CHAPTER - III.

THE PRE-KALACHURI TEMPLES.

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In the last chapter, an attempt was made to determine the chronology of the temples. Due to very little epigraphic evidence the same could not be done satisfactorily. But the broad sequence of the probable time of thin construction has been made. In this chapter, a detailed account of the architectural and the art-style of these temples is presented here. The account of almost every temple will be followed by the analysis of such elements of its style that have the bearing on its comparison with the other examples and the evolution of certain style discernible in a group of other temples. The different aspects of the architecture the ground-plan (bhu-vinyasa or bhu-nivesa or garbha sutra the terms found in the ancient architectural canons), utsedha-vinyasa or Brahma-sutra (elevation) mainly the various parts of the sikhara from basement below to the sikhara (tower) and the surmounting amalaka (the huge disc-shaped member), the decoration of the outer-walls, the doorway and the images of the deities etc. Lastly the interior of the temple is to be taken into account.

Derani-Jethani temples at Tala

As discussed in the last chapter, these are most probably the earliest temples of Kosala known so far. They are situated on the banks of river Maniyari, a tributary of Seonath, near a village Tala, near Sargaoon,
about 24 kilometres of Bilaspur on the Bilaspur-Raipur state highway. The temples were brought to notice only in 1973. Of the two Jethani has completely crumbled down and the huge dressed masonry pieces including some broken statues are lying on a huge mound or around it. Some of these are as big as 10' to 15' in height. Only two of the broken statues can be identified. They are Buddha and Nrisimha (an incarnation of Vishnu). The sedimentary rocks available on the banks and in the bed of Maniyari, the layers of which were used in the construction of the temples as well as in modelling the statues, because of their character, seems to be the logical reason of the crumbling of the temple.

It is only when the mound is excavated and cleared, any idea as to the ground plan of the temple may be understood.

Derani temple

Another local name of this temple is Sabara Deur. The natives of Sabara or the tribe of fishermen seems to have been worshipping an unidentified image now installed on the pedestal in the cella along with other statues.

This temple is partly ruined but complete platform and the walls, the intact and big-sized doorway give sufficient evidence of the character of the temple.
**Ground Plan:** Nearly 4' high jagati (platform) is approached by four steps. The plan consists of a narrow and open porch (13' in depth and 9'-4" wide) followed by enclosed and little higher arddha-mandapa (6'-10" in depth and 12' wide). At the back of this second porch is the huge gateway decorated in the typical fashion of the Gupta period. Through this doorway we enter the long chamber inside which is further divided in two parts with the pilasters on the side walls but without the partition wall. The first part 9'-6" in depth and 12' wide may be named the mandapa and the one behind it, about a square of 13' square, the garbha-griha (or cella proper). Thus the plan is rather unconventional having, unlike other Gupta temples, more than two parts in the long axis and the doorway being in front of the combined chamber, instead that of cella proper.

**Exterior** The walls on the three sides, northern, southern and the western one have projections (rathas) and the long vertical niches (rathika bimbas) also. They are empty now but must have contained the sculptures. On the two longer sides there are two niches each one out of the mandapa wall and another out of the Garbha-griha wall in between them there are the pilasters and the huge coping stones above that compose these niches. Besides there are two extra niches on the front side one each just beside the side walls of the porch.
The roof and the sikhara, if there was any, are now gone. The two tall pillars, rising above the slab-level or the door-way, one on each side, according to K.D. Bajpai and S.K. Pandey, supported the second storey of the temple, which they suggest was brick-built. They base their opinion on the brick-bats that are lying around the temple. But, there seems to be hardly any substance in the contention. There is no reason why the light upper storey could not be sustain itself on the solid masonry lower storey, which is still intact. The little decoration that is still intact on the exterior may be the huge sized kirtimukhas (lion faces) open mouthed on the basement. Two of them on the left side of the temple are intact, two more are lying with the sculptured arranged in a row, found as a result of the clearance of the mound of the temple in 1977-78.

Art of the temple: Consists of the decorated doorway and the figures of Ganga and Yamuna on the side walls of the porch beside it. The door jams (dvara sakhas) of the temple are decorated with foliage, creeper, full-bloomed lotus and the twisted rope designs, carved so finely and tastefully as to remind of such Gupta temple door-ways of central India. The door lintel has an unusually and highly artistic depiction of Gaja-lakshmi seated on the lotus. The two elephants that are anointing the goddess are shown being assisted by two more elephants on their

flanks and who in turn are being assisted by two attendants water carriers with leather water-bags held in their hands. The water inside the bags is shown by the imaginative artist in waves. On the upper flanks of the scene flying ganharvas are carrying garlands in their hands and along with other celestial beings celebrating the occasion by dancing and playing on the musical instruments.

On the inner facet of right jamb, in panels we find Siva Parvati sitting on a coach and playing Choupad. Another panel depicts a huge kirti mukha. In rest of the panels the other figures, one of whom may be identified as Siva-Kiratari.

All these scenes due to their narrative method and the high imagination on the part of the artist are comparable best with the similar depictions on the gateways of the great stupas of Sanchi and Bharhut. In fact, the example is an advancement over the latter.

Ganga and Yamuna figures on the side walls holding Kalasa or Ghata (vase) in the upraised left hand evidently occupy the position of dvarpalas (door keepers), but here their almost life size and their slender bodies and their subtle curves, oval shaped faces with half-closed eyes fixed on the tip of the nose (nasagra-drishti) their beautiful hair-style and headgear, all point out to the highly plastic modelling and the aesthetic bhangimas
(attitudes) so typical of the art of the Gupta period. And when artists' imagination in presenting them as river-goddesses also (thick round waves of the water touching their feet) is taken into account, the art of this temple assigns it a place for above other temples of the period in Kosala.

