I am beholden to Denjong Chogyal and Dr. A. M. D. Rozario, respectively President and the Director of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, for having invited me to deliver Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Lectures at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. The late Denjong Chogyal Chempo Tashi Namgyal was known as a distinguished personality in many fields of human activity. He will be long remembered on account of his intellectual and scholarly pursuits. I, therefore, feel honoured for being called upon to deliver these three lectures instituted in his memory. I do not profess to be a scholar in Buddhism but have studied, during the course of my long service in the Archaeological Survey of India, the Buddhist Art of India, including that of the remarkable centre of Indian art namely, Ajanta, which is well-known for its mural paintings. During the course of my work in North India, I was fortunate to visit the monasteries in the Lahul and Spiti District of Himachal Pradesh and to study the paintings at Tabo. I thought that it would be appropriate to talk on Ajanta (fig. 1) and Tabo during the course of my lectures. The first two lectures would be devoted to Ajanta while the third will deal with Tabo which can be aptly described as the ‘Himalayan Ajanta’. I shall try to bring home to the learned audience the importance of these monuments in the history of world art.*

India has a great art tradition traceable through the centuries in her literature and archaeological remains. Of the latter, Ajanta occupies a place unique in the history of world art as the foremost art-centre of ancient India. Though well-known as a rich repository of mural paintings, it has architectural splendour and sculptural beauty rarely matched by any other centre of art in the country.

The art of Ajanta owes its inspiration to those early Buddhist bhikkhus who came to western India in the wake of the spread of Buddhism under the patronage of Aśoka (273-36 B.C.). Among many cultural emissaries who went to different parts of India and Ceylon to preach Dhamma, the nātha of (Vāsana) Dhararakshita stands out for he appears to be responsible also for starting a new architectural activity in the Deccan, connected with the propagation of Dhamma. It is believed that he commenced his work from Sarpāraka (modern Sopara, District Thana), a flourishing port-town and a find-spot of the edicts of Aśoka. The perpendicular cliffs of the amogadudāl trap formation of the Sahyādri with horizontal beddings must have caught the imagination of the Buddhist monks as being ideal for the excavation of monasteries and

* The photographs illustrating the talk have been reproduced here by the courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India.
prayer halls. It is very likely that the inspiration for such experiment might have evidently come from the early Aśokān caves attempted in the quartzite gneissic rock of the Barabar and Nalpurjani hills in District Gaya, South Bihar. These early caves, excavated by Aśoka and his grandsons Devārāja, appear to have set the new style for carving out in the more permanent medium of rock, monastic centres meant for quiet contemplation and religious study by the monks. Such caves are undoubtedly in the tradition of the ancient Indian custom vouched in the Śrīvāśvatara Upaniṣad which describes a place a monk should use for quiet meditation. It says ‘labha-jal-āлагay-adishāh mamo’ nu-kie na ti chauchā-nidāne guhā-nivāśāryay prajyōjey.’ The serene grandeur of a mountain abode always attracted the recluses and the Māhāyāna found the hillocks of the Sāhāyāhī side suitable for the establishment of suṣṭhāmānas (vihāras) and chaityagṛhas. It appears from the available evidence that structures in the rock-cut form were brought into existence in western India some decades after the arrival of (Yavana) Dharmarākṣa. Examples conforming to Hīnāyāna have been located at Bhaja (District Poorna), Kondane (District Kolha), Pitalkhora and Ajanta (District Aurangabad) and many other places.

These early excavations were patronized by merchant-princes who lived and prospered under the benjāg rule of the Sātavāhana kings with their capital at Pratishthāna (identifiable with Pathan in District Aurangabad). Although these rulers preferred Brahmanism, they were also tolerant towards Buddhism. The country was rich, prosperous and peaceful under their rule. Trade and commerce within the country and with the Mediterranean world brought in enormous riches. The early stage of rock-cut activity belonged to the Hinayāna faith as the other school—Mahāyāna—was non-existent at that time. The excavations of this period can be placed in two centuries before and after the Christian era.

