Ajanta's Evolution
From Savakayana to Bodhisatvayana amid Hunnic Turmoil
by Rajesh Kumar Singh

DESCRIPTION:
Ajanta's Evolution: From Savakayana to Bodhisatvayana amid Hunnic Turmoil offers a new scholarly exploration of the rock-cut caves, their sculpture and paintings, meticulously tracing the rise, transformation, and legacy of these architectural marvels.

The book takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining elements of historical, archaeological, artistic and Buddhist studies. Part I treats the grand epoch of Sravakayana, discussing archaeological contexts, cave classification methodologies, and the emergence of rock-cut monasteries under the influence of King Hari Sena. Against the backdrop of Hunnic upheaval and societal transformations, Part II delves into the Bodhisatvayana era, chronicling the impact of Alchon or Alkhan Hun raids, migrations, and the evolution of the rock-cut monuments.

The principle aim is to contextualize the site of Ajanta within a new historical setting. It seeks to address the paradox of how the Early Alchon or Alkhan Hunnic invasions, despite causing significant challenges to the development of the fifth-century cave temples, also provided opportunities for innovation. Another noteworthy aspect is the introduction of a novel taxonomical approach to the monuments. A revised chart for the taxonomy and typological classification of Buddhist rock-cut monuments is presented, mapping the evolutionary trajectory of architectural development over time.

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Rajesh Kumar Singh studied at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and obtained his doctorate in art history from M. S. University of Baroda. His doctoral research focused on Ajanta. Under the banner of the Ajanta Mahapitaka project, he has published six monographs and 22 articles in peer-reviewed journals to date.