It was a Vaishnavite temple it seems the Gaja-Lakshmi on the dvara lañata-bimba (centre of the door-lintel) and a broken statue of Vishnu lying outside when I visited the site. The same is now kept in the row of sculptures some distance in front of the temple.

Adbhay (Asta-dvara) 1 Temples of Kevatin and the brick temple

The main temple, belonging to about 6th century A.D. is almost entirely gone now, only the foundation (adhissthana) and the decorated doorway to the cella being intact which give some idea as to the plan and the art-style of the temple. 2 Nothing can be said about the roof and the sikhara of the temple.

Plan - The temple is unconventionally facing west, the steps leading to the plinth and the main entrance being on the west and the doorway indicated the position of the garbha-griha on the east. The three different pithikas or the plinths of the mandapa, antarala (vestibule) and the garbha-griha meet in such a way that

1. Sitamarhi (Korba) inscription (Hiralal Descriptive list of the Inscriptions of C.P. and Berar, No.60, p.120.
together they make up a single asta koniya (eight sided) plan mistakenly called star shaped, the total dimensions being 60' in length and 20' in width.

**The door frame:** The door frame of this temple has the two jambs. The two inner faces of the jambs on the each side are decorated differently. The main, i.e. the projected and wider jambs have Ganga and Yamuna on their respective mounts makara (crocodile) and Kachhapa or Kurma (tortoise) now much mutilated. They are shown standing in graceful dvibhanga (two bent) posture, holding purna ghata (pot) in a hand upturned near the waist. They have umbrellas over their heads the curly hair of which are arranged in the bumps. Their stanottariya (the female upper garment) is so transparent as to exhibit round and full grown breasts. The sree or adhovastra worn down to the lower parts of the legs reveals its fine folds clearly. That the high skill of the artist is demonstrated in the modelling of such fine folds of the dreppery when it is put on.

The second sakha (jamb) on the either side are decorated with Naga-worshippers. The human shaped part of their busts with folded hands in namaskar mudra held at the chest is shown at the bottom. Then, their remaining body, serpent shaped, goes up in slight twists and coils covering not only the middle and upper part of the jamb but half of the lower door-lintel also where their tails are caught held of, by Garuda, the Vahana (mount) of Vishnu. He is also shown in the shape of half human and half bird.
The third and the inner face of the door-jamb is decorated with beautiful purna-ghata (an auspicious vase) with a high round bottom, the foliage and the creepers emanating out of it and going up to decorated the middle and upper part of the jambas. In between them the full bloomed lotuses also add to its beauty.

The lintel scene of Garuda holding the tails of the Anant Nagas remind us of the similar depiction in the door frame of the Rajivalochana temple at Rajim. This, as well as the figures of Ganga and Yamuna conform to the conclusion drawn elsewhere that such similarities help establishing the contemporaneity of the temples.

The upper door lintel, has Karttikeya and Uma-mahesvara in the centre flanked by garland-bearing glying gandharvas. The depiction of these deities as well as a statue of Nandi (bull, the mount of Siva-parvati) suggest that it was a Saivite temple but perhaps built by Vaishnavite Panduvansi rulers, whose royal emblem was Garuda.¹

KHALOD

This village is just about 4-5 kilometres from the well known site of seori-marayan on Mahanadi. The place had four temples in all but the one known as Isanaavara is in a ruined state now on the bank of a tank.

behind the village. The remaining three, viz., Indaldeva, Savari mata and Lakshmanesvara temples were brick-built. The first one retains its original character, Savarimata's mandapa is renovated and enclosed by the stone walls and the roof whereas Lakshmanesvara is thoroughly reconstructed.

**Lakshmanesvara Temple:** This temple was first built during the Pandu vansi or Somavansi ruler Isana deva, the son of Indrabala, for the performance of religious ceremonies by ascetic sula pani. The inscription on a stone slab now fixed in the left wall of mandapa of the temple relates the occasion. The record also speaks of the grant of the villages sothapadaka and Mekalapataka (incidentally Mekala, a neighbouring janapada or kingdom also belonged to Somavansi rulers of another or lateral branch) in honour of the lord Lakshmanesvara.²

**Plan and Reconstruction:** The second inscription, fixed in the prakara wall, surrounding the whole temple premises, belongs to Ratnadeva III of the Kalashuri dynasty, engraved in the year 933 of K.E., i.e. 1181 A.D. Verse 30 speaks of the reconstructions of the mandapa of the Saiva temple and erection of Matha with well-seasoned wood for the residence of ascetics.³ This is an evidence of the fact that the bigger part of the mandapa, the entrance porch and the said prakara were added later.

1. Ibid., and Henry Cousens, A.S.I., WC, 1904, pp. 31-32.
It is stated in the inscription, that this was one of the benefactory works of the ruler's chief minister Gangadhara.

Thus of the original temple only the garbha-griha alongwith its doorway remain now, and due to the vast difference of style can be easily distinguished from the mandapa in front of it. Of course there are two pillars, with Ganda and Yamuna figures of similar style as that of the sanctum door-jambs may also be ascribed to the original temple or some other contemporary temples.