In this context it will be worthwhile examining the location of different Buddhist rock-cut caves in the Deccan. This study at once reveals that most of these Buddhist establishments were situated on the ancient Śrīvāśvatara-pathas or chaityan-routes. Ajanta was no exception. The situation of Ajanta is significant in more than one ways. It is about 130 kilometres north of Pathan (ancient Pratishthāna), the capital of the early Sātavāhanas and lies on the ancient terrestrial trade-routes connecting north India, through Ujjain and Māhābhārata, with Pratishthāna in Dakshinapatha and further with ports on the south-coast coast, through Ter (ancient Tagara), Konapur, Amaravati (ancient Dāṇyakašāyaka), Gurnapalli, etc. Half-way between Ajanta and Pratishthāna is a place called Bhokarlan which can be identified with Bhogavārthana of the early Sanchi inscriptions. The last-mentioned place, which has recently been excavated by the Universities of Nāgarjū and Aurangabad, has yielded remains of the Sātavāhana period including a very fine ivory figurine showing affinities with the ivory figure of Lakṣmī of Indian origin found
at Pompeii in Italy. Ajanta also lies near another trade-route connecting
Brahm (ancient Bharukachcha, Bāryaga of the Periplus and Po-lu-ka-
cheh-p' of Hsuen Tsang) with Pratishthāna through ancient townships like
Frakash and Fisal recently brought to light by excavation. As already
mentioned, the selection of the site was conditioned by the chief conside-
ration of quietude and scenic beauty. At Ajanta, the serene grandeur of
nature is at once in evidence and the words of the Upanishadic seer (see
above, p. 2) that an ideal place for the contemplation of the Divine is a
hidden cave protected from wind, situated in surroundings made favour-
able to the mind by the sound of water and other features and not offen-
sive to the eye, are amply borne out by the selection of the site. The
stream Waghora, rushing down from the high gorges, takes seven leaps
at the head of the semi-circular end of the gorge; the resultant water-
falls, pools of water (Sāt-kund) as also the melody of running water add
charm to the place. In an inscription in Cave 16, the valley is described as
resonant with chirping of birds and chattering of monkeys and the
monastery as inhabited by great yogis.

It is not known what was the ancient name of Ajanta. However, about
less than half a kilometre from the cave group is a place called Lenapur
(cave town). It is not unlikely that this small hamlet came into exist-
ence about the time the first group of workers came and settled down
at Lenapur for the purpose of excavating a monolithic cave-estabishment.
The name Ajanta, however, can perhaps be the ancient Ajitaśānya, a
place mentioned in the Mahāmāyāśī, with the vajra Kīlaśāṁshāngma (one
with peak-like teeth) as its patron deity. The caves have obtained their
present name of Ajanta from a neighbouring village, the usual local pro-
nunciation of which is Ajnāti. It would thus be seen that the words
Ajitaśānya and Ajanta seem to be very closely related. It is also likely
that the full ancient name of this monastic establishment was Ajitaśānya-
sāhāna from which the word Ajnāti could be an easy derivative. Ajita
is also the lay-name of Maitreya or the Future Buddha.
The caves, now famous throughout the world, were once lost into obli-
vion and were re-discovered in the first quarter of the last century. A
recently discovered inscription engraved in the plaster over a pillar in
Cave 10 gives the name of a British officer with the date 1819. It ap-
pears that this first recorded visit took place immediately after the caves
were noticed by the officers of the Madras Army in 1819.
The caves, however, find mention in the travel accounts of Hsuen Tsang,
the Chinese pilgrim who stayed in India for about fifteen years in the
first half of the seventh century. It appears that he did not visit the
caves and his description is mainly based on hearsay. He says “In the
east of this country (Mo-ha-la-ch’a or Mahārāsha) was a mountain
range, ridges one above another in succession, tiers of peaks and sheer
summits. Here was a monastery the base of which was in a dark defile,
and its lofty halls... and storied terraces had the cliff on their back and

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faced the ravine. This monastery had been built by A-chê-lo of West India. Within the establishment was a large temple above 100 feet high in which was a stone image of the Buddha above seventy feet high; the image was surrounded by a tier of seven canopies unattached and unsupported, each canopy separated from the one above it by the space of three feet. The walls of this temple had depicted on them the incidents of Buddha’s career as Bodhisattva, including the circumstances of his attaining the Bodhi and the omens attending his final passing away, all great and small were here delineated. Outside the gate of the monastery, on either side north and south was a stone elephant.”

