

**SETTING THE THREE JEWELS:
THE COMPLEX CULTURE OF BUDDHISM AT THE AJAṆṬĀ CAVES**

by

Richard Scott Cohen

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Asian Languages and Cultures: Buddhist Studies)
in The University of Michigan
1995

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Luis O. Gómez, Chair
Professor Madhav Deshpande
Professor Donald S. Lopez
Professor Walter M. Spink

Richard Scott Cohen
© ————— 1995
All Rights Reserved

For my parents, David and Bernice Cohen,
whose love, encouragement, and support
have always been without reservation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was born of an epiphany. Walking along a path at Ajaṅṭā, somewhere near Cave 9, I had a realization -- whether in the body or out I do not know -- of how rich the site could be for a scholar of Buddhism. It requires no such epiphany to recognize that one does not become a scholar of Buddhism without the assistance of one's teachers, friends and family.

I am deeply indebted to the members of my committee, whose role in my graduate career commenced long before the dissertation. My most profound debt is to Luis O. Gómez. Driving the chariot of my graduate career, Luis revealed the Dharma of Buddhist studies. But whereas Kṛṣṇa's teachings were broadly universal, his physical form infinite, Luis is best revered for the precision of his insights and the human warmth of his delivery. Walter Spink, my next-door-neighbor at Ajaṅṭā for several months while I was doing research, became my friend as well as teacher. Whether arguing the reasons that a vihāra's wall is askew or dancing to a cassette of eighteenth century waltzes, Walter is the model of a man whose work has redefined an entire field. I am also grateful to Donald Lopez, who taught me Tibetan after a string of inadequate teachers had made me question whether it could ever be taught. More importantly, Don's emphasis on matters theoretical has pushed me to explore avenues of thought that provided an underpinning for the dissertation and will guide my intellectual life for the foreseeable future. Rounding out my committee is Madhav Deshpande, who provides me with an ideal of what a Sanskritist can be.

I also wish to thank the many people who made my year-long research trip to India enjoyable and successful: the many people of USEF/I, beginning with Dr. Amiya Kesavan; the Archaeological Survey of India; Dr. T. V. Pathy in Aurangabad; the people of Fardapur; the chefs of Gopalkrishna Hotel, arguably the best dabha in India; and the crew

at the MTDC Holiday Resort, whose companionship was as welcome as it was inevitable. I returned to America without all the necessary documentation, and thank Leela Wood for her excellent slides and conversation.

Erudition and friendship alone do not a dissertation make. The sources of financial support that enabled the realization of my project include a Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship to India, a Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship from the University of Michigan, and a Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for my final year of writing.

An unrepayable debt of gratitude is due my parents, David and Bernice Cohen. They feared I would not return after my first trip to India, but never discouraged me from going; they feared that the path to a degree in Buddhist studies was a long hard road to nowhere, but as long as I kept my eyes on that goal, so did they.

There is a common trope in Buddhist literature, wherein two religious practices are compared, and one is said to not have one hundredth, one thousandth, or even one ten thousandth of the merit of the other. It is in the spirit of this trope that I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Nancy Caciola. Nancy has been my companion, friend, and lover for my entire adult life. And whether it was helping me find the correctly nuanced word, distinguishing "principle" from "principal," or discussing the value of different scholars' takes on ritual, Nancy's contributions to this dissertation have been of singular merit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF APPENDICES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
INTRODUCTION: A TRAVELLER'S TALE	1
PART I:	
PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF AJAṆṬĀ'S BUDDHISM	12
CHAPTER	
I. ON THE HISTORY OF A PLACE, AUSPICIOUS AND DELIGHTFUL	13
Ajaṇṭā, An Introduction A Review of the Scholarship Towards a Relative Chronology Relative to What? The Rocky Road to History Reconstructions and Resurrections	
II. BETWEEN THE MOTION AND THE ACT FALL THE SOURCES	78
Schopen, Archaeology, and Textual Possibilities Two Scholars Between a Rock and a Hard Place The Ajaṇṭā Canon	
PART II:	
THE THREE JEWELS AND OTHER VALUABLES	132
CHAPTER	
III. SAṄGHA: AJAṆṬĀ'S COMMUNITY AND ITS PATRONS	133
A Brief Reprise, The Three Jewels Delimiting Ajaṇṭā's Saṅgha Patronage and Community in the Configuration of Ritual Space Interlude: A Reaffirmation of Vākāṭaka Control over Ajaṇṭā A Census of Ajaṇṭā's Patrons Programmatic Dōnors	