**Door frame:** Ganga-Yamuna, like Indala deva, occupy the upper parts of the door-jambs. This position is to found in all the early temples. In the famous caves of Ajanta also, we found them occupying similar position. The goddesses are in graceful tri-bhanga (three bent) attitude. Their plasticity is enhanced by the mango-trees, under the shade of which they are shown standing. Besides, there are two male dvarapalas (door-keepers) or the attendants on the lower parts of the door-jambs. Inner jambs are decorated with foliage and full bloomed lotuses. The ceiling of the cella (vitra) is formed of oversailing square courses of masonry, the last course pancha-koniya (five sided). The whole acquires a shape of the dome (sunda).

**Mandapa pillars:** The two pillars just in front of the cella-door, as stated above, belong to the same period,
i.e. 6th century A.D. One on the left, has three vertical panels, the upper two occupied by twisted serpents, middle one depicting the scene of Ravanagraha, Siva and Parvati sitting on Kailasa and Ravana, under the pedestal. On the front side of the pillar, similarly, upper part shows serpents and the lower one arddharnarisvara (Siva and Parvati half-each in the same image). Nandi, their mount is depicted at their feet and the worshippers and attendants stand on the flanks.

The pillar on the right, on its inner side has four panels, containing the upper, down Rama and Lakshmana, a couple with beautiful hair style and turban, another couple, respectively. The front side has 1. Serpents, 2. Bali-Sugriva wrestling and Rama hiding behind a tree shooting an arrow., 3. Trivikram or Vamana incarnation of Vishnu, Sukracharya Bali under his upraised left leg., and 4. Varaha with worshippers below. Lastly, the right side of the pillar has serpents first and then Hanumana worshipping Rama, a couple and a bearded figure respectively.

Savari devi (or mata) Brick-temple : The plan of this temple in general similar to Lakshmanesvara temple at Sirpur, there is an adhishthana (basements) about 2 high supporting it and there is an upa-pitha also 2' high or the pista (the moulded lower part) round the shrine proper. Although the outer walls of the maha-mandapa have been added at the time of the reconstruction,
the pillars and pilasters in side decorated with sculpture and various ornamental motifs, suggest that the original plan must have been the same.

Main shrine or the sanctum with its Sikharas is 18'-7" east-west and 14'-6" north-south. It is of triratha or tranga (due to projections on the exterior) type. The sikhara (tower is almost intact, all brick-built. Its bhumi (the tiers gradually receding in size as they rise are indicated by the smaller ring stones (the surmounting one being of much larger dimension) four of which can be seen even now. The three rathas that divide the exterior from basement belong to right up to the spire are of the result of comparatively poor workmanship.

Door-frame: Ganga and Yamuna occupy the conventional position of door keepers but on the inner facets of the saktas (jambs). Their mounts are missing here but like the other example (Lakhanesvara) they are standing under mango-trees. The lintel piece depicts the popular scene of the time and the rulers half-human shaped Garuda holding Vasuki Nagas in both of his hands, whereas Nagis or their queens are shown in the namaskara-mudra on the flanks. Outer jambs show the associated members or the attendants are the secondary door-keepers on the lower parts. In one of the female member of them, a child is sitting at her feet (right jamb). She could be a Matrika (mother goddess).
The jambs and the lintels are also decorated by the full-bloomed & half medallion like lotuses. Just close to Garuda on his flanks, are the makara (crocodile) figures, their mouths emitting the pearls that make up the garlands.

Ceiling of the cella, made of bricks, is dome-shaped and made up of the circular courses of oversailing masonry.

Mandapa-interior: The two rows of six pillars each and the corresponding pilasters on the side-walls all decorated, primarily with the sculpture about 4'-5" high are an important feature of this temple. They remind one of the temples of Rajin. They are evidently contemporary. The art represents the refinements and plasticity of the Gupta period. Tribhanga poses fine and transparent drapery, oval face of the human figures particularly female, the huge karna kundalas worn by them are all typical of that art-style. Some of the sculptures worth mentioning are siva Amadamurti in tribhanga pose, his upper right hand in Vitarka abhaya mudra and Rama whose pedestal is supported by the kishaka (dwarf).

Kharap temple of the Lodha copper plate inscription:

The temple mention in this inscription has always been a matter of speculations. We have seen that the place had four temples in all. One of them is not only ruined but almost non-existing now. Out of the three
that are intact now scholars hold different opinion, picking up any one of them as the temple referred to in above inscription. In fact the name of the place mentioned in the inscription is Khadirapadra. Mirashi while editing the inscription identified this place with present Kherod but about the temple he was not quite certain which temple did the inscription writer really mean.\(^1\) Therefore, the identification of a particular temple mentioned in the inscription is still to be made.

**Indala deva**

This is also a brick-built and partly preserved temple and is famous for its doorway decoration. The towered sanctum is a square of 13'-6" aside and is placed on 5' high plinth made of dressed stones. It is tri-ratha type, the central ratha or projections being decorated by the windows arched niches, some of which have stucco-images installed within them. Some of the noteworthy among them are Vishnu in Lalitasana, Ganesa and Nrisimha are to be seen on the left wall. On the back wall also there are two images of Nrisimha, besides an elephant rides and Gaja sardula : Right wall is much damaged, therefore, whatever it contained is now in the oblivion.

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and

Sikhara (Tower): The top of the sikhara is now gone but from the proportions of three Bhumis as indicated by the amla-silas (ring stones) on the corners, it can be assumed that it was a Panisha-Bhaumika (five tiered) temple.

The Door frame: This is the only feature of the temple that draws everybody's attention. The graceful figures of Ganga and Yamuna in two bent body (dvi-bhanga) postures, their slim and slender limbs, the five and transparent drapery put on by them etc. are characteristic of the poetic concept of human beauty as if transformed in stone by the artist of the Gupta period. The upper parts of the door-jambs as well as the flanks of the door-lintel are decorated with the twisted and coiled serpents. In the centre of the lintel is depicted Garuda on the immediate flanks of which we find Uma Mahesvara and Brahma. The inner faceted of the jambs are decorated with the foliage kaalpalata (creeper) and the lotus motifs.

