

= Lenyadri =

Lenyadri ( Marathi : लेंयाद्री , Le<sup>y</sup>dri ) represents a series of about 30 rock cut Buddhist caves , located near Junnar in Pune district in the Indian state of Maharashtra . Cave 7 is a famous Hindu temple dedicated to the god Ganesha . It is one of the Ashtavinayak shrines , a set of the eight prominent Ganesha shrines in Western Maharashtra .

Twenty six of the caves are individually numbered . The caves face to the south and are numbered serially from east to west . Caves 6 and 14 are chaitya grihas ( chapels ) , while the rest are viharas ( dwellings for monks ) . The latter are in the form of dwellings and cells . There are also several rock cut water cisterns ; two of them have inscriptions . The layout of the caves , in general , are similar in pattern and shape . They generally have one or two sides with two long benches for occupants ' use .

The caves date from between the 1st and 3rd century AD ; the Ganesha shrine situated in Cave 7 is dated to the 1st century AD , though the date of conversion to a Hindu shrine is unknown . All of the caves arise from Hinayana Buddhism .

= = Names = =

The current name " Lenyadri " literally means " mountain cave " . It is derived from ' Lena ' in Marathi meaning " cave " and ' adri ' in Sanskrit meaning " mountain " or " stone " . The name " Lenyadri " appears in the Hindu scripture Ganesha Purana as well as in a Sthala Purana , in association to the Ganesha legend . It is also called Jeernapur and Lekhan parvat ( " Lekhan mountain " ) .

The hill is also known as Suleman Pahar ( " Suleman hill " ) or Ganesh Pahar ( " Ganesha hill " ) . An ancient inscription calls the place Kapichita ( Kapichitta ) . The caves are also known as Ganesh Lena or Ganesh Caves .

= = Geography = =

Lenyadri is located at 19 ° 14 ' 34 " N 73 ° 53 ' 8 " E , in the Indian state of Maharashtra in Pune district . Lenyadri is a deserted location , with no human settlement nearby . It is located at about 3 miles ( 4 @. 8 km ) from Junnar , the headquarters of Junnar taluka . It is situated on the north @-@ west banks of river Kukadi , which flows between Golegaon and Junnar . It is also approached through Nanaghat , which was originally on the trade route between Aparantaka or the northern Konkan and the Deccan and descending to the plains of the Junnar town , dated to about 100 years before Christ was born . The circular hill , where Lenyadri caves have been emboweled , raises about 100 ft above the plains in the Hatkeshwar and Suleiman ranges .

Lenyadri is the only Ashtavinayaka temple on a mountain and within the precincts of Buddhist caves .

= = Cave 7 : Ganesha Temple = =

= = = Architecture = = =

The Ganesha temple is located in Cave 7 , the largest excavation around Junnar , about 100 feet ( 30 m ) above the plains . It is essentially a Buddhist Vihara ( a dwelling for monks , mostly with meditation cells ) in design , an unpillared hall with 20 cells with varying dimensions ; 7 on either side and 6 on the rear wall . The hall is large , can be entered by a central door , under a pillared veranda . The hall is 17 @. 37 metres ( 57 @. 0 ft ) long ; 15 @. 54 metres ( 51 @. 0 ft ) wide and 3 @. 38 metres ( 11 @. 1 ft ) high . There are 2 windows on either side of the entrance . The hall is treated now as a sabha @-@ mandapa ( " assembly hall " ) of the Ganesha temple . 283 steps built ( by devotees ) in stone masonry over eight flights lead to the entrance . The

steps are believed to represent sensual pleasures , which Ganesha has overcome . The veranda has six pillars and two pilasters ( half @-@ pillars ) , that support " an architrave from which projects eaves relieved with a railing resting on beams and rafters " . The pillars have octagonal shafts and " over benches and back rest and topped by an inverted ghata , compressed amalaka in between two square plates , inverted stepped pyramid and finally crowned by a bracket " with tigers , elephants and bulls .

