CHAPTER VI.

THE LATE KALACHURI TEMPLES.

An unknown temple at Palari (Durg).

The Minor sites of Rajnandgaon District.
CHAPTER - VI

THE LATE KALACHURI TEMPLES

In the last chapters we have analysed the temple built during the rulers of the Kalachuri branch of Ratanpur built during the period 11th to 13th century of the Christian era. The 14th century on-wards although the dynasty was able to maintain its sovereignty over the central parts of their kingdom whereas the parts surrounding them were under the rule of their feudatories. The temples built during this phase of their history, do not show the same artistic grandeur as the early examples. Similarly from the point of view of architectural style also there are clear indications of the degeneration, mostly to be seen in the decoration on the outer walls and the pillars which are crudely model and the refinement and the aestheticity that we have been coming across in the early temples, is lacking now. Most of these temples follow a general pattern of mandapa and garbha-griha, both placed on a plinth and the tall sikhara above the latter without the demarcation of the bhumi as indicated earlier with a help of a corner ring stones are amlasilas.

Mahamaya Temple, Laphagarh

Laphagarh, as the name suggests is a fort, but in this case, it is a hill fort atop the 3240' high Chhitorgarh the highest plateau on the Mahak range."

"It is the strongest natural fort I have seen this season, and one of the strongest in India," said General Cunningham.¹

The place is to be approached via Pali on Bilaspur Katghora road. It is a fair weather track which leads to a village at the foot hill where the grade to the hill top takes its turn. The temple is situated after one enters through the Simha dvara.

**Ground-Plan**: The temple is placed on a high plinth to be approached by eight steps on the eastern side. The Mahamandapa is open on three sides due to the half-walls and the dwarf pillars on them in the fashion of Virasomesvara on 32-pillared (battis Khambha) temple at Barsur in Bastar district and Palari (Gundar-devi road) and Sahajpur temples in Durg district.

The 56' long and 20' wide plinth has after mandapa, an antaralal (vistibule) and garbhagriha. The later is a square of 20' aside from the outside. The mandapa has 5 gows of 5 pillars each. The central or full pillars are 6'3" high.

The vestibule infront of the sanctum is quite spacious occupying about one part of the one third of the space of mandapa. Dwara-lalata-Simba (lintel-piece) of the door frame depicts Ganesa. There is nothing remarkable about the decoration of the door jambs. Perhaps the original pieces have been replaced at the time of the renovation of the temple. Inside the garbha-griha, vitana (ceiling) has the conventional decoration of the square courses of the over-sailing masonry forming a shape of a dome. At the top of this dome there is a round
disc depicting a full bloomed eight petalled lotus (astadal kamala. A statue of Mahisasur-Mardini is installed inside the garbha-griha. The goddess may be identified as Katyāyani on the basis of her attributes described in the scriptures\(^1\). She is supposed to have eighteen arms and three \(x\) eyes, according to them, but, the goddess in the question, has ten arms, the right hands holding Parasu, trisūla, Chakra, Padma and dagger respectively. Her upper left hands have shield and pāsa, the lower one holding the head of the demon destroyed by her. Rest are of the hands and the objects held in them are all broken. This form of the goddess almost tallies with the account given in Matsya Purana.

**Exterior and Sikhaore of the Temple**: Although the temple must have followed the conventional style and therefore the halls must have been decorated with the ornamental motifs and sculpture. But unfortunately the time has played havoc with this temple and the empty rathikās (Niches) on the outer walls suggest that the images of the deities that once occupied them have been stolen or have fallen to pieces, a few of which are still lying in the village. Notable among them is an eight-armed Nateśa and Uma-Maheswara. The sūkhanasika infront of the sikhaore has a Chaitya window.

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Madwa Mahal Temple

About a kilometre or more south-east of the main temple of Bhoramdeo, inside the dense forest and near the Chhapri river is situated this temple of Madwamahal famous next to the main temple of Bhoramdeva and a centre of attraction of the local tribal people. It is in the state of semi-preservation, most part of the sikhara having gone off. The walls of the garbha-griha have been obviously disturbed at the time of the renovation because the rotic sculpture usually to be placed on the jangha part are now to be found, in rows, above the Kapota (cornice) level just where the sikhara body would have started up. The temple has been given this name by the local legends who state at the time of the marriage of the princesses, its mandapa was used as the place of the ceremony.

Date: Although the pillar-inscription near the temple, discussed in the last chapter, is assignable to the year 1349 A.D., and the present appearance of the temple also leads one to regard it belonging to late Kalachuri period; the decoration of the garbha-griha door-frame inside, is identical in style and details with the other temples of 12th Century. A.D. Therefore, I have a strong impression of the original temple, now partly reconstructed, belonging to this time.
The mandapa in front of the garbha-griha and open on all three sides, has fourteen pillars now. Originally the number must have been sixteen, forming four squares within a large square of the mandapa. The two pilasters of the antarala (vestibule), in addition to the two far-end central pillars in front of the cella, give it a separate appearance. The huge entablature above the pillars converts the ceiling also into the composition of squares. The carving on them is not that fine as that in their counter parts of the Bhoramdeo temple.

The roof the mandapa is flat now and nothing certain can be said about its original shape, though debris (and the resultant vegetation above it, for want of maintenance) may have something to do with the original super-structure.