SIRPUR

The place was the capital of Kosala during the Pandu vanasi rulers. It is situated on the bank of Mahanadi and is in Raipur district, approved from the letter by the G.E. (Great Eastern National Highway) and its bifurcation at Tung gaon. The excavations conducted at the side by M.G. Dikshit of Sagar University in early 50's
unearthed the Buddhist monasteries and the huge statues of Buddha and Bodhisatvas justifying the statement of the well known chinese traveller Huen-Tsang that the capital of Kosala was a great centre of Buddhist education also. For several centuries this suspet of this place remained conceal and its glory was confined to its importance because of the brick-built temple of Laxmana.

The Laxmana Temple: The Laxamanesvara temple is not only important because it is the best example of the brick-temples not only in Kosala and Madhya Pradesh but also in whole of India. It is also regarded as a mature and the most developed temple of the Gupta period that has remained in tact so far, whereas all other temples topped by the curvilinear nagar shikhara are either ruined or have completely disappeared. Even in case of Bodh Gaya temple which is regarded as belonging to the Gupta period it is now been ascertain that the same was renovated and reconstructed a number of times after the original shrine had crumbled down. Thus, this temple has acquired an additional importance, and is regarded as a model for the study of the temple architecture of Gupta period.¹

Ground Plan: The temple was placed on a high plinth which could be approached by the double flight of steps on the northern and southern sides. The part of the temple intact now, the sanctum and its shikhara had,

it, a large mandapa enclosed by the two side-walls. It had two rows of pillars eight in each and the corresponding pilasters on the side walls. Although, they are all gone now, the basement or the lower parts of some of them are indicative of this fact. The mandapa and the sanctum were joined by anantarala (vestibule), also gone now. Besides, perhaps, there were two entrances to the mandapa at the head of the stairs on both sides. The sides of the mandapa were higher originally as the level of pillars-basis indicate.

Sikhara and exterior: The curvilinear Nagara style sikhara is of pansharatha or panchanga type (five projections on the walls). They are decorated with a series of chaitya windows or aches both horizontally and vertically. Next, the niches on the walls, to enshrine the images of the deities are composed of artistically modelled pilasters on the sides and the coping stones of the sloping cylindrical shape in the fashion of the saka sikhara in the Dravid or south Indian style of temples. Krishna Deva thinks that although saka sikhara designs are also found in the brisk temple of Bhitargaon also but because they are too rudimentary and far away from this region, the later is not supposed to be influenced by the architectural style of south India or Orissa or vice-versa. But the geographical proximity of Kosala with these three regions allows this type of inter change of the art styles.\(^1\) Some other scholars

\(^1\) Krishna Deva, Temples of Northern India, 1969.
have also noticed certain elements of this temple followed by the Orissan temples at Bhuvaneshvara. K.C. Panigrahi for example is of the opinion that Laxman temple at Sirpur has served as a model for the early temples that were built at Bhuvaneshvara. ¹

In Kosala, sala-sikhara example of this temple has at least one parallel. In the nearby district of Durg, another brick temple of about the same time, exists at Kirwai bazar, near Damakheda, 55 Kms. from Raipur, on Raipur-Bilaspur state highway. The niches of the sikhara of the later are also topped by the sloping, coping stones forming a rudimentary design of the sala-sikhara.

Apart from the architectural designs discussed above the sikhara is further decorated withanga-sikharas (miniature towers), and the series of kudu motifs (chaitya arches of smaller size) horizontally parallel to each bhumi or tier of sikhara. The konaka paga (the projection just near the corner) amlasila (ring stones) are much more important in this temple than anywhere else. The top-most member may have been an Oblong sala or the huge Amalaka, preferably the later. There are false windows on the three sides of sikhara on its jangha part. This is another feature influenced by the south Indian style of temple architecture. Such false windows are indicated by,

apart from the frame, the grill work within the square. These type of grilled windows, although open, are to be found in the temples built under the early Chalukyan dynastys in western deccan. But the style seems to have transcended the boundaries of India and has travelled across the Indian ocean to reach the far eastern regions of Combodiya (Kampuchia now). A.K. Koomara Swamy had found similarity between these in the Sirpur example and the ones found in the tower of Bayang temple in Cambodia.¹

The Door Frame: As in the temples discussed before, the door frame of this temple also, because of its typical decorations of the Gupta period is one of the finest examples of the temple art. Here the gate is of much bigger size than in the other temples due to perhaps, the larger proportions of the temple. The height of the sikhara in particular is enormous. It is a Pansha-sakha ṛvar (five jambed door) decorated with the foliage lotus and creeper designs on the inner two sakhas. Ananta sayana (Vishnu lying on the serpent king Ananta or sesa) occupies the lintel-piece with details of Brahma seated on the stalked lotus emanating from the nabhi (novel) of the former etc. Sarasvati and Lakshmi are shown on the flanks. On the side panels of the door-jambs under it. There is the depiction of Mithuna figures. On the fourth again,

¹ Koomara Swamy, A.K., "History of Indian and Indonesian Art, p. 93."
there is depiction of creeper or kalpalata motifs. The fifth jamb has, in panels dashavatara p figures (per ten incarnations of Vishnu. This additional feature speaks of the truth that the temple originally belong to Vishnu. It is however, presently called Lakshamana temple because an image of the Nagara installed in the sanctum, Sesanaga is regarded an incarnation of Lakshmana. The inner and wider facets of the jamb have one full and two half bloomed lotuses in the form of medallions carved very tastefully. On the borders of these facets are to be found, the carvings of fauna including peacock, monkey climbing the tree, snake, parrot and some composite mythical horned animals. On the front facets of the main jambs, the lower part depicts Harihamsa, from whose mouths are emmated the pearls which, together with his creeper shaped tail form up a girdle above. Besides, beautiful half and full bloomed lotuses also decorate it. 