In a later period , the two central cells of the rear wall have been combined by breaking the partition in between to house the Ganesha image . The old entrance was also widened during the conversion to the Ganesha temple . There are two other smaller entrances to the hall . All entrances bear marks of sockets for fixing wooden doors , added during the conversion , and still have doors . The hall also has traces of plaster and paintings , both added during the conversion and renewed in later times - possibly as late as the 19th century . The Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency ( 1882 ) records that the hall was plastered and white @-@ washed . The paintings depicted Ganesha 's childhood , marriage preparations , battle with demons and so forth , along with scenes of other Hindu deities like Devi , Krishna , Vishnu and Shiva . Some of the cells fitted with wooden doors were used for storage . Nine Sati memorials were added on the left wall during the conversion , each is in the shape of a long pillar with an arched top , and to the right of each pillar a hand raised above the elbow , with an open palm , signifies Sati 's blessing . While three panels were plain , the other memorials were sculpted . All of them are worn out , but one of them hints that its subject may be the immolation of Sati on her husband 's funeral pyre .

#### Icon

The Ganesha form worshipped here is called Girijatmaja ( Sanskrit : ??????? ? ?? ) . The name is either interpreted as " mountain @-@ born " or as " Atmaja of Girija " , the son of Parvati , who herself is daughter of the mountain Himavan , a personification of the mountains of Himalayas . The features of the Ganesha icon , seen on the back wall of the cave , are the least distinct vis @-@ a @-@ vis the other Ashtavinayak temples . Though the temple faces the inauspicious south , - according to a local tradition - the deity faces north , with his back to his worshipper and his face visible on the other side of the mountain . The Peshwa rulers even tried in vain to locate the face of Ganesha on the other side . The central icon was covered with brass @-@ plated wooden armour , given as a gift by Junnar . Brahmins , The armour is not present currently . After it was removed , Ganesha could be seen with his trunk turned to the left side , facing east , with one of his eyes visible . The icon is covered with sindoor and is directly formed / sculpted on the stone wall of the cave .

Like all Ashtavinayaka temples , the central Ganesha image is believed to be svayambhu ( self @-@ existent ) , a naturally occurring stone formation resembling an elephant @-@ face .

= = = Legend = = =

According to the Ganapatya scripture Ganesha Purana , Ganesha incarnated as Mayuresvara or Mayureshwar ( May?re?vara ) , who had six arms and a white complexion . His mount was a peacock . He was born to Shiva and Parvati in the Treta yuga , for the purpose of killing the demon Sindhu .

Once Parvati ( Girija ) asked her husband Shiva who he was mediating on . He said he was mediating on " the supporter of the entire universe " - Ganesha , and initiated Parvati with the Ganesha Mantra " Gam " . Desiring to have a son , Parvati underwent austerities meditating on Ganesha , for twelve years at Lenyadri . Pleased by her penance , Ganesha blessed her with the boon that he will be born as her son . Accordingly , on the fourth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the Hindu month Bhadrapada ( Ganesh chaturthi day ) , Parvati worshipped a clay image of Ganesha , which came alive . Thus , Ganesha was born to Parvati at Lenyadri . Later , he was named Gunesha by Shiva . Shiva gave him a boon that whosoever remembers him before starting a job , will successfully complete that task . For 15 years Gunesha grew up at Lenyadri . Sindhu , who knew that his death would be at the hands of Gunesha , sent demons like Krur , Balasur , Vyomasur , Kshemma , Kushal , and many more , to kill Gunesha , but all of them were instead killed by him .

At the age of six , the architect @-@ god Vishwakarma worshipped Gunesha and endowed him with the weapons Pasha ( noose ) , Parashu ( axe ) , Ankusha ( hook ) and Padma ( Lotus ) . Once , little Gunesha knocked an egg from a mango tree , from which emerged a peacock . Gunesha mounted the peacock and assumed the name Mayuresvara . Mayuresvara later killed Sindhu and his army @-@ generals at Morgaon , the most important Ashtavinayaka temple .

= = = Worship = = =

Lenyadri is one of the eight revered Ganesha temples collectively called Ashtavinayaka . While some believe that order of visiting the temples in an Ashtavinayaka pilgrimage is irrelevant , Lenyadri is usually visited as the 6th temple .

The caves including the temple lie under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India . Sardar Deshpande is the priest in charge of the temple 's activities . He does not stay in Lenyadri . The priests there claim to be Yajurvedi Brahmins . The festivals of Ganesh Jayanti and Ganesh Chaturthi are celebrated in the temple , when pilgrims crowd all Ashtavinayak temples .