Garbha-griha and its door-frame: The cella is a square of 7'6" aside within and together with antarala of 15'. The chatussakha (four-jambed) door is tastefully decorated. On the outer sakhas are depicted the conventional motifs of the patrāvali (foliage), kalpalata (creepers) and lotus etc. flowers and the mithunas (couples) in vertical panels. The lower parts of all the jambs are occupied by theśa dvārapāla (door keepers) groups - Ganga and Yamuna within male and female attendants bearing Chauri and Chhatra (umbrella) above the former.
Dvara-torana (lintel) the piece has an image of Ganesha in the centre, the flanking images of the deities almost entirely mutilated now, are beyond anyones recognition. On the flanks of the dvarapalas below, the Nāgarajas (Serpent Kings) are shown, one on each side, seated, as if at the feet of the river-goddesses. This position for them is somewhat unusual. They have been shown as worshippers in the pre-kalachuri temples at Kharod, Adbhar, Rajim and Sirpur etc. but always their head or the upper part on the upper parts of the jambs.

Exterior walls: As stated before, the walls of the shrine are disturbed. Most of the sculptures, if there were any, are missing. But their upper parts at the level of Kapota (cornice) and above, the erotic couples have been fixed, in all probability, as the time of the removation of the temple. Moreover, there is a lack of that refined and artistic touch, found in such figures in other temples of Kosala. Though bigger in size, they present and awkwardness and crudity in their attitudes. Even their modelling misses the skilled hands of the earlier artist who could never afford such an absurd attempt. Maybe, the stone used for the purpose, is not of that required quality. But at the distance of only a kilometre or so, the artist could get the finer stone for the temple of Bhoramdeo hence the argument does not hold any ground. Resourcelessness of the donor builder of the time, however, may be responsible for this. One unique scene, of course, looks like a consoling factor among otherwise dull affair. A lady is depicted in a labour, about to
deliver a child. Nowhere else in Konala, or even Khajuraho, have I come across, such an imagination of the artist.

Rajim

We have already discussed the art of the Rajivalochana and Ramachandra temples at Rajim. The place has quite a few other temples, but most of them are either modern or reconstructed more than once. There are hardly any traces left of the ancient form of architecture and any particular detail of the design. But at least two temples, built during the Kalachuri period, retain some of their ancient character. An attempt, will, therefore be made to analyse their style, concealed, though, it is under the cover of renovation.

Kulesvara or Utpalesvara temple: This temple is situated at the spur of the land in the confluence of the rivers Pairi and Mahanadi. It is placed on a high plinth. This as well as the asta-bhujya (octagonal) layout of the temple is meant to save the temple from the flood-waters and to prevent its erosion. The long rectangular axis of the temple consists of steps, Mahamandapa closed at sides but open on front with three rows of pillars and the corresponding pilasters on the side walls, antarāla (vestibule) and garbha-griha. The pillars are adorned with life-size sculpture like Rajivalochana. When Beglar had surveyed the site, two front-pillars of the first row were not there. They were added subsequently, brought perhaps from some ruined temple in the neighbourhood.¹ The shaft of the pillars is divided

¹. Thakur, V.S., Rajim (Hindi), 1972, p.98.
in three vertical sections - square, octagonal and sextagonal. The top is the beautiful purna or mangalagha capital.

Elevation: Although the temple has the usual four parts of adhisthana (basement), jangha, sikha and mastaka, but thick cement layers that have been applied to the whole exterior at the time of renovation, make it almost impossible to say anything certain about the original shape and design. In sikha, however, we find this element. It is, instead of being the curvilinear Nagar style, so common in the temples of this period, a pyramid-shaped succession of horizontal tiers. They terminate just at the griva (neck) below the surmounting member āmalaka (the big ring stone). The only other example of this plain tiered pyramidal sikha in Kosala is at Gurur. But the temple in the question, both in this as well as inside, has the clear evidences of the renovation and reconstruction of certain parts. Beglar, therefore, thought, that perhaps the original temple may have been earlier, in its present form, it may have been built by the Raipur branch of the Kalachuri dynasty.¹

Another addition to the original temple, is the second garbha-griha (sanctum) to the north of the original. A statue of Jagadamba is now to be seen in it. Thakur thinks however, that since it is connected with the mandapa, it should be original and the provision of two shrines through the same mandapa shows the style is influenced by the Pallava style of Vimana architecture.²

¹. ASR, Vol. VII.
But, if an influence from the south is to be traced, the tiered Vimāna, instead of tritala or chatuṣṭala vimānas (three or four storeyed) arrangement of Pallavas, has more resemblance with Mallikārjuna group of temples at Badami and Aihole, built under the early Chalukyan dynasty. Some of these temples also have two sanctums. But the time-gap that keeps the construction of the two apart and the logic of the influence does not hold much ground.

Panavara temple: This is another temple at Rajim that was built during the later Kālaçhuri period. If examined closely, it seems to have followed broadly the principles involved in the construction of the Rājivalocana temple. But due to certain amount of deviation from the later, perhaps caused by the subsequent renovations. Henry Cousens assigns it to much later period.¹

Tala-Chhanda (ground-plan): The temple is placed on a plinth 2'8" high and faces east. It consists of Nandi-mandapa, Sabha-mandapa, antarala and garbha-grīha. The first part is the speciality of this temple, not to be found in any other temple at Rajim. This have been provided with the addition of two extra pillars on the eastern side and placing the statue of Nandi within the square of four pillars. The flat roof above it, also, has been the result of the extension of the mandapa-roof supported by the huge beam placed on the extra pillars.