A word about, the art of this famous door-way may be not be out of place here. The drapery and ornaments shown on the human figures are worn so tastefully that one can count the folds of sarees in the bigger female figures. The front of the saree is always shown hanging down. Sometimes the Saree appears to be transparent. In the shalabhanjika figure on the upper panels, it is particularly so. ".... the temple is unsurpassed in the

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1. Cunningham in his ASI, Annual Reports, Vol.VII has given the photographs of the standing image of Vishnu which he thinks was the original deity installed inside.
richness and refinement of its ornaments...", says A.K. Coomar Swamy.

**Date of the Temple:** This matter has been already discussed in the last chapter. Vasata, the mother of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna had built this temple in the last part of the seventh century A.D.

**Gandhesvara (Siva) temple**

This is another temple at Sirpur and is situated on the bank of Mahanadi. It is obviously reconstructed during the later period. A statue of Buddha in bhumi-sparsa mudra (pose), Uma-mahesvara and Gangadhara Siva are to be seen outside the temple and Vishnu on Garuda and Vaman incarnation of Vishnu are to be seen inside the temple. Both the later statue are modelled out of the granite rock) are particularly noteworthy. Similarly the decorated masonry door, in the otherwise ruined brick temple, belongs to the same period as Lakshmana. The door jambs are decorated with the conventional motifs of foliage kalpalata and lotus.

**Pujari Pali**

This place is in Raigarh district, 75 kilometres south-east of the district headquarters and across Mahanadi. The brick temple is in a ruined state now.

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but till the beginning of this century it retained some part of it. Chhattisgarh Feudatory states, a publication of 1904, contains its photograph. The Henry Cousens,\(^1\) also had been seen and reported it. Earlier Cunningham\(^2\) had brought it to the light and Burgess\(^3\) illustrated its angle amalakas.

What remains of the Burra Seni (a Gond devta) temple as known locally now, is, its terrace and the pillars of the mandapa. The pillars are decorated with Kshudra-ghantikas (a series of decorative small bells hanging down) and apsaras. The former is a popular decorative motif of the Gupta period, hence the temple has been assigned the period of seventh century A.D. as the approximate time of its original construction.

On the side of the village, another brick temple, known as Kewatin (that of the caste of fishermen), also in ruined state, belongs to later period.

Some door frames and the sculpture scattered in the village earlier are either collected at a place or two now, or the pieces utilised by the people for the building purposes. Their art-style clearly indicates that some of them belonged to these brick temples in the question. One door-lintel has Ganesa in the centre, thus the possibility of a saivite temple is strong.

There are status of Chaturbhuj Vishnu, Siva with

\(^1\) Pr, ASI, WC, 1904, p.32.
\(^2\) ASI, Annual Reports, Vol. VII, p.68.
\(^3\) Exagx Pr, ASI, WI, 1903-04, p.48. Plates 288, 290, 298, 300.
garland made of skulls, Kubera, Lakshmi, Brahma, Uma-
Mahesvara, Vishnu with umbrella above him.

Rajivalochana Temple

As we have discussed in the last chapter, the plan, design and the decorative art of this temple at Rajim closely follows these aspects of the Lakshmana temple of Sirpur. Besides the art style, the inscriptions found in the two, also are engraved in the same script.1

Then Rajivalochana temple also is a shrine dedicated to Vishnu. The Nala dynasty, whose ruler Vilasatunga, is supposed to have built this temple, therefore, may have succeeded as the ruler of Kosala the Somavansa or Pandu-vansa of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna.2

Brick-original : The temple covered with several layers of cement and white washed now, has the original brick-structure underneath. The masonry slabs have been utilised only for the purpose of pillars, pilasters, door frames and the beams of the mandapa roof. On the basis of this character of the temple, M.G. Dikshit was of the opinion that, the temple was renovated and rebuilt a number of times3, various parts like the sculptured pillars and pilasters of the mandapa, the two decorated doorways to the mandapa on the two sides,

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1. Thakur, V.S., Rajim, 1972, p.65.
2. Ibid.
3. Temple: of Makhalingam, Sirpur and Rajim (Heritage of Indian Art series, No.2, pp. 28-29.
the prākāra (enclosure) wall and its famous western gateway, are all the additions of the subsequent and periods.

**Ground-plan:** Plan as it exists now, is unconventionally west-east of the well developed panchayatana type with the main temple raised on a high plinth and in the long axis of west-east, surrounded by four subsidiary shrines on the four corners, within the prākāra which has a huge gate on the western side. The rectangular maha-mandapa is approached by the double flight of stairs, after Sirpur fashion, on the northern and the southern sides. At the head of stairs are the doorways decorated with the typical art-style of the date and post-Gupta period, maintaining its tradition in the Kosala region. The mandapa has two rows of pillars, four in each with the similar number of parallel pilasters on the side walls, the western side of the mandapa being open. The addition of two pillars on that open side and the two half-pillars above the half walls provides a small porely after the fashion of Nandi mandapa in the Saivite temples.

