

## DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST STŪPA IN GUJARAT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DEVNIMORI

Prof. Atul Tripathi<sup>1</sup>

The present paper deals with the development of Stūpa in Gujarat taking note of the archaeological materials traced from the Devnimori site, now submerged under the Meshvo dam. In Buddhism Stūpa architecture occupies a very significant place and epitomizes the essence of Buddhism and suggests the path of *Nirvana*. The early *Stūpas* were generally the relics chambers gradually developed with the changing socio-economic religious-cultural trends of the society. Buddhism made contribution to Gujarat region through its teaching and art for more than one millennium years i.e., from third century BCE to the eighth century CE. The Kshatrapas (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century CE), who ruled in Gujarat almost contemporaneously with the Kushanas till their fall at the hands of Chandragupta-II towards the end of fourth century CE, were favourably disposed towards Buddhism. During this period Buddhism in Gujarat reached at its peak and Buddhist art flourished, and monasteries grew rich and powerful as evidenced from the archaeological remains found from Devnimori which includes Buddhist *Stūpas*, and *vihara*. Devnimori was a mile and a quarter south of Samlaji, Sabarkantha district in north Gujarat (ancient Anarta) and about 120 kms. To the east of Ahmedabad. The place was a thriving Buddhist centre in the third-fourth centuries CE with two brick built *viharas*, an apsidal temple, and a *maha Stūpa* surrounded by a number of votive *Stūpas*. The excavation reveals that the Stūpa was built of bricks with terracotta ornament. From the Stūpa were recovered 26 terracotta-Buddha images and a mass of carved bricks, medallions and arched niches made of ornamental bricks. The relic casket

---

<sup>1</sup> Dept. of History of Art, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005(India)

from a Stūpa bears an inscription saying that this *mahastupa*, enshrining body relics of the Buddha, was built close to a *mahaviharain* 127 of the era of the “Kathika” rulers, during the reign of Rudrasena. The excavation revealed that Devnimori was one of the most important Buddhist centres of the period.