¹ FR, ASI, W.C., 1903-04, p. 34
The 25' x 23' mandapa is half closed and half opened on the sides due to the half walls and dwarf pillars on them. This seems to be popular style during this period, also to be noticed in the temple at Palari and Sahaspur in Durg district and Laphagarh in Bilaspur district. The inner sides of the half walls provide the Kakshasana (seat-backs) also. In the early Kalachuri temple of Siva at Dho Balod also this arrangement is made.

Sikhara: The pyramid shaped storeyed sikhara, topped by an amalaka, presents the combination of Dravida (south-Indian) and Nagara (north-Indian) styles of temple architecture like the Rajivalochana temple. Also like the later, the storeys have the decoration of huge and almost circular chaitya windows in the horizontal as well as vertical series. One novelty of this temple is the grilled false windows on the northern and southern faces of the sikhara on its upari jangha level.

Palari (district durg):

This place, though inside Durg district, is better approached via Dhamtari in Raipur district situated hardly 14 kilometres north-west of it on Dhamtari-Gundardehi-Rajmandgaon road. Since it is a second class and only a fair weather road, if approached from Durg or Rajmandgaon, it involves greater distance and quite a tiresome journey.

The temple belongs to late Kalachuri period with practically all the sculptures that might have been installed on the wall exterior and temple entrance (torana dvara) now missing.
Shūmi-vināsa (ground plan): The temple is placed on a plinth, to be approached by five steps. After a small ardha-mandapa, a square mandapa of about 20' aside contains quite a few interesting features. Though in the centre of the mandapa there are only four pillars in the conventional scheme, the similar number of dwarf pillars on the half-walls on the northern and southern sides, two more on the front half-wall in alignment with the central pillars and two pilasters on the back wall on the flanks of the cella-doorway, make the total of sixteen pillars. When I first visited the site in June 1979, this arrangement left the mandapa open after the fashion of siva temple at Deo Baloda of the earlier period, Khalari in Raipur district and Laphagarh in Bilaspur district, both later also belonging to late Kalachuri period.

But I happened to revisit the temple in February 1984 and found that the walls were closed up by the priest who resides in the shrine and looks after it. He explained the necessity of this by expressing the fear that the super-structure of the garbha-griha, i.e. sikhara and the roof of the mandapa might have crumbled down. However, the dwarf pillars on the half-walls can still be noticed when booked at from the outside. I thought it better to take a photograph of the same, least the further attempt to strengthen the walls may conceal, forever, the unique style of architecture of this temple.
After mandapa, a small antarâla (vestibule) 7' x 3") precedes the garbha-grîha which is a square of 7' aside from within and a rectangle of 13'3" x 11'7" from outside. The dark interior is to be reached by climbing down five steps. This style, as well as the depiction of Ganesa on dvarâ-lalâta-bimba (the Lintel-piece) leave no doubt that it was a sivite temple. The original Lingam that was installed within is now missing and instead a statue of a yogi similar to that of siddha Lakaradhvaja at Bhorandeo, Kawardha and Ratanpur etc., is set against the back wall. The dome shaped Vitana (ceiling of the cella is composed of conventional oversailing courses of masonry and topped by a round disc decorated with the full bloomed astadalâ-kamala. The Sundakara ceiling is supported by the four pilasters at the corners of the cella.

**Interior decoration:** The door-frame of the cella entrants shows only faint traces of the conventional motifs of foliage, kalpalata and totuses etc. on the appear parts of the sakhsâs. The lower parts contain the dvarapalas conventional Gangâ and Yamunâ holding ghata (vase) in thin hands. Several layers of the white-wash on them and the mutilation have obliterated many a feature about them but their graceful tribhanga mudra (three bent body attitude) speaks of the once glorious pieces of art. In antarâla is placed a statue of Chamunda, the weapon, like Sword and spear in her hands are only partially preserved. A male and female attendants or the worshippers are shown standing on the lower flanks of the furious looking goddess.
The square entablatures (huge Lintels) above the pillars of the mandapa, are decorated with the friezes of warriors, kichakas (dwarfs), the groups of dancers and musicians, flying vidyādharas and apsaras etc. The present an interesting variety of forms, weapons like bows and arrows, spears, swords and shields. On one of the left dharani (beam) Lakshmi is seated in arddha-paryanka asana. Another notable figure on one of the beams is mythical Hari-hamsa (goose) emitting pearls that make up a garland, single in one instance and in pair in another. A scene depicts two male males playing on mridanga and Veena respectively before a dancing female.

Śikhara and exterior: The tall and curvilinear Nagara-sikhara is quite commanding among the surroundings of the tank on the northern side and the low greenery on the other side. The niches on the bāda or jangha part, divided in two, once occupied by the images of the deities, are now empty. Projection-wise, the temple is of tri-ratha type. The adhīsthana, though moulded in courses, is devoid of any decoration.