There is narrow antarala between the mandapa and the garbha-griha (cella) and an ambulatory (pradaksina patha) around it on the same plinth, perhaps the first example of sandhara prasada, in Kosala. Other temples at Rajim, such as Ramachandra, Telin and Jagannatha seem to have followed this style.¹ The path

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1. Thakur, V.S., Rajim, 1972, p.86
circumcumbulation though enclosed on the sides by the construction of extra walls, is open from above. Thakur thinks this is perhaps the influence of the shore temple of Mahabalipura, built by Pallava rulers. But I do not think any such thing could happen in respect of a minor part of the whole temple. Instead, Dikshit may be right in stating the some parts of this temple were added at the time of rennovation that took place during different periods. This part infact is so crudely added, that appears quite illogical in the whole set up of the things, and, therefore, is perhaps much later.

**Elevation:** Thakur agrees that the alteration, at least in the exterior vertical parts of the temple, have been caused by the thick layer of the cement plaster and several layers of the lime-wash, thus making it difficult to make out the original style.

4' high Adhishthana (plinth) and the jangha (middle part) of the Vimana (cella together with the sikhara) is of tri-ratha or tryanga type. The upper part of the adhisthana is heavily moulded and decorated perhaps, with various designs, for at one place where the plaster had gone off, the foliage motif could be noticed on the bricks. Then on the talajangha (lower middle) part we find the purna ghata or nidhi-kalasa,

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1. Ibid.
2. Temples of Mukhalingam, Sirpur and Rajim (Heritage of Indian Art-series, No.2, pp. 28-29.
3. Thakur, V.S., Rajim, 1972, p.86
which definitely follows the Sirpur model. Above this all three mukha-mandals (muhar, faces) are decorated with pilasters, six on each side with purna-ghata capitals, also of popular Gupta style. Each pair of pilasters and false pillars are covered and joined by coping stones ornamented with chaitya-window or arch motif. Sikhara above is separated from this middle part by baranda or a projected single band of string-course running on all the three sides.

Though not really like niches on the Dasavatara temple of Deogarh, within the pairs of pilasters, some images may have been installed.¹

Sikhara: Unlike the plan and the lower middle of the temple which is modelled after the Sirpur proto-type, the source of inspiration of the vimana is far away in the south. Instead of being curvilinear, the decorated tiers of the sikhara recede in the size as they rise in such a way that the result is pyramidal shape, the chief characteristic of the Dravida style. Then there are amla-silas (ring stones) on the corners to indicate separate square bhumis or tiers, finally topped by the large double amalaka. These as well as the huge Chaitya window decoration, given an impression of its being of north-Indian or the Nagara style.

¹ Ibíd, p.87.
Thus possibly the architects and the artisans, who have worked on this temple, have shaped it in a composite or mixed style. Some scholars have designated this style as the Vesara style of the temple architecture. Some of the ancient canon on architecture also, use the term misraka (mixed) for it. P.K. Acharya and several other scholars have connected this style with the Deccan, geographically the region between the North India (the area of Nagara style) and the south India, the area of the Dravida style of the temple architecture.

This, sikhara, therefore, has resemblance, with the Bodha-gaya temple sikhara, but, whereas the later maintains its height proportionate to the long axis of the whole temple. The former appears rather disproportionately strutted.

Praståka: This topmost part of the sikhara consists of double amlaka, each separated from the other part by the narrow griva or necking and the bell shaped member and Kalasa, ayudha etc.

Gateway of the prakara: This is the finest example from both architectural and the artistic point of view. It faces West. It is a tri-säkha dvara (three jambed door)

regarded most auspicious in silpa-sastras. ¹ An entrance chamber about 3 above the level of the prakara, supported by four pillars and four pilasters and topped by a flat roof is built in such a way that half of it appears projected out of the prakara and the half inside it. This, though in absence of the sloping sala sikha above the roof, does not show any direct influence of the southern Gopuram style found in the temples of Pallavas may be, according to Thakur, the modified version of the local architects experiment.²

The decorated door-frame, the central pillars and their lintels are part of the refined art of the late and post Gupta period for which Rajim is so well-known. It is almost square of ten feet aside. The jambs are decorated with coiled Naga couple worshippers in namaskar mudra (two lower panels each of the second and third sakha, their lowest panels showing attendant chauri bearers in dvi-bhanga (two bent body) posture. The upper portions of the pillars are divided in three parts, the one next to Naga-girdla is decorated with the inverted petals of the lotuses. Above it are the pura of the mangala ghata with Pallavas rising from them (vase and foliage motif). Last is the square abacus and the string course or kapotavali along its edges. The first sakha of the jambs depict this same design, the kalpa-lata (creepers) and the foliage covers up not

¹. Tripancha-sapta navabhih sakhbhistat prasasyate (Brihatsamhita, 56/14).
². Thakur, V.S, Rajim, 1972, p.73.
only the upper portions of the jambs but also the bigger part of the first lintel also, sparing just its centre. The subtle flow and the rhythm of the lines in the carving of these natural motifs are suggestive of very skilled and mature hands of the artists chiselling them. Four-armed Gaja-lakshmi seated on the lotus occupies the lintel piece (dvara-lalata bimba). On the flanks above, the elephants anointing her are shown standing on the full-bloomed lotuses, their upraised trunks holding the down faced vases pouring the unending flow of water. On the lower flanks of the goddess are standing the chauri bearing female attendants.

