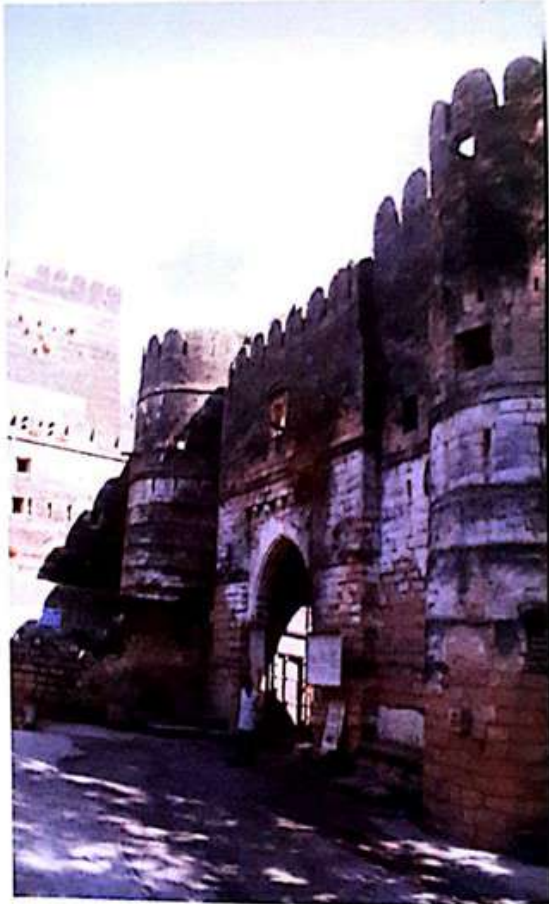


MONUMENTS OF JUNAGADH



Junagadh (Lat. 21° 25', Long. 70° 05') literally "Old Fort" is a historic town, situated amidst Mount Girnar, has always been the place of many cultural traditions and the repository of different cultural trends which are also reflected in the vestiges dating from 3rd century B.C. to 18th century A.D. consisting of rock cut caves, temples, mosques etc. Out of these, the famous Ashokan rock edicts and the rock cut caves of Uperkot namely Buddhist caves, Baba Pyara caves and Khapra Kodia caves are protected and maintained by Archaeological Survey of India, Vadodara Circle, Vadodara.

ASHOKAN ROCK EDICTS

The granite boulder carrying the fourteen edicts of king Ashoka, located at entrance of the valley near the edge of ancient Sudarsana lake, measures 20ft x 30ft, rising 12 feet from the surface was first reported by Tod in 1822 and was copied and sent to James Prinsep in 1837 for decipherment by Dr. John Wilson.



These edicts of Ashoka were meant to spread the message of *Dhamma* among his subjects. He called upon the people to stop killing of animals, respect Brahmins, monks and elders and give encouragement to the charitable persons. He also appointed *Dharma Mahamatras* all over his empire for supervision of the establishment and promotion of the *Dhamma*, caring of all the four communities namely the servile, the traders and agriculturist, the Brahmanas and the ruling class, aiding the down trodden and the family of those jailed for various offences etc..

Apart from the edicts of king Ashoka, the epigraphs of *Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman I* and Gupta king *Skandagupta* (added later on the same rock) speaks about the construction

of a dam on lake *Sudarsana* and subsequent damages caused by river *Suvarana-Sikta* and *Palasini* in rainy season and its repair from time to time by both the rulers.

KHAPRA KODIA CAVES



Khapra Kodia caves are comparatively plainest of all the caves. The cave chambers are cut into an east-west longitudinal ridge of trap rock, in which the central portion is narrow. The approach to the caves is from southern side. The two basic wings of the cave comprises of oblong western wing provided with a grid pattern of water tanks within and a roughly 'L' shaped eastern wing essentially fashioned to serve as the habitational apartments. These caves are datable to circa 3rd-4th century A.D.

BABA PYARA CAVES

These caves lie close to *Modhi Math* known as *Baba Pyara* from which it derives its name. The caves are excavated in three distinct levels following the general terraced nature of the rock, although the caves do not have a uniform orientation.



Beginning from the top level, the first group has four caves of which one on the western end measuring 28ft. x 16ft. is the largest. All the caves have an inner hall and

an outer *verandah* with a row of beautifully carved pillars. The second group of caves, which lies towards the south of the eastern end of first group, is of most unified plan with its spacious court. The main cave of the group is a *chaitya griha*, apsidal in shape, which originally had miniature votive *stupa* in it. The front *verandah* has six pillars with *Simha* brackets and the facade is carved with crude *chaitya* window. The end walls of the *verandah* are also carved with winged lion in low relief.

The main door lintels of the caves carry the auspicious symbols of the Buddhist faith like *swastika*, *triratna*, *ankusa*, fish etc., the door jambs are adorned with prominent *Purnaghata* with over flowing foliage motif. The third group comprises of five caves running west from the southern extreme of the second group. One of the caves has an octagonal pillar in the center, supporting the roof. Architecturally Baba Pyara group of caves are datable to circa 1st - 2nd century A.D.

BUDDHIST CAVES

Buddhist Caves are situated towards the north-west side of *Jami masjid*. These caves are cut into two floors. The excavation at the upper floor comprises a deep tank with a three sided covered *verandah*. The western & north-eastern part of the *verandah* is decorated with a *kakshasana*. Their bases are ornamented with *chaitya* window and chequer carving. On the lower floor, there are similar rooms, each with a corridor and pillars supporting the floor above with stone bench recesses.

The main hall contains exquisitely carved pillars having influence of *Satavahana* art tradition as well as exotic Greco - Scythian trends. The elaborate provision of rock cut channels, cisterns and tank made in this complex exhibit the rain water harvesting system of ancient India. These caves are assignable to 3rd century A.D.

LET US PRESERVE OUR GLORIOUS PAST