Khalarī

Once a glorious city and the capital of Raipur or Khalvāṭikā (ancient name of the city) branch of Kalachuri of Ratanpur and now only a big village, the place is situated within Raipur District about 18 Kms. from the Tehsil headquarters of Mahasamund. It is approachable from Raipur via Mahasamund on the G.E. Road (Great Eastern National Highway No.3) and then a
branch of this road going towards the east-south-eastern town of Baghbahara near the Orissan border. The place can be also approached by rail via the Bhuma-khoja Railway Station on the Raipur-Waltari-Visakhapatnam section of the south-eastern railway. The places surrounding Khalari, incidently Sirpur on the north-west Narainpura and Pujaripali on the north-north-east etc. all have historical and religious connotations. The remains of ancient temples at these and other places are sufficient to justify this statement.

As it is Khalari had quite a few temples, mostly built during the reign period of Kalachuri rulers of Ratanpur and their subordinate Mandalesvaras ruling from this place. But, most of them are now non-existent, only the art-pieces, obviously belonging to them are found scattered in the village. Some of them are, however, installed in some of the temples built subsequently or they have been so fixed in others at the time of the renovation and reconstruction that their original position along with the architectural designs of the temples is grossly disturbed.

Of the earlier mention and evidence of the ancient temples, we have to rely, mainly on the initial reports of the Archaeological Survey of India. Thus, its first Director General, General Cunningham, for example, refers to a temple built by Devapala Mochi (cobbler, by caste and profession).  

Immediately after entering the village, we come across, on its southern end, a modern shrine, where a beautiful statue of the river goddess Ganga, essentially a dvarapala (doorkeeper) of some ancient cells doorway is placed outside it. Besides this, there are some broken pillars decorated artistically, which must have belonged to some mandapa of ancient temple. Next, we approach the main shrine of the village, now, popularity known as Khalaridevi Mandir. This temple, in its present form, seems to have been reconstructed more than once and the knowledgeable older men of the village ascribe the latest attempt at its renovation during the Bhosle Rulers who had dealt the death-blow to the already weakened, Kalachuri dynasty. At present it is only mandapa of the temple, which has anything like ancient in it in the form of carved pillars and the entablatures above them.

Dongripara Remains: On a platform raised in this part of the village seems to have occupied a centre of attraction and devotion of the people because the ancient images of gods and goddesses are fixed and arranged in a symmetrical way. Noteworthy among them are an eight-handed goddess, difficult to identify now because the objects held in her hands are all broken, an ásana (sitting) Ganesa and flying Vidyádhara couples with garlands in their hands etc.

But the most interesting of all the remains here, also in Dongripara, is a small temple of Bhúmija-style, which on one hand follows the example of Nagpura
near Durg, as far as the Śikhara is concerned, but on the other, has an open pillared-mandapa or porch infront. This is a style in itself for a few temples of Bastar District (Veerasomesvara at Barsur and Siva temple at Shairamgarh), although have open mandapa in front of the garbha-griha, but they differ from the temple in the question since they have two garbha-grihas at both ends of the mandapa. Then, the temples at Deobaloda, Palari (district Durg) and Laphagarh (Bilaspur district), the mandapas are not entirely open but half closed by the dwarf-walls and half-pillars above them.

When I first visited the site in June 1979, I noted the beautiful curvilinear Nāgara-style sikhara topped by a majestic āmalaka and the tastefully moulded adhīsthāna and jangha of the temple decorated with some designs, besides the porch or mandapa described above. But during my recent visit in February 1984, I was shocked to find both interior and exterior of the temple covered with the thick layer of the cement concealing all that could be regarded ancient. The tower, the pillars of the mandapa look as good as modern now and the later has been closed up on all originally open three sides. In fact, the work was still in progress inside of the mandapa. I can not help but reproduce the drawings of the temple that I had in my possession. I had met with the same disappointment at the temple sites of Palari and Sahaspur in Durg district. Ratapur, Seorinarain, Kharod etc. had already suffered from this destruction of our
ancient heritage in the name of its preservation.

**Lakhshwahi Gudi**

This is a ruined Garbha-griha outside the village, situated inside a farm. The term gudi for the temple reminds of the Kannada words Guṭī and Guḍī, both synonymous to temple. Whether there is any connection between the two is a matter of speculation. The temple has similarity with the one described above, but it is much more damaged and wrapped up by a gasti tree, a double niche on the right side wall is now empty. The shrine has no plinth but five layers of its decorated adhisthana indicate its ancient character. The vitāna (ceiling) of the shrine, instead of astadala kamala has a ring or disc in the centre and the girdles decorating its edges.

**Sahaspur**

There are two places of this name and in order to distinguish the two one of them is popularly known as Sahaspur Lohara which incidently is the old Gond Zamidari of the former Rajnadgaon state. The place is situated 13 Kms. off Lohara and about 60 kilometres north of Burg inside Rajnadgaon district. The ruins of the temples and the few sculptures that have escaped the cruelty of the thieves and smugglers are all situated on the banks of a huge lake half-natural bound by the eastern spurs of the Maikal range and half-bound by the long and semi-circular embankment, which due to its
dimensions, must have been built by local subordinate rulers under the Kalachuries of Ratanpur. At one time, the area was all forest covered but even its present surroundings, particularly during the wet season presents such a panoramic natural view that the selection of the site for the purpose of temple-building definitely a wise and judicious act on the part of the builders. Undoubtedly it is a cruel and stroke of the fate that the old grandeur of the place, in absence of the temples in full view now is only a memory of the past.