Identifying Ajaṅṭā's Intrusive Donors: On Collective Patronage
Intrusive Patrons

IV. DHARMA: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BUDDHISM AT AJAṆṬĀ	194
Who Were India's Śākyabhikṣus? Sircar on Śākyabhikṣu Sarkar on Śākyabhikṣu Towards Identifying Ajaṅṭā's Śākyabhikṣus Between Two <i>Yānas</i>	
V. BUDDHA: AJAṆṬĀ'S IDEAL SAVIOR	270
The Miracle and the Descent The King is Dead, Long Live King Buddha	
VI. CONCLUSION: ON THE COMPLEX CULTURE OF BUDDHISM AT THE AJAṆṬĀ CAVES	316
APPENDICES	324
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	431

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix

A.	Ajaṅṭā's Inscriptions	325
B.	A Discussion of the Cave 17 Inscription, Line 10	387
C.	Figures	394
D.	A Summary and Analysis of Walter Spink's Chronology for Ajaṅṭā	422

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. General Plan of the Ajaṅṭā Caves, after James Burgess. *Report on the Buddhist Cave Temples and their Inscriptions*, plate xiv. 394
2. Walter M. Spink's Chronology of Vākāṭaka Patronage at Ajaṅṭā and Related Sites, after Spink. "The Archaeology of Ajaṅṭā," Table 1. 395
3. Entrance, Cave 15. Courtesy of Asian Art Archive, the University of Michigan (AAAUM). 396
4. Entrance, Cave 16. Courtesy of AAAUM. 397
5. Entrance, Cave 23. Courtesy of AAAUM. 397
6. The Vākāṭaka Genealogy. 398
7. A Map of the Vākāṭaka Homelands. 399
8. Appendix A, No. 77, line 10: the crucial *akṣaras*. 400
9. The *akṣara* from app. A, No. 77, line 10 read variously as [*ṣu*], [*kam*], or [*bhiḥ*]. 400
10. A sample *ka* from app. A, No. 77, line 28. 400
11. A sample *ṣu* from app. A, No. 67, line 13 400
12. A sample *ā* from app. A, No. 77, line 13. 400
13. The *akṣara* from app. A, No. 77, line 10 read variously as *ma* and [*v*]*a*. 400
14. A sample *ma* from app. A, No. 77, line 29. 400
15. A sample *va* from app. A, No. 77, line 29. 400
16. A sample *ṣṭa* from app. A, No. 77, line 17. 400
17. A Map of the Lands named in Varāhadeva's Inscription from Cave 16. 401
18. A Map of the Lands named as Anantavarman's feudatories in the eighth chapter of Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita*. 401
19. The Kadamba lineage from Kākusthavarman. 402
20. The Wheel of Existence on the left wall of Cave 17's verandah. Courtesy of Leela Wood. 403

21.	Cave 17's Wheel of Existence as Reconstructed by Dieter Schlingloff (<i>Studies in the Ajanta Paintings</i> , 384).	403
22.	Detail of the door under Cave 17's Wheel of Existence, showing paint over the door's right corner, and a plug cut into the door frame. The left side has a matching plug as well.	403
23.	Main Buddha, Cave 16. Courtesy of AAAUM.	404
24.	The bodhisattva receives his first meal after years of asceticism from the hands of Nandā and Nandabalā as the gods look on. Cave 1, capital of porch's right pilaster. Courtesy of Leela Wood.	404
25.	A view of Caves 15, 16, and 17 from across the Waghora river.	405
26.	The river entrance to Cave 16, detail.	405
27.	Cave 12, floor plan.	406
28.	Cave 7, floor plan.	406
29.	Cave 14, floor plan.	406
30.	Cave 20, floor plan.	406
31.	Programmatic painting on the walls of Ajaṅṭā, Cave 20.	407
32.	Programmatic painting on the walls of Bāgh, Cave 2.	407
33.	Programmatic painting on the walls of Bāgh, Cave 3.	407
34.	Programmatic painting on the walls of Bāgh, Cave 4.	407
35.	Cave 2, The Hārītī Shrine. Courtesy of Leela Wood.	408
36.	Cave 2, floor plan.	408
37.	Cave 2, Hārītī and Pañcika.	408
38.	Cave 1, Capital of Pillar L2: Hārītī and Pañcika.	408
39.	Cave 2, Padmanidhi and Śaṅkhanidhi. Courtesy of AAAUM.	409
40.	Cave 1, Capital of Pillar L3: Śaṅkhanidhi and Padmanidhi. Courtesy of AAAUM.	409
41.	Cave 2, Hārītī attacking Buddha.	409
42.	Cave 2, Hārītī paying homage to the Buddha.	409
43.	Cave 2, Painting on Hārītī shrine's right wall: A pūjā for Hārītī. Courtesy of Leela Wood	410
44.	Cave 2, Detail of right wall painting: A prince or bodhisattva.	410