The lowest two of the four panels each of the second sakha contain mithuna (couple) figures. After the Naga-worshippers (half human shaped) described above, the flanks of the second lintel supported by these jambs also depict the half human-shaped Naga-couples, but here they are shown in embracing posture. In the centre is placed the famous carving of human shaped figure of Garuda in Virasana mudra only the outstretched wings on the sides of his back and the long nose can help one to identify him as the mythical bird. In each of his hands, he is shown catching hold of the hood of the Naga. In his immediate flanks are shown the five hooded human shaped Nagas, one each, in namaskar mudra. This depiction of Garuda grabbing at the Nagaraja is as per the injunctions of the silpa sastras.
On the third sakha, lowest panels depict the dvarapalas holding Parashu (axe). Above, the jamb is divided into two parts. In one of them, there are mithanas (couples) and the human shaped Nagas with five hoods over their heads. Another part is carved with the Kalpalata (creepers) design. On the lintel supported by these two jamb, there is depiction of anantasayana Vishnu in his deep Yogamidra (slumber). On the flanks of the lintel crocodiles emitting the pearls to make the garlands (makara torana) are depicted. The total scene of this lintel is one of the finest examples of the art of this temple.

The Interior of the Mandapa:

Both pillars and pilasters inside the mandapa are carved in such a way that the decorative motifs like foliage creeper lotuses, the purna-ghata and the capital part of the pillars with various styles present a panoramic view of aart gplary. The pillars are further beautified by modelling their lower, middle and the upper parts in the square, octagonal and sextagonal shapes respectively. No two pillars of the mandapa are of the same variety.

Besides, all these ornamental aspects, statues of the Gods, goddesses and demi-gods also occupy an important position on some of the pillars and pilasters.
In the modelling of figures like Ganga, Yamuna and Salbhanjika, their dressess and ornaments, their hair-style and the dvi-bhanga and tribhanga pose, the artists have shown the same skill and the resultant plasticity as we have witnessed at Indal deva temple at Kharod, Adbhur and the Lakshmana temple at Sirpur.

The Door-Ways: We have already discussed the art of the gate-way of the prakara. There are three more door ways, two leading into the mandapa and the third to the garbha-griha (sanctum). They are more or less similar in design, but different only in the details. There are certain motifs, most popular during the Gupta period, they are the door-keepers, the purana or mangalghata, some auspicious birds, the serpents, a tree, swastika, Mithuna or couple, the foliage and the creeper design. Most of them appear on these door-ways. It seems the artist has followed the injunctions of the silpa-sastras.¹ The Mithuna figures that are found on the second jamb of the cella-door frame are presented in a variety of attitudes. On the third one the Naga couples, half human shaped similarly, present the variety of postures. The lintel piece is Chaturbhuja Vishnu, mounted on Garuda, the later performing the dual duty by catching hold of the Nagas on his flanks also.

¹ Shastric references: Mārāntaka Mahāparināma

Brihata Samhita - 56
The Temple of Kirwai Dhobin

This is a village **Kirwai Bazar** near Damakheda about 55 kilometres of Raipur on Raipur-Bilaspur state highway.

Bhumi Vinyasa: The plan of the garbha-griha and its sikhara the intact main part of the temple, follows the Lakshmana temple of Sirpur in general, but has some variations also. The shrine is placed on a 5' high masonry sub-structure. Above this rise the brick parts of pista (basement) jangha (middle and upper part of the wall) and the sikhara.

Star shaped: Novelty of this temple is that on each of the three wall sides, five angular projections give it a star-shaped appearance. The stone adhisthana has semi-round and square mouldings.

Exterior decoration: Like Sirpur temple, Kudu (Chaitya arch) motifs are the main ornamental motif. They are quite huge sized with niche-like appearance and are shown supported by a pair of Kichakas (dwarfs) each. On their usnisa (copings) are shown the huge vyalakas (mythical half-lion figures). On the recessed part of the bada are depicted the flying gandharvas and vidyâdharas with garlands in their hands.

Again, like Sirpur, the decorative series of the smaller-sized Kudu (arch) motif, between the jangha and
the sikhara, is topped by the sloping copings which have the appearance of saka-sikhara.

Sikhara : The tower is of the Nagara style, curvilinear in shape. Three four bhuminis can be judged by the amla-silas on the corners, the top most part having fallen off.

Sculpture : The doorway is all gone. At the time of subsequent, a modern door has been fitted in place of the original. A walled courtyard has also been added towards the entrance of the garbha-griha with no clue spared as to the original mandapa etc.

The sculpture now found set against the wall outside include two images of Buddha, Ganesa and an eight armed goddess, which because of the mutilation of her attribute held in hands, can not be identified now.

Palari

This place has yet another example, in the tradition of the brick temples of Kosala. The place is in Raipur district, 69 kilometres from it and 15 kms. from the tehsil headquarters Baloda Bazar.

The temple is situated on the bank of a huge tank Balsamdri-supposed to have been built by Mahasivagupta Balarjuna, the Pandovanai ruler with his capital at Sirpur. It its style also, it follows the Lakshman temple at the later place. It is not improper, therefore, to assume that the temple was built not much after it and perhaps at about the same time as Kirwai-Dhobin.
Garbha-Sutra or bhumi vinyas (ground plan): Plan of the temple is unconventional for the temple faces west. It is most certainly so because the architect wanted it to face grand Balasamudra tank. It is of tri-ratha type. There are no remains of a mandapa or porch in front of the shrine. What is intact now is the garbha-graha and its sākhara.

