the *vihāras* holds the key to understanding the transition of Buddhist art and architecture from the Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna period. He suggested that the edifice is most relevant for understanding the circumstances that caused the revival of excavation activities

at Ajantā during the Mahāyāna period. Jadhav prepared a ground plan of the edifice believing that it has never been attempted before (fig. 2). Actually, Robert Gill was the first one to prepare the ground plan of the edifice. None of the plan is to the scale.<sup>11</sup>

Jadhav made a remarkable observation that the dilapidated *vihāra* is equipped with a shrine or altar at the rear of its hall.<sup>12</sup> He also pointed out that the shrine has a raised platform at the rear on which a portable, perhaps wooden, Buddha image might have been placed. He further noted that such an arrangement of a portable votive image has been already found at Kondvite and Kanheri, both dating to earlier times. Another remarkable observation of Jadhav was that of the existence of cisterns, one on the front-left side outside the hall and another on the symmetrically opposite side (front-right corner of the hall). Unfortunately, the *vihāra*'s exterior portions have now been cemented; hence, no trace of the cisterns is visible.

Because water cistern have been excavated near most of the Mahāyāna caves (except for those on upper level, where excavation of a cistern was not feasible), the presence of the cisterns near Cave 8 contrubutes further to its ascription to the Mahāyāna period. In spite of his correct ascription to the Mahāyāna period, Jadhav refrained from assigning any particular date to the *vihāra*.

### **The 'Late Hīnayāna ascription**

Following on from Jadhav was Dhavalikar, who proceeded in the same direction, except that he found the *vihāra* to be of 'Late Hīnayāna' type. He believes that the edifice could be classed neither as a *caitya* nor as a *vihāra* neither of Hīnayāna nor of Mahāyāna type. He placed it at the intersection between the two types and periods. For him the edifice is a 'missing link' between the two periods and therefore an integral key to understanding the revival of excavaiton activities at Ajantā. The introduction of a shrine in a *vihāra* for worshipping- albeit not in the form of the *caitya* or *stūpa*, but in the anthropomorphic form of the Buddha-places the cave at this crucial juncture of the transition. By comparing the unique *stupa* and image combine with other connected Hīnayān sites, Dhavalikar concludes the Cave No. 8 could best be described as of 'Late Hīnayān' type and period. He has assigned the cave to 'late fourth century' CE in 'the Vākāṭaka period.'

But we are not inclined to go by the evolutionary thesis of Dhavalikar, simply because he failed to notice that the shrine was not there when the edifice was first planned and begun. His whole theory collapses in the aftermath of Spink's rather revealing notices of the cave's phase-wise development in the course of about sixteen to eighteen years.

### **The 'Vākāṭaka' ascription**

According to Spink, what probably started as a small, austere *vihāra* in c. 462 CE. gradually transformed into a *vihāra* shrine following a sudden burst of patronage for the site. Spink attributes the expansion of Cave 8 to the (temporary) abandonment of the adjacent Cave 7 during the periods of 'recession' and 'hiatus.' He also explains the damage to the cistern of Cave 7 as a result of this expansion. The precarious rock structure ('red bole') at the cave's lower level was not suitable for carving out an image. Therefore, a separately carved image was brought in and installed in the newly constructed shrine at a later date. Spink points out that the shrine of Cave 8 was built during a period when several plain *vihāras* were converted into shrines. He dates this period to c. 466 CE. But the presence of what he calls the 'B-type' door fitting in one of the cells, and the cutting of further cells, are indicative of rework incirca 468 CE. The cave lay temporarily abandoned until frenzied patronage resurfaced in c. 477 CE. It was then that the excavation was completed and interiors were coated with a redbrick mix. Spink notes that the use of ground brick plaster is not found anytime earlier than 477 CE. He goes on to suggest that the plasterwork was carried out by an individual patron in 478. There are also signs of decorations and murals on the walls and ceilings that may have been introduced at an earlier stage. The presence of large holes on the walls and ceilings suggest the use of wooden holders and iron hooks, and indicate the presence of a square central area in the cave.