45	Cave 2, Painting on Hārītī shrine's left wall: The outcome of the Hārītī pūjā. Courtesy of Leela Wood.	411
46.	Cave 2, Detail of left wall painting: Hārītī appears.	411
47.	Identifications of donors, programmatic and intrusive, named in Appendix A.	412
48.	The <i>akṣara</i> in app. A, No. 84, line 2 read variously as <i>kṛ</i> and <i>kṣa</i> .	413
49.	A sample <i>kṛ</i> , from app. A, No. 77, line 6.	413
50.	A sample <i>kya</i> , from app. A, No. 77, line 25.	413
51.	A sample <i>kṣu</i> , from app. A, No. 77, line 5.	413
52.	Cave 26 ambulatory, Intrusive Buddhas and the programmatic <i>Parinirvāṇa</i> . Courtesy of AAAUM.	413
53.	Use of Buddhist epithets in Appendix A.	414
54.	Cave 9, pillar L4: Intrusive image of a bodhisattva, probably Maitreya, associated with app. A, No. 32.	415
55.	Cave 4, porch rear wall: Intrusive image of <i>aṣṭamahābhaya</i> Avalokiteśvara.	415
56.	Cave 26 ambulatory: Intrusive images in which one Buddha is superimposed over another; associated with app. A, No. 96.	415
57.	Cave 1, <i>Mahāsudarśana jātaka</i> (?): 'Persian' residents of Kuśāvati bring Mahāsudarśana gifts, which he uses to construct a religious hall. Courtesy of Leela Wood.	416
58.	Cave 10: A white robed Buddha in the Gandhāran style.	416
59.	Cave 16: An illustration of Aśvaghoṣa's <i>Saundarananda</i> : The Śākya in Kapilavastu. After Schlingloff. <i>Studies in the Ajanta Paintings</i> , 351.	416
60.	Cave 17, antechamber rear wall: Yaśodhara introduces Rāhula to his father.	416
61.	Cave 19, porch, rear wall.	417
62.	Cave 19, porch: Sumati receives a prediction to Buddhahood from Dīpaṅkara Buddha.	417
63.	Cave 19, porch: Detail from the meeting of Sumati and Dīpaṅkara: A flying dwarf.	417
64.	Cave 19, porch: Yaśodhara introduces Rāhula to his father.	417
65.	Cave 26, clerestory over pillars R3 and R4: The meetings of Sumati/Dīpaṅkara and Rāhula/Śākyamuni.	418
66.	Cave 26, clerestory: Sumati receives a prediction to Buddhahood from Dīpaṅkara Buddha.	418

67.	Cave 26, clerestory: Yaśodhara introduces Rāhula to his father.	418
68.	Cave 17, antechamber left wall: Detail from the Great Miracle at Śrāvastī: Pūraṇa-Kāśyapa faints in dismay at the Buddha's superior powers.	419
69.	Cave 1, antechamber left wall: The Great Miracle at Śrāvastī. Courtesy of Leela Wood.	419
70.	Cave 17, antechamber left wall: The Great Miracle at Śrāvastī.	419
71.	Cave 17, antechamber left wall: Detail from the Great Miracle at Śrāvastī.	419
72.	Cave 17, antechamber right wall: The Buddha's descent from Trāyastrimśa heaven and related events. After Huntington. <i>Art of Ancient India</i> , Plate 8.	420
73.	Cave 17: antechamber right wall. The Buddha teaching his mother and gods in Trāyastrimśa heaven. The monk Mahāmaudgalyāyana kneels in the foreground.	421
74.	Cave 17, antechamber right wall: The Buddha descending from heaven flanked by Indras and Brahmās. Utpalavarṇā in the form of a Cakravartin king rides an elephant at the right.	421
75.	Cave 17, antechamber right wall. The Buddha preaching after his descent. Note the Cakravartins kneeling before Buddha.	421

76. Cave 26, caitya arch, left side: Two Buddhas seated side by side. Possibly a reference to the meeting of Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*.

421