An inscribed statue of a king and queen the short inscription giving the name of the former as Yaśaraja, and the year in which it was engraved, as 34, is very important. Cunningham has assumed the year to belong to the Kalachuri era which would correspond to 1182 A.D.¹ In fact it has been a tradition in Kosala that royal couples are shown worshipping their tutelary deity. In this case also this statue was placed in some temple, the Chief deity of which must have been the object of their adoration. A modern shrine known as Jagannātha, has in its compound, a number of broken images arranged in a row. One, that can be identified inside the shrine is a small sized Hanumana statue occupying the place beside Jagannatha (Vishnu). It is to be noted that Hanumana by the time of the Kalachuri rule, had occupied an important position in the theistic system as evidenced by the presence of a beautiful tribhanga (Three-bent body)

statue of Hanumana at Bhoramdeva. Even up to the nineteenth century, when the place, due to thick forestry around, preserved a part of the original temple as can be seen from the photograph taken by Cunningham.¹

The second Sahaspur, not far away from the one described above, falls within Durg district and is approachable via Dewkara on Durg-Bemetara Jabalpur State Highway. The ancient temple here shows in its present form that the exterior including the mandapa walls and the sikhara above the garbha-griha belong to the much later period. This is obviously the addition made at the time of renovation. The original plan of the mandapa followed the pattern of Deobaloda and Palari of the same district, being only half closed with the help of half walls and dwarf pillars above them. Thus the four rows of pillars, four each and the entablatures above them supported the roof of the mandapa. The later and the major portion of the Sikhara though reconstructed retain some of the original style, particularly the curvilinear, tall, tapering and Nagara-style shape of the Sikhara.

The Minor sites of Rajnandgaon District

In the Khairagarh region of the Rajnandgaon district there are a number of sites in the western, mostly tribal area on the slopes of Sal-Tekri (Maikal) range full of ruins of some temples and scattered sculptures.

¹. A.S.R., Vol. XVII, p.43, Plate XXII.
Most of them are situated on Khairagarh-Pandah-Langi (in Balaghat district) road, 19 Kms. west of Pandah, the sites of Gata-Pidha near Limautola, are lying the statues of warriors, some on foot and others riding on the horses with swords and shields in their hands, are obviously the pieces that decorate the adhisthana of the temples. Their drapery is very scant just covering their waist and coins. The Katibandha (waist-band) is shown hanging down in front. They are 30 to 40 pieces in all. Further up the road, there is another dump of similar broken sculpture near the P.W.D. store at Gatapar. In the neighbourhood sites such as Kukrapat, Rakhal, Ghodapat, Bajrangapat, Pendrypat, Kanhabalua, Jhandikunta, Jullakhar, Mutradhar, Bheriara etc. have one or two pieces each of such sculptures. It is noteworthy that the horse-riders statues and their tribal drapery is most popular in the art of this region which due to its crudeness most probably belongs to the late Kalachuri period.

Navagarha.

This is a place, a newly formed tahsil headquarters of Durg district. It can be approached via Bemetara on Durg-Kawardha-Mandala-Jabalpur State highway and also via Mangeli a tehsil head quarters of Bilaspur district and on Bilaspur-Mandla-Jabalpur highway. Alternatively, it can be approached via Damapur on Bilaspur-Raipur road, about 20 Kms. from Mangeli. The name of the place suggests that at one time, it had a fortress, perhaps one of the thirty six, after which
the Kosala region was styled Chhatisgarh in the early modern period of the history. The place now has no remains of ancient temples, but, a few sculptures belonging to earlier periods are lying at two places of the town. Then, a Wooden-temple (the interior of the temple) built during the Bhosle reign period, shows all the symptoms of an ancient temple. This monument is therefore, unique, but due to its later period, we can't include it in our present study.

Of the sculptures that are to be found scattered in the town, the two, lying infront of the Government Higher Secondary School building now, one is that of the river goddess Yamuna standing on her mount - the Kachhapa or Kūrma (Tortoise) obviously a piece belonging to dwārapāla the door frame of certain ancient temples. The dwārapāla figure of the otherside i.e. Gange is not to be found anywhere. Yamunā is shown standing in a graceful tribhanga mūdra and cross-legged, her left hand hanging down with palm touching her waist and thigh; and the right hand held up near the breasts. The Kalasa (vase) or any other object that might have been held in this hand is now mutilated beyond identification. On the flanks of the goddess are standing thef female attendants (since they are of much smaller size than the goddess), the chouri or Chhatra usually held by then is now broken. The head of the goddess is also gone.
Another sculpture is that of the Nagaraja and Nagi shown as worshippers in half human and half-serpent form. This slab also appears to be a dvāra-sakhā (door-jamb) of some door frame of the temple entrance. We have been coming across such depictions in the temples of the Pānduvarāṇi rulers. Kharoda, Adbhur, Rajim, Sirpur, and Bhimadeval temple at Malhar all have the Nagas and Nagis in the similar form of worshippers occupying this position on the door jambs. The Nagaraja and Nagi in their lower half and human forms have a shade of five hoods above their heads and their hands are folded and held at the waist in the anjali or namaskāramudra (the attitude of adoration). In fact, the Nagaraja figure occupies a frontal and prominent position, whereas the Nagi figure, shown behind him, in smaller size, naturally so due to the law of perspective, of which the artist seems to be certainly aware of.