Spink's reconstruction of the cave's development is based on archaeological facts and evidence, which sets aside Dhavalikar's theory of the 'missing link', 'late Hīnayāna', and 'late fourth century' CE dating.

### **THE INEXPERIENCED MASONS AND ARTISANS**

At the time when Cave 8 was initiated, the deployed masons and artisans may have been aware of the modest excavations at Bokhardan, some twenty miles

away that were carved during the previous centuries. But, they were Vaiṣṇavite caves. The *śilpīns* hardly knew of any other recent undertaking anywhere else in South Asia since there hardly existed any. The Hīnayāna *vihāras* on-site must have been the major source of inspiration serving as prototype. The patron must have faced difficulty in finding *sthapati* (architect) and masons knowledgeable in rock-cut architecture, due to nearly two centuries of lull, the required workers were not available. If the *sthapati* knew what to do, and how, he would have to train the workers and artisans who were skilled only in constructing wooden architecture, for there was no dearth of these people.

The challenges posed by the hard and uncouth monolith of the basalt must have been peculiar. Probably, the implements for the new task had to be invented. New methods, processes, and techniques must have been devised to deal with the work of rock-cut excavation. Notwithstanding the creativity and zeal, a degree of diffidence, archaism, simplicity, and imperfection was naturally taking place. These traits are evident in Cave 8 and some other early projects on-site.

#### THE SELECTION OF THE SITE

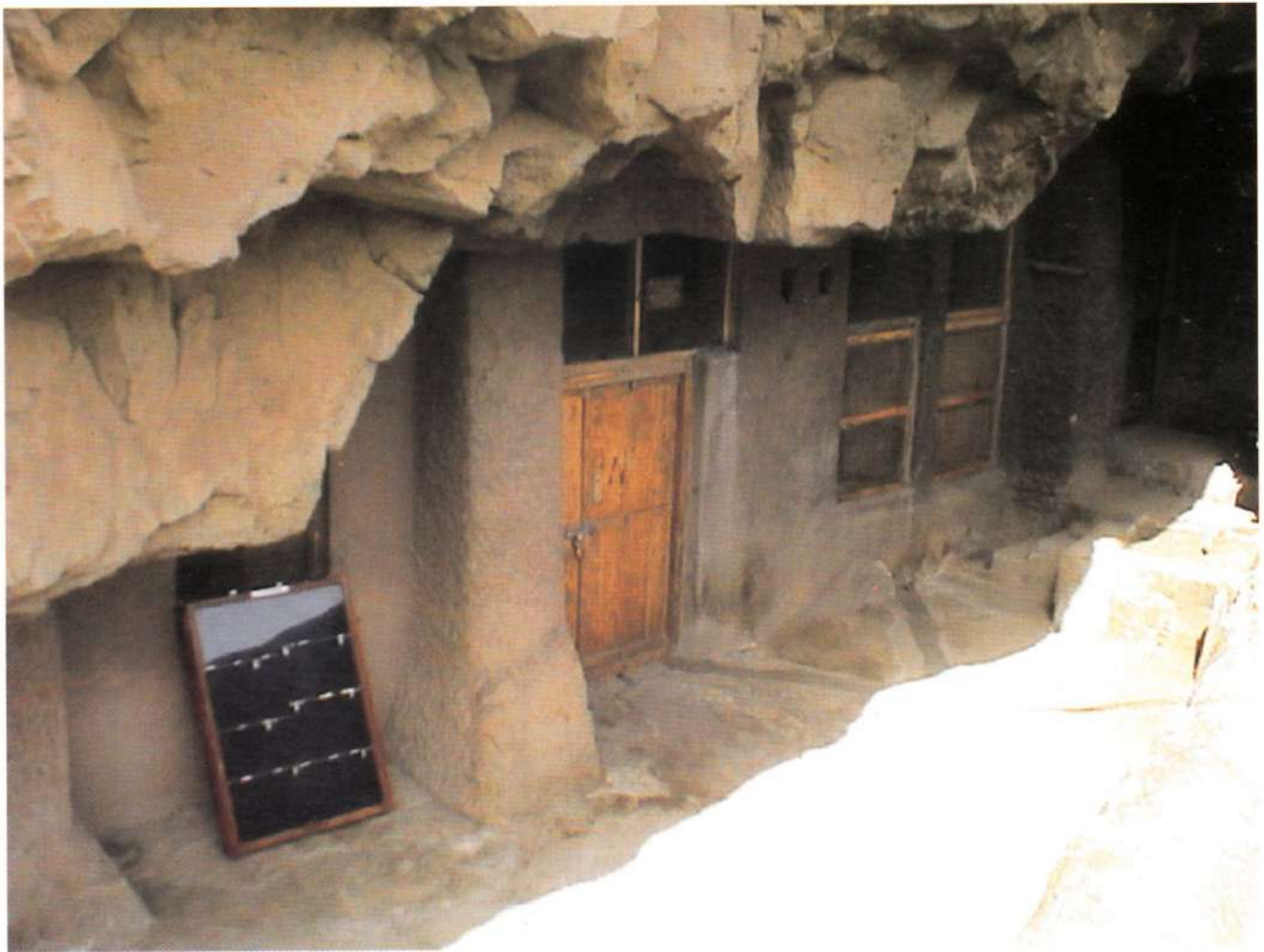
There was not a single Mahāyāna or Vākāṭaka *śailagrha* when the decision of excavating Cave 8 was made. Only the *śailagrha* of the Hīnayāna period were seen on the scarp. The rest of the hill was still barren. For choosing the location of the new project, the excavators chose not to go too far away from the pre-existing edifices. The factors contributing to the choice of location may have been from the following :