= = Other viharas ( monk dwellings ) = =

#### Cave 1

Cave 1 is divided into four parts : a veranda , a middle room , a cell , and a half cell . The veranda has a bench along the right wall . Its front possibly had two quadrangular pillars , traces of one are seen around the ceiling . A rock beam was present over the pillars , above the beam ribs and a rail pattern could have existed . In a recess below the veranda is an earth @-@ filled cistern . A door with a small window to the left leads into the middle room . The middle room has a bench along the right wall . Towards the back of the middle room , to the left , is the half cell and to the right the cell . The half @-@ cell has a bench along the right wall and to the left , has a square window connecting it to cave 2 . A door with grooves for fitting a wooden frame , leads into the cell which has a bench along its right wall .

#### Cave 2

Cave 2 is similar to cave 1 in design . The veranda has two pillars and two pilasters , a bench between each pillar and pilaster with curtains in the back , which have a rail pattern . Over the pillars rests the rail @-@ patterned rock beam , above which is the ceiling . Parts of the pillars and pilasters are broken . In front over the beam project rock imitations of rafters . A doorway with grooves for a wooden frame , leads into a middle room , with a bench along the left wall . The position of the hall @-@ cell and cell are exchanged with respect to cave 1 design . Each has a bench .

#### Cave 3

Cave 3 has an open veranda and a cell . The veranda has a bench along the back wall . A door leads to a cell , which has a seat in a left recess . In front of the recess , below the seat , are vertical bands . Between caves 2 and 3 there is a seat in the front , in a recess .

#### Cave 4

Cave 4 has an open veranda and a cell . The veranda has a bench , along the back wall . A grooved door leads to a cell , which has a bench along the right wall . A broken window is to the left of door and to its right , a small hole , which could have been used to wash feet before entering the cell .

#### Cave 5

Cave 5 is located 12 feet ( 3 @. 7 m ) lower to left of cave 4 . It is divided into 3 parts : veranda , a middle hall and seven cells of varying size , three in the back wall and two in each side wall . Thus it is known as a saptagarbha layana ( seven cell dwelling ) . The veranda had two pillars and two pilasters with pot capitals of the Satakarni period ( B.C. 90 @-@ A.D. 300 ) , of which only the right broken pilaster and a trace of the base of the right pillar remain . In front of the veranda , an open court with two steps lead to the veranda . To the right of the court is a cistern . In the back wall of the veranda , to the left of the door to the middle hall , close under the broken verandah ceiling , is a

single line inscription , flanked by the Buddhist trident in the beginning and swastika at the end . It is translated as : " A meritorious gift of a seven @-@ celled cave and cistern by a guild of corn @-@ dealers . " The door also has windows on both its sides . Throughout the middle hall in the front of the cells is a bench . A bench is also built in the back wall of the cells .

#### Cave 8

Cave 8 is a difficult @-@ to @-@ reach dwelling . It consists of a veranda with a cell and a half cell in its back wall , both entered through the veranda . The cell has a broken door , a small window , benched recess and a peg hole . The half cell has an open front and a bench at the back .

#### Cave 9

Cave 9 located to the right of Cave 8 , can be entered via the latter 's veranda . Cave 9 has its own veranda and a hall . The veranda has four Satakarni @-@ period , broken pillars . The hall has a larger central door - with windows on either side - and a side door , both having grooves for wooden frames . The purpose of this hall is unknown and speculated to be a school or study .

#### Cave 10

Cave 10 is located at a higher level than cave 9 and is difficult to reach as its front is broken . An open veranda with a broken ceiling and floor leads to a middle room through a grooved broken door , which has windows on either side . The right wall of the hall has a recess with a seat . A cell to the left of the room has a seat in a recess . A door from the cell leads to a half @-@ cell which has a recess and seat . Traces of painting are seen on the ceiling . Outside the veranda to the left is a cistern .

#### Cave 11

Cave 11 is difficult to reach with a broken front and a hall . To the left of a hall is a cell , lower in height than the hall . The hall has a grooved doorway and a recess with a seat at the back . Outside the hall is a view seat . The cave bears traces of paint .