The upper and serpent form of the Nagaraja figure is gracefully coiled and goes up to occupy the remaining space of the door-jamb. In the space between the coils, the figures of flying gandharvas or vidyadhāras are shown with the garlands in their hands.
Dhamda

This is a place of considerable importance and an important road junction about 39 Kms. from its district headquarter of Durg. The roads taking off from this place of Durg on the southern side, Bemetra-Kawardha-Mandla-Jabalpur state high-way in the northern direction, Gandai towards the west which connects Rajnandgaon and Balaghat on the southern and western side and finally Nandini Raipur road on the eastern side. It appears that this strategic position of the place was recognised by the people and rulers of ancient period. The place had acquired a great religious and cultural importance as its name Dharmadham suggest. The present Dhamda is derived from the ancient world. Popular legends ascribed to the place One hundred and twenty six "chhai agar chhai kori" as it is said in Chhastisgarhi dialect meaning six twentieths plus six ) and equal number of temples built at various periods. It appears that the Kalachuri rulers of Katapur after their empire head sufficiently expanded across Mahanadi in southern Kosal and Dhamda was accorded the place of an administrative centre also. At the present however the number of the tanks and lakes can be counted in forty or above and temples that once emblished the place are mostly in the form of ruins. Of course there are quite some reconstructed and modern temples which have within them the icons of the chief deities of Saivite and Vaishnait cults installed within them are fixed on their outer walls. Apart from
the temples, a part of an ancient fort with a huge torana dvara and its walls also are studded with the sculpture belonging to the culhuri period. Thus although the total number of sculptures to be found in Dhamdha runs in hundreds, we shall confine our studies to only those of them which are of some interest.

**Sitāla Mātā Temple**: This temple is situated between the two tanks and has the goddess Chāmundā installed within it. The same is locally known as Sitāla devī. But what interests us more is the images of Jaina goddesses (Śāsana devtas) fixed on the walls of the temple. Behind this, there is small modern shrine which contains an image of Chaturbhujā sthānakāVishnu (four handed standing).

The Śiva temple nearby above temple has an image of Nandi seated in front of the shrine. In the porch of shrine Ganesa is fixed on the right wall and Kartikeya (Śaḍānana or six-headed) on the left. The peacock mount (Mayur-asana) of the deity is beautifully designed with his wings upraised and the god sitting in Lalitāsana. There are number of images to be found all-round the prominent among them a Raj-yogi or the royal personage in the attitude of meditation, similar to the one we have seen at Bhoramdeva, Kawardha, Sehaspur, Ratanpur etc. It is in the tradition of the feudatory rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty of Ratanpur who are both represented as the deities as well as worshippers. It is significant that they are found almost in the premises of
the temples that are dedicated to their tutelary deities. On the pedestals of the images of Jaina Tirthankaras in the neighbourhood, the scenes of dance and music are very interesting. They depict the local dresses and ornaments worn by the people at that time. A statue of Ganesa pot-bellied with bulging and bulbour eyes wears a bell shaped mukata. His thighs and knees are shown very massive, proportionate to his remaining body.

A new temple across the lake near a palacial building belonging to one Gupta, a former Zamindar in the area has the figures of Nāga worshipper with folded hands in namaskara mudra, the presentation being similar to that at the neighbouring Navagarha and the far off earlier site of Kharod, Adbhar, Rajim and Sirpur etc. It seems that most temples built during the early Kalachuri period have followed the earlier tradition of Pāṇḍuvasi temples by depicting the scene on the door jambs of the temples. In the case of the present example, however, the half hand in the serpents form is shown sitting on Garuda in animal form.

Mahamaya temple: The temple is situated on the right side of the pallaice which have a huge torana-dvāra (Gateway) about 20' high. It has as dvarpalas, the conventional Ganga and Yamuna on inside upper facets of the front jambs and dashavtāra panels (the ten incarnations of Vishnu) on upper two sides. It appears that an important vāishnavite shrine once existed here. Apart from the
dasavatāra panel, the right wall of the palace gateway has another figures of dvarapala Ganga and Yamuna and the images of the deities Sūrya or sun god, Rudra a form of Śiva, Vyāslkas a royal couple Śiva Natesa and the scenes of dance and music all now fixed in the vertical panels, a Brahma figure comes right above them. On the still lower part of the wall the upper portion of the plinth depicts Hari-hamsa picking the pearls and gajavali (frieze of the elephants) in a small size. The elephants are shown in different attitudes in variety of postures. A frieze of gods and goddesses again decorates the part above of the all above. An independent image of Viṣṇu is depicted on the front wall.

In site of the shrine, its Vītāna (ceiling) is decorated conventionally with the foliage and lotus designs on the ages of the courses of the masonry, oversailing to form a shape of the dome. The brackets of the pillars that support the main ceiling above is equally decorated.

Another shrine in the neighbourhood contains an image of Mahisasur-mardini.