*The Hīnayāna caityagrhas:* The Hīnayāna temples, No. 9 and 10 were pre-existing, and so were the necessary adjuncts like the *vihāra* Cave No. 12, 13 and 15A. There was a relatively cosy atmosphere. Because the temples were in worship and were being visited by pilgrims, the creation of another adjunct, a supplementary residential unit, which Cave 8 essentially was, had to be located as nearby as possible. The location on extreme left would have meant going beyond Cave 15A, which would have been too far away from the *caityagrhas* (fig. 3). When there was space available adjacent to the *caityagrha* Cave 9, it was naturally the first choice. In fact, no other site on the hill could have been closer than this.

*Squeeze-in was not possible;* In the late Vākāṭaka period, there grew a trend on the site to squeeze-in a new *śailagrha* between any two of the pre-existing ones,



**10.3:** General View of Ajanta - Caves 7-16



**10.4:** Cave VIII - View from outside

e.g. Cave No. 3, 11, and 22. The scheme was preferred when no other location on the hill was considered convenient either because (a) most of the spaces had been exhausted, or (b) the quality of rock was not desirable, or (c) proximity with the ravine and concerned *caityagr̥ha* could not have been assured. No such constraint was faced at the time when the site was being chosen for the cave. Squeeze-in was not even feasible, since the existing caves were in close contact with one another, leaving no room in between.

**The distance from the main gate/staircase:** There must have been a main gate and a series of steps to access the temples and residences from the ravine below. These are no longer extant. Because the *śailagr̥has* are located at some height from the stream below, the existence of the steps cannot be ruled out. A single access point would have sufficed the purpose, because the residential units at this time had barely any purpose or function exclusive to their own; hence, they did not require independent staircases from the ravine below. But, soon things were going to change, when a new patron Monk Buddhahadra, would begin to excavate his '*sugatālaya*' (abode for the Sugata or the Buddha) far off on the western side of the hill and at a height that was going to require the excavation of a long flight of steps from the ravine below.

He was in fact going to set a new trend: every new patron would note consider it necessary and honourable to excavate a flight of steps exclusively for their own edifices. In other words, it is only after the Hīnayāna austerity disappeared in the Vākāṭaka period, and the practice of individual patronage became the norm, that the luxury of separate stairs for each new *śailagr̥ha* became fashionable.