At the outset it must be made clear that the thirty caves at Ajanta were excavated over a long period when the country was being ruled by the Satavahanas and the Vakataka. The Vakataka had hailed from Basim (ancient Vatsagulma, District Akola), about 130 kilometres north-east of Ajanta. The latter caves, containing inscriptions, testify that a minister and a subordinate vassal of Vakataka king, Harishena, were responsible for the excavation of Caves 16 and 17. The Vakataka, besides being contemporary of the Imperial Guptas of north India, were matrimonially connected with them and thus this royal house came to represent the classical artistic tradition in the Deccan. In fact, Ajanta caves symbolize the high water-mark of ancient Indian tradition and the paintings assume great interest as giving a vivid picture of the social life and customs of ancient India.

As already stated, the earliest caves at Ajanta belong to the Hinayana tradition. An inscription on the façade of the oldest chaitya-griha, Cave 10, mentions that the chaitya-mukha (façade) was the gift of one Vasishthiputra Kshahadi; and that vikara, Cave 12 was the gift of a merchant Ghanamadada. Recently two new inscriptions have come to light (A. Ghosh, Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XXXVI, Part VI, pp. 241—244) in Cave 10 and these belong to the second century B.C. One mentions a donation of a bhuta (wall) by Kanthaka of Bhabha while the other mentions the gift of pañāda by Dhamadeva.

The work at Ajanta began in the middle of the second century B.C. when Caves 10 and 12 were excavated. Almost about a century later was excavated Cave 9 which is a chaitya-griha with a closed façade. To the same period belong the Caves 8, 13 and 15A. However, the second phase of activity at Ajanta is of great importance. Almost after an interval of about 600 years, very ambitious excavations were planned at Ajanta to encompass the entire crescentic valley in order to meet the changing and growing needs of the faith, namely the broad-based Mahayana Buddhism. Accordingly, two magnificent chaitya-grihas, Caves 19 and 26 (the third one, Cave 29, was left unfinished) and commodious vihara, Caves 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11-15, 16, 17 and 20-24, each of the latter type, almost invariably with a shrine of Buddha and some with shrines for minor deities e.g. yakshas and riches for Buddha and
AJANTA

PLAN OF VÄKÄTAKA PERIOD VIHÄRA (CAVE NO. 17)
Bodhisattvas, were excavated. Almost all the excavations were completed in the fifth and sixth centuries a.d. under the patronage of the Vakālaka rulers. An interesting inscription in Cave 16 in Ajanta mentions the dedication of a dwelling which was fully adorned with windows, doors, beautiful picture gallery and stairs and had a temple of Buddha inside, by one Varāhadvīpa, the minister of the last of the Vakālaka rulers.
Harishena, of about A.D. 475-500. Another inscription, in Cave 17, tells us of a chief of a family subordinate to Harishena. It describes how under his patronage was excavated a gem-like monolithic stūpa. Cave 17 itself, with a shrine for Buddha and an adjacent water-reservoir and a gandhi-kāya ("perfumed-chamber"), which evidently is the chaitya Cave 19.