Devkhar

This small town is situated ahead of Dhamiha on the road leading to Bemstāra and Kawardha etc. In an around the village several statues, mostly broken of the gods and goddesses are to be found scattered. But of greater importance and still larger in number are the Sati pillars which are locally known as 'Ghuggusraja'
perhaps the martyr leaders of the local populace who had sacrificed their lives fighting against invading troops of the neighbouring kingdoms. The people hold them in such a veneration that some of them are still being worshipped by them. There are Sati pillars to be found in the other side like Bhoramdeva, Chauri and Kawardha etc. But the present examples highly artistic in their decoration after the fashion of the similar decoration of the adhisthana of the temples built during the Kalachuri period. The depiction of Kirtimukha and hamsa on the lower square part of the pillar, the hexagonal middle part of the pillar occupying some part of the hamsa below and the conventional son, moon and the hand palm on the upper and conical part of the pillar are all indicative of the genius of the local artist who could not resist the temptation of showing his skill even in this minor form of architecture. One of these pillars is inscribed in the magari script of late Kalachuri period and has two figures seated, in namaskara mudra shown as worshipper. The decorative design on this pillar is satadala kamala instead of the Kirtimukha.

**Chaurel**

This is a village 42 Kms. from Durg, its head district headquarters on the Balod-Dhamtari highway. The site of the ancient sculptures now collected at one place is a Goraiyan an annual fare spot about 3 Kms. from the main road on the other bank of river Pairi. The famous water reservoir of Tandula is not far away. The sculptures lie within the huge compound of a small modern shrine and a large mango grow throws its shade above the
later. Notable among the sculptures here is a beautiful image of Surya, in northern style (wearing the long boots) he is riding on a chariot or rutha driven by the seven horses, Aruna the Sarathi or the Charioteer standing at his feet in control of the reins, Usha and Pratūsha standing at the lower flank of the god, the whole scene presenting a panoramic view with the domineering tall size of the god above everything. Another image is that of large sized Saraswati with Veena in her hands and sitting in Lalitasana. Unfortunately her face is mutilated. On the pedestal of this image Hari-hamsa (Goose) is shown emitting the pearls which make up a girdle.

Next is an image of Śiva Nāṭeśa in Prasanna mudrā and his tribhanga pose shows him in quite an unusual grace and poise. Nandi is shown at his feet on left and an eroded couple is depicted to the right. There are several statues of Umā-jahesvara, some in Lalitasana others occupying the full couch, etc. Then, there are some Yogi images moustachined like the one in Sitata Devi temple at Dhamdha. One of them is found wearing a number of ornaments such as Ekāvali (single-beaded necklace) elongated Karnakundalas, Bhujbandas (bracelets) and Katibandha (waste-band). The hair on his head are arranged in a domical ushanisa (the conventional bump of knowledge) and on the left side in the form of a smaller bump of the turban. The feles of the drapery are shown flying from above his arms. Another Rājyogi figure is inscribed at the pedestal given the name of Vidyārathna which perhaps stands for him.
An interesting image of Uma-Mahesvara, now fixed in the left wall of a shrine at the back wall of the courtyard depicts the pair sitting face to face and knees to knees. Only a few of the attributes held in their hands are intact now but the damaru in particular is quite distinct. Their fairly modelled heads show beautiful Jatamukuta and Uma (Parvati) is shown wearing a turban also. On the pedestals of this statue are shown the two mounts Nandi and the lion belonging to both of them.

**Balod**

This town, fairly well known and a tahsil headquarter of Durg district occupies a strategic position because on the one hand it touches the boundary of Raipur district on the east and that of Bastar district on the south. The remains of ancient fort, large number of time tanks and the ruined temple and scattered sculptures on the banks of the later are all indicated of the hori past that the place belongs to. At present, however, its only the sculpture fixed on the fort, gate and walls apart from certain temples that are witnessed of the past glory.

**Fort gate on Budha Talab:** Although the fort perhaps belongs to 14th or 15th century A.D., but, during its construction the art pieces of earlier damaged temple have been fixed on the gate and walls of the former. One such pieces shows a couple with the female holding a kalasa (vase) in her left hand and a lotus with closed petals in right. Faint traces of a Tortoise on the pedestal below leave no doubt that she is Yamuna the river
and therefore a part of the door-frame belonging to some ancient temple. But the male figure on her flank holding a snake whose body is common with the long stalk of the lotus confuses the identification as to Siva or some other deity. The mace (Gada) in his right hand with a top looking like Chauri or Chhatra further confuses. Another noteworthy statue fixed in this wall is that of Bhairava a form of Siva, naked and in dancing pose. There are scenes of dance and music, the friezes of warriors and gajavali etc.

To the left part of the prakara (the fortification wall) on the left front corner of the tank and under the Attalaka or burj of the fort are found the two statues belonging to Nagraja and a goddess seated beside each other. The damaru in the hand of the later suggests she being Parvati. On the door lintel above Parvati occupies the centre, Ganesa the left flank and the mutilated figure on the right flank was perhaps that of Kartikeya. All the three are shown within the small canopied niches. The various designs of foliage in creeper etc. occupy the remaining space of the lintel. Placed against this wall on the outer side we find a dvarapala couple again, similar to that on the central gate. To the left of this burja, a group of sculpture is now placed in a box shaped arrangement. The group includes Hanumana with his left foot placed on the demon, Parvati holding a damaru standing Uma-Nahasvara, elephant and horse riders, warriors, dvarapalas
Gansea and Nandi etc.