#### WHY IS CAVE 8 A VIHĀRA AND NOT A CAITYAGR̥HA?

One may ask: Why was the first *śailagr̥ha*, after nearly two centuries of lull, planned as a *vihāra* rather than a *caityagr̥ha*? The life at the site regulated round the *caityagr̥ha* Cave No. 9 and 10 must have now required another *vihāra*. The *vihāra's raison d'être of the vihāra* indicates that it was planned for residential purpose. Perhaps pilgrimage was growing in the changing times of the 'Classical' and 'Golden Age', and the transforming socio-cultural, political, and religious circumstances had revived the interest of pilgrims on the site. Although there were other residential units like caves 12, 13 and 15A, the creation of yet another one

only indicates the need of more space. The *śailagr̥ha* would not have been initiated if the site was inactive. Prayers and congregations must have been going on in the *caityagr̥ha*, and pilgrims must have been visiting. That is why Cave 8 was carved immediately next to them. It is doubtful whether this proximity would have been chosen if the site was dead. No one would have liked to donate a *vihāra* adjoining and abandoned, longforgotten, ruinous caves, full of debris, overgrowth, and skeletons of dead beasts (like what the British officers found when they first visited the site in early nineteenth century).

### THE LIKELY PRESENCE OF THE R̥SIKAS

Was the patron an individual or the *Sam̥gha*? We may never be able to know, since there is neither any inscription nor any other reliable evidence to tell us anything for sure. However, if we examine the historical circumstances in relation to the early developments at Ajantā during the Mahāyāna period, some pointers come to mind.

The absence of individual traits in the plan of Phase I indicates that there may have been collective patronage, and the work may have been carried out by the *Sam̥gha*. It was customary for the *Sam̥gha* in the past to execute architectural projects. It is, however, possible that later developments of the *śailagr̥ha* were undertaken by an individual. In any case, a marked change in the system of patronage was introduced at this juncture of time and place. From here on, all subsequent patronage on the site came from individuals. They brought about individual tastes and preferences in art and architectural matters. Hence, a certain degree of innovation was experimented with, which became so rampant in due course that the caves started bearing the imprints of the patron's aspirations. Evidence suggests that collective patronage or execution of the work by the *Sam̥gha* became a matter of the past at Ajantā. Such factors point out that Cave 8 was a turning point not only for the future development of excavation activities at Ajantā but it was also a milestone in the history of rock-cut architecture. Without Cave 8, it would be impossible to investigate early Mahāyāna or Vākāṭaka developments of Ajantā. Because of the initiative of Cave 8 the site was able to attract more patrons like Buddhahadra, Varāhadeva, Upendragupta/Dharādhipa,<sup>13</sup> Mathurādās, etc. Evidently, Buddhahadra came when Phase I of cave 8 was completed. His modestly planned Cave 26, a *caityagr̥ha*, underwent massive

change of plans through the course of development, so much so that it acquired as many as four wings at a later juncture, and as if this was not enough, many more *vihāras* were excavated exclusively for its adjuncts. Cave No. 21, 23, 24, 25 and 27 are thus, parts of the Buddhahadra's temple-complex-cum-annexe.<sup>14</sup>

When was the excavation of the *śailagr̥ha* inaugurated and when was it completed? Let us readdress to these questions. Jadhav has not proposed any specific date. Since he endorses Spink's chronology of the Mahāyāna caves (c. 462-c. 480 CE) and identifies the cave as the first Mahāyāna excavation, it can be deduced that Jadhav would place the cave at about c. 462 CE. as did Spink. Although Dhavalikar too endorses Spink's chronology, with regard to Cave 8 he has expressly stated that it is datable to the late fourth century CE. He has arrived at this date based on his theory of an 'evolution' for rock-cut architecture. He has argued for the case of a 'transitional period' between the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna types. he cites Cave 8 as the 'missing link' in the period of transition. As regards the period of transition *per se*, he calls it 'Late Hīnayāna,' Dhavalikar does not provide any other, more conclusive evidence for supporting his chronological claims.