Rock-cut activity at Ajanta commenced, as already stated, from the middle of the second century B.C. and continued till almost the end of the sixth century A.D. During this long period, the artistic and architectural activity underwent developments and the caves excavated in different periods beautifully illustrate such a development. Before we examine this process, it will be appropriate to understand the significant features of the two principal types of caves, namely the chaitya-grihas and the vihāras. A chaitya-griha, sometimes called simply a chaitya, was a prayer hall, apsidal or rectangular on plan, with a nave and side aisles marked out from each other by a row of pillars and a stūpa (often called chaitya) at the rear end of the nave (fig. 2 and plate 1). A stūpa, often called vihāra, is a monastic abode and had as its nucleus a central hall with flanking residential cells (fig. 3). At Ajanta, the progressive architectural development in the chaitya-grihas excavated during the Śātavāhana rule under the Hēnāyāna influence and those excavated under Vākātaka patronage with Mahāyāna influence can be clearly detected. The early chaitya-grihas closely imitate contemporary buildings built in timber, the vaulted ceiling hereof still retaining the original attached wooden ribs. The later chaitya-grihas excavated under the Vākātakas, although following in a general way the plan of the typical chaitya-griha, were more elaborate in structural and sculptural treatment. Caves 19 and 26 exemplify the later effort. Both these caves have received the highest attention by the addition of elegant pillared porticoes, charming façade and skilful integration of architectural and sculptural details. These two chaitya-grihas have forecourts with attached pillared rooms to provide for the accommodation of priest monks.

The later vihāras of Ajanta, of which Cave 1 or 17 may be taken to be the most representative examples, presuppose a long development from the pillarless and rather austere examples of the earlier period. The vihāras of the later period had a pillared porch or a verandah supported by elegantly decorated pilars, the sculptured capitals of which carry spectacular entablatures with friezes or panels of sculptures including scenes from the life of Buddha (plate 11). The interior hall was supported by pillars arranged in a square and cells for monks pierced into the walls. An ante-chamber leads the visitor to the sanctum enshrining a colossal image of Buddha through well relieved door-frames.

In the fifth century and perhaps a few decades later, activity at Ajanta was so brisk that the work progressed simultaneously in different sectors. The vihāras, Caves 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, together with smaller intervening
Plate II. Ajanta. Cave 1: panel showing the four events which led the Buddha to renounce the world.

caves, were excavated at the outer end of the valley and Caves 11, 16, 17 and 20 in the central sector. The other viharas, Caves 21 to 24, together with the chaityagriha, Cave 26, at the inner end, were commenced a little later but were executed during the early part of sixth century and some were left unfinished.

The Sculpture of Ajanta

The splendour of the paintings of Ajanta has overshadowed the elegance and serene dignity of its sculpture, as a result of which the latter has not received its due attention. The study of Ajanta sculpture is of utmost importance for the understanding of plastic art in the Deccan.

The sculptural activity in Buddhist caves in the Deccan is broadly divisible into two main periods. Ajanta does not, however, contain any
sculpture of the earlier period, covering about four centuries, from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D., when the caves associated with Hinayana at Ajanta, the chaitya-grahas, Caves 10 and 9, and vihāras, Caves 8, 12, 13 and 15A, were excavated. The lacuna is now filled by the fortunate discovery of a large number of early sculptures in the cave-group of Pitalkhora in District Aurangabad, about 70 km. to the west-south-west of Ajanta. Sculptures in the caves at Bhaja, Kundane, Nasik, Behsa, Karla and Kanheri further help in showing an almost unbroken tradition of sculptural art of the earlier period. Thereafter, there was a comparatively unproductive period in the northern Deccan, the centre having shifted to Andhradeśa, where, under the patronage of the later Sātavāhana and Ikshvāku rulers, the existing art-tradition blossomed forth as exemplified in the Buddhist monuments at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. The discovery of sculptured limestone slabs of the Amaravati type at Tir (ancient Tagara) in the Deccan attests to the synthesis of these art-traditions. The northern Deccan came into prominence once more with the rise of the Vākāṭaka power, when an all-round development of fine arts like sculpture, painting and architecture was witnessed. Under the new impact of iconic Buddhism, figures of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas came to be carved as the chief objects of worship in the caves. Vākāṭaka inscriptions in the Ajanta and Ghatotkacha caves would indicate that this second phase was ushered in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. Once a beginning had been made, side by side with the excavation of new caves, the existing Hinayana ones were suitably modified and sculptures or paintings of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas added thereto as at Pitalkhora, Karla, Nasik and Kanheri, while entirely new groups of caves were excavated at places like Aurangabad, Ellora and Ajanta itself.