#### Cave 12

Cave 12 is a small dwelling entered by a door from the veranda of cave 11 . It has its own open veranda , which has a partly broken floor and ceiling and recessed benches on the left and right of the door to the middle room . The middle room has a small window to the left of the door and a seat recess in its right wall . In the back wall of the middle room to the left is a half cell - which has a seat recess - and a cell with a grooved door . The floor of the cave has a coating of cement , while the ceiling of the middle room bears painted concentric circles .

#### Cave 13

Cave 13 on a slightly higher level than cave 12 , is a small dwelling with an open court and from 2 steps lead to a veranda . To the right of the court is a cistern . The veranda has a bench along its right wall . The front of the veranda has 2 benches , flanked by a plain eight @-@ sided pillar and pilaster ; some remnants of these survive . On the right pilaster is a double crescent ornament . A grooved door leads to a middle room , which has a bench along the right wall and seat recess to the left . A window is to the left of door . In the back wall of the middle room a cell ( left ) - with a grooved bench and a bench - and a half cell ( right ) are seen . The ceiling has traces of painting .

#### Cave 15

Cave 15 is a small dwelling consisting of a cell with an unproved doorway and a veranda . Though the side walls of the cave are still preserved , the ceiling is half broken .

#### Cave 16

Cave 16 is a small dwelling , on a slightly higher level above cave 15 . It has a cell with a bench along its right wall and a veranda , which leads to the cell through a door . The side walls as well as a part of the ceiling are broken .

#### Cave 17

Cave 17 comprises a series of three small dwellings located along a row with a shared veranda . The first dwelling has a doorway flanked by broken windows on either side , leading to a middle room . The back room of the middle dwelling has a cell to the right and a half cell to the left . A window is located to left of door to the cell . The cell also has traces of painting . The half cell has a bench . The second dwelling has a middle room , a half cell to the left , and a cell , reached from the right of the half cell . The middle room has a bench . The half cell has a recess in its back wall ,

along with a bench . A grooved door leads from the half @-@ cell to the cell , which also has a bench . A window in the right cell overlooks in to the middle room . In front of the doorway is a bench . The third and largest of the three dwellings consists of a middle hall . At the back wall of the hall there are two cells and two seat recesses . Along the right and rear walls runs a bench . The right cell as well as the left cell have grooved doorways , a window to the left of the doorway and a bench along each of their rear walls . In front of the hall door is a bench . In front of the broken veranda are holes for fixing wooden pillars . To the left of the veranda are two cisterns . Between cave 17 and cave 18 , there are three other cisterns . In the recess of the first cistern , an inscription reads translated : " A meritorious gift of a cistern by Saghaka a goldsmith , son of Kudira of Kalyana . " Another inscription in the recess of the second cistern reads translated : " A meritorious gift of a cistern by Lachhinika ( wife ) of Torika the Na daka [ and ] Nadabalika , wife of Isimulasami . "

#### Cave 18

Cave 18 is a dining hall with a front wall and a grooved doorway , on either side of which are windows . A bench runs along the back and side walls . The passage to the hall has 3 broken steps and an open court in the front . A cistern is located to the left of the court .

#### Cave 19

Cave 19 is a cell without a front wall and a bench runs along the left wall . The ceiling shows signs of a dressed stone or wooden screen from the right wall to the end of the bench . To the right is a small cell in the same roof , probably connected with cave 19 . The small cell has a bench along its right wall and the grooved doorway . The cave has two cisterns .

#### Cave 20

Cave 20 is a small dwelling , hard to reach as the front is broken . To the right is a passage and to the left a cell with a bench along the entire left wall .

#### Cave 21

Cave 21 is approached through a small crevice from cave 20 , in the absence of any direct approach . Its living space has a veranda of fairly large size . There is also an inner cell with a grooved door frame . Seating benches have been cut into shallow spaces both in the cell and in the veranda .

#### Cave 22

Cave 22 adjoins cave 21 on the left and it was also a dwelling unit with a bench for the entire length of the back wall . A window from this hall overlooks another smaller room . An entry through a grooved door gives access to a long corridor and in the back wall of which is an inscription that discloses the name of the donor and the monastic order .

#### Cave 23

Cave 23 has two dwelling units with a long passage with shallow niches with seating provisions on the left wall . A door provides links to the rooms . A 2 feet ( 0 @. @ 61 m ) niche in the back wall between the two rooms gives no clue of its purpose .

