



## SIYOT CAVES

On the highway from Bhuj to Lakhpat comes the village of Ghaduliya from where a road leads past the village of Siyot to a cave with an east-facing sanctum and an ambulatory, which is said to date around the first century AD. Brahmi inscriptions and seals have been found at this cave site. This may have been one of 80 sites that the Chinese travelers reported seeing in the seventh century at the mouth of the Indus River. There is a primitive rock stepwell at walking distance from the site.

### Location:

By road it is 125 km from Bhuj.

Come to Gujarat to walk the path of Buddha, unveil ancient wisdom and step back in time of the enlightened one himself.



## GUJARAT'S TIME MACHINE THE BUDDHIST TRAIL

*"No one saves us but ourselves.  
No one can and no one may.  
We ourselves must walk the path"*  
- Buddha



"There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth;  
not going all the way, and not starting."  
- Buddha



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"Go into all lands and reach this gospel.

Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high are all one and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea".

- Buddha

The sacred places of pilgrimage directly associated with Buddha-Lumbini, Kushinagar, Sarnath, Bodhgaya are all in northern India.

There are 1200 splendid rockcut sanctuaries in the country and a few of them are in Gujarat. The Buddhist bhikshu (monk) was a wanderer, carrying Buddha's message of compassion and code of ethics from village to village. Traversing the hilly terrain of Central India, the bhikshus sheltered in secluded caves particularly during the monsoon. The enforced rain retreat may have encouraged monastic community life and, in time, meditation and prayer rituals. With just hammer and chisel held in the hands, the bhikshus carved out Viharas and Chaityas for their monastic complexes.

In the 3rd century BC, Mauryan emperor Ashoka, after years of successful conquest was sickened by the slaughter of the innocents by his army at Kalinga. Deeply grieved he laid down his weapons.

He embraced Buddhism and converted to the path of peace and non-violence preached by Buddha. 36 of his inscriptions have been found all over his erstwhile empire in the subcontinent, with one of his major set of edicts inscribed on a basalt rock near Uparkot Fort in Junagadh.

## RELICS, SCRIPTURES, SCULPTURES, EXCAVATIONS REVEAL MANY BUDDHA-INSPIRED IMAGES...



After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, Buddhism continued to flourish in Gujarat during the reign of the Western Kshatrapas from the first to the fourth century AD. The Maitraka rulers patronized Buddhism together with Hinduism and Jainism, during their rule from 470 AD to 788 AD. When Chinese travellers like Hsuan Tsang and I-Tsing visited Gujarat during the Maitraka rule, they found thriving centres of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism. During archaeological explorations and excavations, Buddhist sculptures have been found at various sites in Gujarat including terracotta Buddha figurines, Bodhisattva images and bronze Buddha statues.

## DEVNI MORI

Just south of Shamlaji, a bridge leads off the National Highway 8 across the Moho River to a path leading to the village of Devni Mori spelt Devani Mori or Devnimori in some maps. This village came into the limelight after excavations in the area revealed the presence of a substantial Buddhist site with a *stupa* where a relic casket was found, which is currently housed in Vadodara. According to the inscription on the copper casket it contained relics of Lord Buddha, gold bottles, burnt sandalwood, beads, gold, silver foil, and silk. A replica of the casket and a model of the stupa with its elongated dome have been exhibited at the nearby Shamlaji Museum as also some of the Buddhist sculptures found in Sabarkantha district.

**Location:**  
49 km from Himmatnagar,  
2 km from Shamlaji.

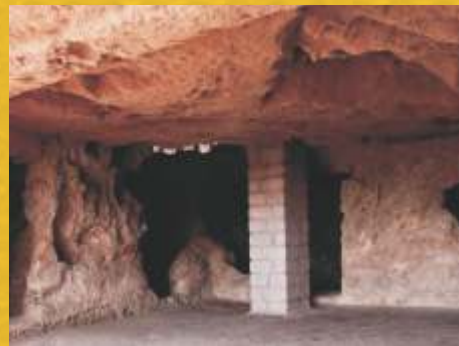
## VADNAGAR



Located 47 km from Mehsana, excavations around the Ghaskol Darwaja area of Vadnagar have revealed an enormous Buddhist site that was probably the town of

Anantpur-described by Hsuan Tsang as a wealthy place with 1,000 Buddhist monks and 10 Buddhist monasteries. The archaeological survey has unearthed Buddhist sculptures, toys and utensils. A plaque depicting scenes from Buddha's life which is about 1900 years old, and a clay artifact similar to what is found in Sri Lankan and Afghan Buddhist sites.

## TALAJA



Talaja on the NH 8E running south from Bhavnagar to Srunnath has 28 caves on a cone-shaped hill that has Jain temples on its summit. The most impressive is Ebhala Mandapa with a large hall fronted by four octagonal pillars. The other important cave is the ruined *chaitya-griha* with a stupa that has a primitive version of the vedika and *chaitya-window* (a horseshoe shaped window).

**Location:**  
53 km from Bhavnagar.

## SANA CAVES



Turning off at Timbi from NH 8 II, the road leads to Vakia village after which the plains give way to hills leading to Sam Hangar, a hill marked with caves. In these hills, more than 60 caves have been found, believed to date from the first century BC to the second century AD. The largest is the Ebhal Mandap, which is about 22m wide, 5m high and 20m deep. The Bhimchory cave, sometimes written as Bhima-Chauri, has octagonal pillars and a stone bench. Near this cave is a chaitya-griha which has a plain stupa and an apsidal rear. A Sitaram Bapu temple has been built on a hill which has many caves connected to one another by rough hewn rock steps.

**Location:** Sana Caves,  
Dist. Amreli, Near Rajula,  
On the way of Veraval, Bhavnagar.

Around 40 km from nearest city Amreli.

## JUNAGADH

Nestled around 102 km from Rajkot, Junagadh has the third century BC rock inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka housed in a building with the English translations of each displayed on the walls for the benefit of visitors. The caves in the Uparkot Fort at Junagadh have three storeys of cell-like rooms set around a rain water tank. The caves reflect the advanced system of drainage and water utilization prevailing in the period, and the cells are well-ventilated to get light and cool air. On the opposite side of Uparkot Fort is another three-storey cave complex with 13 cells cut into the rock face called Baba Pyara or Bawa Pyara. A third cave cluster is called Khapara Khudiya with cells set in an L-shape and a rain-water reservoir. Most of the caves around Junagadh are dated from the second to fourth century AD. The Junagadh Museum exhibits Buddhist finds from the region including remains of the Bone Stupa discovered in the hills near Girnar which had a solid brick core. Another Buddhist monument found in Junagadh district was a vihara at Minya in the Girnar hills which is dated to the reign of Rudrasen (199 -222 AD).



## KHAMBALIDA CAVES



About 21 km south of Gondal, Khambalida has one of Gujarat's most impressive Buddhist caves. The entrance to one of the caves is flanked by sculptures of Bodhisattvas identified as Avalokiteshvara, who is much revered by Buddhists as an embodiment of compassion, and Vajrapani-one of the earliest Bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism Buddhist iconography. This cave site is of considerable interest as the only one in Gujarat with perfectly identifiable carvings of Bodhisattvas, beings who assist people to achieve complete enlightenment or Buddhahood. Another site near Gondal is at Dhank where there are some Buddhist caves hewn into a ravine. The first cave has a cell with a shrine door that has a Buddha figure. On the eastern side is a recess from where the image has disappeared but there are noteworthy flying figures.