Between the sikaripara and amapara, the two wards of the town on a tank near tahsil court a modern shrine of Sitala mata also has fixed on its wall quite a few ancient sculptures. Some Sati pillars are also found lying around. On the right wall of the garbha-griha on its nearer end is fixed a beautiful image of Hari-hara, the composite deity showing both Hari (Vishnu) and hara (Siva) in one. The Kirta Mukata, finely ornamented belongs to the former and the figure of Nandi shown seated at the right bottom flank belongs to the later. The hands of the deity hold objects belonging to the both. Thus the damaru in the upper left hand alongwith lotus also demonstrates him the composite character of the deity.

The right wall in front by the side of the garbha-griha has got an image of Mahisasur-mardini fixed in it. There is another image of Mahisasur-mardini riding on her mount Lion and both of them together peancing on the demon Mahisa with the long spear of the goddess deep-thrust in the body of the later, all exhibiting the giving violence and the movement making the presentation a liveliness. On the same right wall there is another statue of chaturbhuja sthanaka Vishnu.
Kawardha

This town, a tehsil headquarters of Rajnandgaon district, is also an important road junction of the Kosala or modern Chhattisgarh area. On the southern side it is connected with Rajnandgaon via Gandai and Khairagarh, the former being an important site of ancient temple, with another site of Ghatiyari also nearby. Also on southern side, it is connected with Durg via Bemetara and Dhamtara. The ancient sites of Devarbija, Devkar and Dhamtara falling by the road leading to them. On the eastern and north-eastern side, it is connected with Mungeli and Bilaspur with the ancient sites of Pandatarai and Set-ganga falling on the road leading to them. On the north-western side, the state highways starting from Durg and Raipur passing through this town, go up to Jabalpur via Chhilpighati (the passes through the Malkal range of hills) and Mandla. Ancient and more important site of Bhoramdeo, the ancient capital town, of the Naga dynasty. After the downfall of this dynasty, the descendents of the same shifted their seat to this town, continuing as the Zamindars under the late rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty of Ratanpur. After the end of successive rules of Bhojala and British and abolition of Zamindari system, the rajas, like in all native states of India, have now started leading the life of a common citizen.

But the past glory of the place, can still be seen, in the palace of the erst while royal family, the temples built in the later and modern periods on the ruins of the
ancient ones, with the ancient images of gods and goddesses etc. occupying some place in them and the tanks built by the former rulers, on the banks of which some of the said temples stand. Some of the ancient images are to seen, installed under the trees or on the platforms, meant for the worship by the neighbouring religious-minded people.

Kankālin temple: This temple is situated on the banks of a tank also known as Kankālin. An open platform is also built against its wall. Two well-preserved sculptures and a number of broken ones are to be found here. Two of the stone slabs are inscribed also. An eight armed image of the goddess Durgā mounted on a lion is the most important of them. Interesting details like flying gandharvas and apsaras, decorative motifs etc. are to be found both on her top and lower flanks as well as the border of the statue. Another statue is that of Umā-mahāsvara with Gaṇesha or Karttikeya on the lap of the former, so mutilated now that it is beyond any one's recognition.

Buddha Mahādeva temple: This temple is situated on the bank of a tank known as Ujjayar Sagar and has some sculpture, installed within it. One of them can be identified as royal couple, represented both as worshippers (since they are in namaskāra-mudra) and yogis. Popurally, therefore, the male figure is known as Rāja-yogi. The single figure is certainly that of Raja-yogi. The chhatra (umbrella)
above his head is the symbol of royalty. The similar chhatras are shown above the heads of the royal couple. The king has a halo behind his head also, symbolising his statue of a yogi of higher order. The deification of the rulers, particularly in the interior regions of the Kosala area, is not uncommon. We have already discussed similar Rāja-yogi Yasa Raja, whose statue is found at Sahaspur.

All the figures above, have been shown wearing beautiful head gears, mukutas and various ornaments on the body. The triple Kati-bandha (the waist band) is shown in both King and queen figures is of special interest. The queen, sitting in ardha-paryanka asana is slightly inclined towards the former. A, female devotee, is shown standing behind the queen’s figure, in tribhanga mudra (attitude) and with folded hands.

**Kankalina**

This is a village in Kawardha tehsil, just on the border of the Mungeli tehsil of Bilaspur district and on the right bank of the stream Hanf. Across the stream is another ancient site near the villages of Vakela and Devasara, inside Mungeli tehsil. The whole area is forest infested and lies on the spurs of the Maikal range on the eastern side. Near the village, there is huge mound full of dressed stones and brick-bats that speak, some of them littered around in extensive area. Undoubtedly the place was once a flourishing habitation and the foundations of some temples and houses
are still to be found if the bushes and the trees are
looked into carefully. Till recently, walls of a couple
of temples and sculptures belonging to them could be seen
in situ (as reported by the local people) but during my
visit at the site in 1980, there was hardly anything
left except the broken pieces of some sculptures, only
a couple of them could be identified. Noteworthy among
them, is a beautiful life-size statue of Hanumana, in
graceful tribhanga mudrā (posture). We have earlier
mentioned a similar statue of Hanumana set against a tree
in front of the main Saivite temple of Bhoramdeo and also
discussed that this deity, by the 12th century A.D. had
acquired an important position in the theistic system
of the Hindu pantheon in Kosala. The fragmentary eight-
armed goddess at the site cannot be identified now, and
so the lower part of the statue of a Jaina Tirthankara,
seated in Padmasana and its pedestal depicting the figure
of a lion. It could have been that of Mahāvīra.