Spink suggests that the work on the edifice started in c. 462 CE as the first example of excavation on the site in the Vākāṭaka period. He is the first one to suggest that the edifice was reworked many times over through the life span of the site during the Vākāṭaka period.

Although I agree that Cave 8 reflects the transition, it is not the 'missing link.' The transitional period may be called 'late Hīnayāna' period, but I do not know why we must place it to late fourth century CE. It is extremely hard to ascertain as to when the excavation of the cave started, for there is no proof whatsoever. However, we would like to propose that Phase I of the cave must have been completed-or significantly completed-by c. 461 CE. While my proposition is based on Spink's larger theories about the circumstances of Ajantā's revival in the Vākāṭaka period, it differs slightly from his view that things did not start before c. 462 CE. Because of my own reasoning (explained in '*Early Mahāyāna Cave of Ajantā*,' forthcoming) I would shift the date backwards by a year, hence placing it to c. 461 CE. My analysis of the earliest *śailagr̥has* at Ajantā (during the Vākāṭaka/Mahāyāna period) makes it nearly impossible to fit all the inaugurations and developments of the various edifices within the limits of two years, i.e.

462-463 C.E. as proposed by Spink. Since the date cannot be shifted forward, the only option is to shift the date earlier by a year. Thus, if at least three years are granted for the inauguration and development of all the edifices and adjuncts, we can relocate and explain more reasonably as to how so many architectural projects started so quickly, one after another, and progressed so vigorously (as Spink wants us to believe).

A word is necessary on Dhavalikar's assumption that the *śailagr̥ha* is of late Hīnayāna type and belongs to the late Hīnayāna period (late fourth or early fifth century CE). The basis of his assumption rests chiefly on the fact that the *vihāra* does not have monolithic shrine as found in other Mahāyāna *vihāra* at Ajantā (e.g. Cave No. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 16,17, etc.) and elsewhere. The 'Archaic' quality of the shrine space and the altar for a portable Buddha image lead him to link the arrangement with the late Hīnayāna *vihāra* at other sites (*Table 1*).

Site and <i>vihāra</i> No.	Shrine type	Date, circa	Remarks
Karād. 11 & 16	Stūpa-shrine	100 BCE-100 CE	-
Nāgarjukoṇḍā, Site 6	Stūpa- + image-shrine	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> c. CE	-
Junnar Ganesh Pahad, 7	Stūpa- or image-shrine	110 CE	-
Nāsik, 17	Image-shrine	110 CE	late addition?
Kuḍā, 9	Stūpa-shrine	150 CE	-
Nāsik, 20	Image-shrine	170 CE	late addition?
Junnar Manmoḍī, 2	Image-shrine	170 CE	-
Kuḍā, 15	Stūpa-shrine	240 CE	-
Kuḍā, 1	Stūpa-shrine	250-300 CE	-
Kuḍā, 1, 6	Stūpa-shrine	310 CE	-
Mahāḍ, 8	Image-shrine	310 CE	Portable?
Śaliārwaḍī, 5	Stūpa-shrine	300 CE	-
Ajantā, 8	Image-shrine	461-478 CE	Portable, 466 CE

Table 1. Late Hīnayāna *vihāra* equipped with stūpa- or image-shrines.

(*chaityagr̥has* are not listed. most of the dates are from Nagaraju.<sup>15</sup>)