#### Cave 24

Cave 24 is a long cave with difficult access that leads into a cistern with seating arrangements in the niches . There is a door access to the passage , which also has benches for seating .

#### Cave 25

Cave 25 is longer than cave 24 with several small and big rooms . These rooms also have seating arrangements in niches which display irregular excavations denoting poor condition of the rock , which probably stopped further work on this cave .

#### Cave 26

This is plain cave located below cave 6 , which is a chaitya ( chapel ) cave .

= = Chaityas ( chapels ) = =

#### Cave 6

Cave 6 is the main chaitya @-@ griha of the Lenyadri caves and one of the earliest examples of a Hinayana chaitya @-@ griha . Its plan is similar to the Ajanta Caves chaitya @-@ griha , though smaller in size . It has a veranda , pillars and pilasters with animal @-@ capitals , and a shrine with

5 steps at the entrance . The shrine hall is entered by a plain and a socketed @-@ door measuring 1 @.@ 8 metres ( 5 @.@ 9 ft ) in width and 2 @.@ 79 metres ( 9 @.@ 2 ft ) in height . The hall measures 13 @.@ 3 metres ( 44 ft ) in length ; 6 @.@ 7 metres ( 22 ft ) in width and 7 metres ( 23 ft ) in height . It has a row of five pillars and one pilaster on each side of the chaitya or Dagoba or stupa ( central relic @-@ shrine ) , located at the rear of the hall . The Satakarni period pillars begin with a four @-@ plated pyramid structure , then a waterpot base , followed by an eight @-@ sided shaft , above a reversed pot , then a capital in five plates , and on the top the amalaka or cogwheel pattern . The capital has animal figures like lions , elephants , a sphinx and tigers . Parts of the pillar are broken . Behind the relic @-@ shrine , are six eight @-@ sided pillars , arranged in a curve . " The stupa consists of a drum with a moulding below and railing above , a globular dome and a corbelled ( with " a projection jutting out from a wall to support a structure above it " ) dome with a railing at the base . " The stupa has Buddhist tridents carved on it . A hole is carved for fixing garlands in the front and 5 holes on the top probably to fix a central wooden umbrella and side flags . A 2nd century , swastika @-@ flanked inscription on the back wall of the veranda translates : " A meritorious gift of a chapel cave by the distinguished Sulasadata , son of Heranika of Kalyana [ modern Kalyan near Mumbai ] . "

Between caves 5 and 6 , on higher level , is an excavation originally intended either for a dwelling or for a seat , but converted into a cistern following discovery of a rock @-@ fault . On its left side is a bench .

#### Cave 14

This cave , also a chaitya @-@ griha , has a flat roof . However , it has no pillars in the hall that measures 6 @.@ 75 metres ( 22 @.@ 1 ft ) in length ; 3 @.@ 93 metres ( 12 @.@ 9 ft ) in width and 4 @.@ 16 metres ( 13 @.@ 6 ft ) in height . It has a pillared veranda ; pillars are in octagonal shape . The stupa is in three steps with a base of 2 @.@ 6 metres ( 8 @.@ 5 ft ) diameter . The rim has a railing design surrounded by a cylindrical drum with ? a square harmika with railing pattern and an inverted stepped pyramidal abacus . ? A carved chhatra covers the ceiling . The pillars of the veranda consist of octagonal shafts resting on ghata base over a stepped pedestal . An inverted kalasha adorns the top , which also has a corbelled abacus . Inscription on the back wall of the veranda dates the cave to the 2nd century A.D. The inscription translates as : " A meritorious gift of a chapel cave given by ' nanda , a son of Tapasa an Upasaka , and grandson of Kapila an Upasaka . "

#### = = Unnumbered Caves = =

On another spur of the same Lenyadri hill , there are four more caves ( not numbered ) that face south @-@ south west and are cut into precipitous hill slopes . Based on their unfinished conditions , they are interpreted as early caves . The details are : a small chaitya with a relic @-@ shrine and a door , with unfinished irregular rock faces . The entrance is decorated with ornamentation that depict relic @-@ shrine , a lotus flower and geometrical patterns ; another is an inaccessible cave with two rooms , a well , and stone beds in three adjoining rooms with an incomplete relic @-@ shrine in low relief ; two other adjoining caves have a chapel and a front veranda .