Ajanta imbibed artistic influences which penetrated into the Deccan from both the north and the south. The figure-sculpture of Ajanta thus reflects the best in the art-tradition of contemporary India, generally drawing its inspiration from the artistic movement set afoot under the aegis of the Guptaś and the Vākāṭakas yet retaining fundamentally autochthonous elements. The basic character of Ajanta sculpture is unconscious but quite naturally related to the indigenous school of the Deccan sculpture which flourished under the Sātavāhanaś and was later nurtured in the Krishna and the Godavari valleys. Indirect influences also traveled from north India. A recently-noticed inscription on the pedestal of a Buddha-image in the sanctuary of Cave 4 of Ajanta states that the image was the deśa-dhārma or religious gift of a person named Māthura who was the son of Abhayānandina and the owner of the monastery (vihāra-svāmi). The name of the person may suggest that he hailed from Māthura, an important centre of Buddhist and Buddhist art in northern India. The influence of Sarnath is apparent on the sculptured decoration introduced during the fifth and the sixth centuries at several centres in
the Deccan. The later carvings, specially in the chaitya Cave 3 at \textit{Kanheri}, show nearly the same refinement of modelling and spiritual expression as are met with at \textit{Sarnath}. These features, which form the fundamental characteristics of Gupta art, are palpable at \textit{Ajanta} in the standing figures of \textit{Buddha} on the façades of Caves 9, 19 and 26 and particularly
in the standing figure of Buddha in abhayagati-mudra in Cave 19. Barren such exceptions, the general character of the sculpture has a certain amount of ponderosity and heaviness of form, despite a conscious attempt at imparting a spiritual expression and finer sensitivity to the sculpture by refined modelling.

In the present context, I have selected a few important subjects to illustrate the rich variety of Ajanta sculpture. The most important subject is naturally the Buddha. The worship of Buddha as the saviour of humanity had taken roots in the Deccan by at least the fifth century A.D. and the artist took particular delight and care in fashioning his figure in rock. The presentation of Buddha in both chaitya-ha律师 and vihārās had become a necessity. The colossal images of Buddha carved in the garbhagriha, located at the rear end of the pillared vihāra, thus form a class by themselves. In this class, Buddha is usually shown seated in vajrasana. Flanked by Bodhisattvas acting as the whisk-bearer, the figures of Buddha now a sublime spiritual expression and appear to be the embodiment of karuna or benevolence in most cases. Among such figures, special attention may be drawn to the sculpture in Cave 1 (Plate III). In another case, however, probably to match the greatness of Buddha, a sculpture of colossal proportions was carved in Cave 26, where the parinirvāna (extinction) of the Master is treated with an utmost warmth of feeling (Plate IV).

The figures of Buddha flanking the entrance to the chaitya, Cave 19, are remarkable examples where the sculptor has lavished all his skill in bestowing on the Master a superb expression of detachment as also of universal love. He has refrained from producing colossal but has, for once, produced a masterpiece. The fine modelling and the delineation of feeling by subtle shades have given a new charm to these sculptures.

The highly-ornate façade of the chaitya-ha律师, Cave 19 (Plate V), has a wealth of reliefsoffering an opportunity for the study of sculpture of the classical period. Some plastic decoration cropped up here and there later on, but it only helps in understanding the artistic decadence and the changing pattern and needs of the faith. The façade was artisti-

Plate IV: Ajanta, Cave 26: Mahāparinirvāna of Buddha
cally conceived with a view to achieving an aesthetic unity by the harmonious blending of architecture and sculpture. The carvings on pillars and pilasters, the rows of chaitya-vases framing prodyon faces, scrolls of foliage in horizontal bands—all these were introduced on the façade to project pleasing architectural features and to bring out the beauty of sculpture thoughtfully introduced at appropriate places.
Coming to the principal carvings on the façade, we notice two sculptured panels set within an architectural framework of delicately-carved