Understandably, it is natural to think on such lines that give us an impression that there was an 'evolution' of sorts within which programme the *chaitya*- or image-shrine was introduced gradually within the precincts of the *vihāra*. While it may be true of other sites, I am afraid Ajantā Cave 8 cannot be linked to them—simply because we have seen that Phase I of Cave 8 had no arrangement of a shrine whatsoever. As both Spink and I believe, it was in Phase II or III of the development of the *vihāra* that the shrine was introduced.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. I am grateful to Ms. Shuchi Kalra, a copy-editor from Patiala, for going through the typescript.
2. The word Śailgrha appears more apt than cave of English. The word was used by the makers of Ajanta, as found in Buddhahadra's dedicatory inscription in Ajantā Cave No. 26, verse 6. For details on the problems involved with the usage of cave in English, see Rajesh K. Singh, "Enumerating the Number of Sailagras at Ajanta", *Journal of the Bombay Asiatic Society*, 2008-2009 (forthcoming).
3. James, Fergusson and James Burgess, "*Cave Temple of India*" Delhi, 2000 (reprint), p. 289.
4. Suresh Vasant Jadhav, "Ajanta Cave VIII: A Study," *Kusumanjali : New Interpretation of Indian Art and Culture, Sivaramamurti Commemoration Volume*, vol. 2. ed. M.S. Nagaraja Rao, Delhi: 1987, pp. 249-254.
5. M.K. Dhavalikar, "Ajanta Cave III: A Vakataka Edifice," *The Age of the Vakatakas*, ed. Shastri, Ajay Mitra, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 203-207.
6. M. Walter Spink, "*Ajanta History and Development*, 6 vols. Handbuch Der Orientalistik (HDO) Series; ed. J. Bronkhorst, Leiden, 2005-2008.
7. Walter M. Spink, "Ajanta's Chronology: The Problems of Cave 11", *Ars Orientalis*, 1968, pp. 155-68 believes that the *vihāra* Cave 11 had first introduced the element of shrine inside a *vihāra*. There was initially a *stūpa* inside the shrine of the cave, and later the Buddha image was carved on it. It is hard to subscribe to the view, for *Table 1* displays many Late Hīnayāna *vihāras* (dating to earlier times) that were equipped with *stūpa*- or image shrines. Also, close observation of Cave 11's shrine reveals that the sequence of excavating the *stūpa* and images was perhaps *vice versa*. In Phase I of the cave, there was no provision of any shrine. In Phase II. the shrine as well as the shrine-image (without the *stūpa*) was excavated. This image was sticking to the shrine's rear wall. There was no ambulatory, nor any *stūpa* at the back. It was after the model of Cave No. 26 and 19 that the idea of adding a *stūpa* with the image came up. Hence, in Phase III, the shrines' back wall was pushed further back thus creating an ambulatory in addition to the 'half-*stūpa*' sticking to the rear of the shrine-image. Although the experiment was unique on the site, it was hardly extraordinary in terms of the purpose.
8. *ibid.*, pp. 155-68.
9. For discussion on Rsika Janapada, see Rajesh K. Singh, "Some Grey areas in Fixing the Date of the Vakataka Phase of Ajanta Caves" *Kala*, (Journal of the Indian Art History Congress)

- 2008-2009, in press; V.V. Mirashi, "Inscription of the Vakatakas", *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Series*, vol. IV, Ootacamund: *Government Epigraphic for India, 1963 and Walter M. Spink, op. cit., 2005-2008.*
10. James Burgess, *op. cit.*, 1880 reprint. Debala Mitra, "*Ajanta*", Delhi, 1956.  
S. Nagaraju, "*Buddhist Architecture of Western India*", c. 250 B.C.-C.A.D. 300, Delhi 1981.
  11. Robert. Gill, "*Stereoscopic Photographs of Ajanta and Ellora (1862); One Hundred Stereoscopic Illustrations of Architecture and Natural History (1864); Notes and Illustrations of the Buddhist Caves of Ajanta (1876).*
  12. Suresh Vasant Jadhav, *op. cit.*, 1987, pp. 249-254.
  13. Rajesh K. Singh, *op. cit.*, 2008-09 (in press)
  14. This fact is contributed by Spink's researches. In addition, the present author has unearthed number of fresh evidences and ideas incorporated in a book, '*Early Mahāyana Caves of Ajantā, (Forthcoming).*
  15. S. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture of Western India, c. 250 B.C.- c.A.D. 300*, Delhi, 1980.