Plate VI. Ajanta, Cave 19: Bodhisattva handing over the begging bowl to Rāhula
pilasters on either side of the mukha-mudra and a standing figure of the yuddha Kubera on either side of the chariya-window. The first set of sculptures flanking the entrance depicts Buddha. In the siniste panel he appears in his mendicant’s garb at the palace-door at Kapilavastu where his son Rahula, led by his mother Yasodhara, receives the begging-bowl from him (plate V). His peerless wisdom and compassion are indicated by his superhuman stature and spiritual expression. The crown held over his hallowed head by heavenly churls further enhances this effect. The scene is, no doubt, inspired by the painting in Cave 17 and is a masterpiece of Ajanta sculpture as the latter is of Ajanta painting. The corresponding figure on the dexter side (plate V1) depicts Buddha in varada-mudra, his figure steeped in karana. On his right side is a standing woman bereft of all ornaments and near his left foot is another woman, this time prostrating. Probably both represent Amrapall, the favourite courtesan of Vasishth, who, according to Avagobha, appeared in white garments and devoted body-paint and ornaments before Buddha like a woman of good family at the time of worshipping and ‘prostrated her slender body like a blossoming mango creeper and stood up full of piety’.

As a total composition, the principal figures in the niches flanking the entrance stand gracefully in slight tribhanga postures half-inclined inwards and, therefore, facing the devotee entering the shrine, their benign expressions creating a feeling of assurance in the heart of the worshipper. The soft mellifluous contours of the bodies which were enriched originally by painted plaster, coupled with the charming expression exuding spirituality, make these figures stand out from the rest.

The adjacent panel on either side depicts Buddha as an object of cult worship: on the sinistre side, he is portrayed as standing on a double lotus with varada-mudra against the drum of the stupa under a finely-carved mukha-torana, above which rises the amalaka-harmika and triple chhatra-flanked by naga-celestial. The corresponding panel on the right has two compartments, the upper one having a seated figure of Buddha in dharma-hakka-pravritti-mudra and the lower, a standing figure in varaka-mudra.

The upper part of the façade is relieved by a central chariya-window of an elegant design, with a figure of richly-decked and majestically-standing yuddha on either side. These two guardian yuddhas, in the classical Gupta-Vaishāli idiom, are generically related to the yakshas of the Śiāvalīsana period (Pāṭalihor and Nāsik). Verging on corpulence, they stand in tribhanga posture with a tight belt (udara-bhoja) around their belly. The general contours of the body are soft and fleshy. The legs are rather heavy and short but less than their archetypes. The facial expression is calm and charming with a smile concealed under a thick lower lip. The round halo around the face bestows an air of spirituality. A dwarf attendant emptying the bag of wealth of its jingling
Plate VII. Ajanta, Cave 19: Buddha figure flanking the entrance

contents adds greatly, by contrast, to the majesty of the yaksha, who has a Buddha-figure on his crest which is a unique feature.

The lord of the nāga with his consort on his left and a standing whisk-bearing on his right (plate VIII), carved in a niche on the flanking wall at right angles to the façade of Cave 19, is a product of superb

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Plate VIII. Ajanta, Cave 19: nāgarāja with his consort

artistry. Seated in dignity, he is seated on a rocky platform in mukhāśāla-līlā posture with a seven-hooded cobra behind his head. The form of the body is graceful and slim and bears an expression of peace and devotion. The lavish ornamentation, besides adding beauty to the sculpture, makes up for the nudity of costume worn by the figures.

All the vihāras of Ajanta usually have a garbhagriha to enshrine a
colonial figure of Buddha. Cave 1 contains a fine specimen of such a sculpture depicting Buddha in amashakha-pravartana-mudrā (see above pl. III). On the pedestal is seen the Wheel of Law flanked by a deer on either side to suggest the provenance of the sermon, viz., Mīgadāyā (Sarnath). The main object of worship, Buddha, is flanked on either side by a stout whisk-bearer. These attendant figures are similar to the yaksha-figures on either side of the chaitya-window in Cave 19 in regard to modelling and may, therefore, represent the work of the same group of artists. The viṣṇuṇiharan, with garlands in hands on either side of the painted halo amidst clouds represented by ringlets, are also well conceived figures. The composition is extremely well-integrated and the attention of the onlooker is focused on the main object of worship. The sculpture, however, tends to be rather heavy and lacks the grace of those on the façade of Cave 19.

The story-telling pattern followed in the paintings of Ajanta is at times repeated in sculpture. One such example is to be seen over the cell to the left of entrance to Cave 1. The four great encounters in the life of Gautama which prompted him to forsake the life of pleasure are carved here on the façade (see above, p. 8). The life of pleasure led by the prince is also depicted in the panel above the central chaitya-arch, where he is seen listening to the music produced by a lady holding a vina on her lap. The two panels to the right depict the young prince Gautama on a horse-driven chariot going for a ride, where scenes of death, old age and disease confront him.

Cave 16, a chaitya-griha not far removed in time from Cave 19, contains in its interior walls a large number of small and large sculptured panels, suggesting a definite departure from the earlier tradition of decorating the interior walls of caves with paintings. The wall-space on the left of the cave is covered by two large panels connected with the life of Buddha. While the rear and right sides bear panels depicting Buddha flanked by the Bodhisattvas. On the left side is depicted the temptation of Buddha by Māra; its lower portion showing the dalliance of his daughters to allure Buddha (plate IX). Failing in his attempt to disturb Buddha meditating under the Bodhi-tree, Māra thought of spreading a golden stupa and commanded his youthful daughters Rati (lust), Trishāla (thirst) and Arati (delight) to tempt him by their bewitching charm. Their coquetish gesture, attractive dance and melodious music, all failed to tempt Gautama and save him from the path of Enlightenment. They are then shown seated on the right lower portion with their father, dejected at the failure of their mission. The story-telling quality of the sculpture, the unity of the composition and the ingenious disposition of the figures attest to the mastery of the sculptor in his art equaling that of his brother-artist in painting.

Under the influence of polytheism of Mahāyāna, the worship of the Bodhisattvas began to have an irresistible appeal to the Buddhist laity.
on account of the more humane qualities and the spirit of self-sacrifice
of the Bodhisattvas to the extent of abjuring the highest knowledge and
Buddhahood for the good of humanity. Bodhisattvas, who had till now
been sculptured as attendants of Buddha, now came to be carved inde-
pendently. Particularly popular was the litany of the Bodhisatva Ava-
lokiteśvara depicted both in painting (tarābhrājita) of Cave 2 and veran-
dah of Cave 17) and in a large sculptured panel in the verandah of Cave 4 (plate X) and another two panels near Cave 26. The litany usually contains a central figure of Avalokitesvara with eight small panels, four on each side, showing him in the act of giving protection to the devotees from the calamities of life. He is usually shown with jatā-mukta (matted hair) with Amitābha on his forehead. He holds a
lotus-stalk, with an opening bud in one hand and generally a rosary in the other. He is invoked in all cases of danger and distress, and it is interesting to notice that they are varied, such as those that caravan-leader might suffer in his journey by land and sea, the fear of wild animals like the lion, elephant and cobra and of goblins, fire, assassins, incarceration and shipwreck. Such panels had a special appeal to the people engaged in commerce by land and sea. Similar panels are met with at the Buddhist cave-groups of Aurangabad, Ellora and Kanheri, the one at Aurangabad being the most vivid and the best executed one. One of the representations at Kanheri depicts Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with his consort Tārā standing in the centre amidst smaller panels illustrating his nonviolent actions in granting protection to devotees in distress. Besides these representations, mention must be made of the sculptures of yukṣāvā Pāṭchika and his consort Hāritī, the goddess auspicious to children. Pāṭchika (also called Jambhala, the Buddhist god of wealth) and Hāritī are invariably met with in the monasteries of the Guṇḍāra region and their worship also became popular in western India. Cave 2 of Ajanta and Cave 7 of Aurangabad have subsidiary shrines dedicated to them, while at Ellora they are sculptured in a separate niche in the middle of the group of the Buddhist caves. At Ajanta, smaller panels depicting only Hāritī with children or with Pāṭchika are carved in Caves 2 and 23 on the architraves of the cells inside the vihāras.