Brahma Sutra (Elevation): The lowest part i.e. the adhishthana is moulded in several bands of which a few are with kudu motif. The middle and the upper part is not only decorated with the Chaitya-arch motif in the bigger size but the niches containing the images of Gods and goddesses also embellish, the exterior of the temple. Some of the sculptures worth-mentioning here are Kalyana-sundrama i.e. depiction of the scene of marriage between Siva and Parvati, Lalitasana Ganesa, Surya (the sun god) sthānaka (standing) on a ratha driven by the five horses, a kneeling figure of Varaha and Kṛttikeya. The recessed angles and the faces of the exterior are decorated with the bands of horse-riders and interestingly enough, sardula or the mythical lions riding on the elephants.

The Door-frame: Like all other instances related before the entrance to the shrine is built of dressed stone and of bigger size than usually found in the temples of this area. The height of the door is about 10 feet and perhaps is modelled after the Lakshmana temple of Sirpur.
It is a dvi sakha (double jamb) dvar and on the outer jambs, proportionately of large size we find the life-size statues of the dvarapalas Ganga and Yamuna standing on their mounts—crocodile and the tortoise respectively. Not only these female forms of the goddesses but also the attendants on their flanks bearing chouri/umbrella in their hands are aims so tastefully modelled that one is reminded by similar plastic figures of Indal deva temple at Kharod and the door frame of the Adbhur temple. They are in tri-bhanga pose and nasagra drishti with eyes half-closed and fixed on the tip of the nose. The engirdled adho-vastra (saree) and its folds are lined so intricately that the account of the transparent drapery available in the Mandsore inscription of Kumara gupta and Bandhu-varmana comes to one's mind. The weavers of Gupta period in that area most certainly could produce such delicate and fine clothes.

A unique feature of this temple is the arrangement of double door-keepers. The dvarapalas on the inner jambs of the door are made more graceful, the way both Ganga and Yamuna are holding a vase on their upturned palms. The same are then supported by stalked lotuses and the lotuses in their turn are supported by their other hands. The upper parts of the inner jambs show, in panels, the ganas of Siva, Uma Mahesvara on their mount Nandi (bull) on the right and Indra and Indrani on their mount Airavata, the elephant, on the left.
Apart from Kalyana-Sundaram scene on the upper lintel described earlier, the lower lintel-piece depicts all the main deities on their respective mounts. Thus, Brahma on hansa on the right and Vishnu on half-human shaped Garuda on left flank, a mutilated figure is placed in the centre. He could be Lakulisa, as the danda in his hand suggests it, but if the mutilated object be a stalk of the lotus, then there is a possibility that the image would be that of Sun. The horses driving the chariots or rathas usually shown on the pedestal under him or probably mutilated now.

The Brick Temples at Bhoramdeo

This place is about 18 kms. from Kavardha, a tehsil headquarters of Rajnandgaon district. There are two temples belonging to 7th, 8th century A.D. One of them in a ruined state, stands in the compound of the main temple of Bhoramdeo. Another temple situated near a village choura and some way from the Chhapri river is known as Chherki-mahal.

Like all other brick temples of Kosala these two temples also have the masonry door-frames fixed in them. The first, near the Bhoramdeo temple, due to its extra bold projections, is of pancha-ratha type. The larger portion of the sikhara above the square sanctum is gone, but the pillars in front of the later are suggestive of the original mandapa. A statue of Nandi
is placed in the porch now, perhaps does not belong to this part of the temple. On the left side of the doorway are the steps leading to the upper storey or chamber of the temple now gone. This follows the Parvati temple at Machna and Siva temple at Bhundara, both in Satna district. And, since they belong to the Gupta period, this temple could be assigned the 7th-8th century A.D., the time when quite a few other brick-temples were built in Kosala.

Sculptural art: Most of the sculptures placed within the sanctum of this temple now do not belong to it. But a couple of them attract the attention. One is that of Lakshmi-Narayana, their unusual embracing posture otherwise found in Uma-Maheswara figure. Had it not been for the Garuda on which they are sitting, one could have got confused in the identification. Another is that of Nandi sitting head down and a worshipper standing before him in namaskara mudra.

Chherki Mahal: The part of this temple that is intact now is a square cella 12' aside and its tall slender (about 40' high) tower. Because of several bhumis (tiers) of the curvilinear Nagara sikhara of the otherwise damaged shrine, this example may be regarded as a type in itself. The brick temples modelled after Kharod and Sirpur whereas have a slight curvature of the contours and thus giving the tiers of the sikhara a substantial width, this example shows their sharp inward inclination. Then, unlike the
temple dismissed before, this shrine was placed on a plinth which is half covered by the debris around and only half exposed to our sight.

Mandapa or arddha-mandapa: The possibility of this part of the temple, when intact, is suggested by the broken Nandi image in front of it.

Garbha-griha: The door frame of the shrine is decorated with the usual door keepers Ganga and Yamuna along with their paraphernalia so common in the temples of the period. The foliage, creeper and lotus designs, besides the jambs and the lintel, decorate the oversailing courses of the dome-shaped ceiling also, the top centre of which is embellished with the conventional motif of ashta-dala-padma (eight-petalled bloomed lotus).

Kesava-paravane temple Seorinarain:

Situated just in front of the main temple and facing west this small sized temple with the exterior of the garbha-griha measuring 26' x 18', is also half-brick and half masonry built. The upper part of its sikhara is gone but in the plan it is star-shaped. This shape is much more marked here than in the Dhobin Kirwai instance. Then it is of sapta-ratha type, made so due to larger number of the projections and re-entrant angles of the walls. The semi-preserved sikhara is indicative of its Nagara style. The four masonry pillars and the flat roof above them, due to the stark simplicity do not give an impression of being original.
door frame: This is the best example of an intricate carving and the variety of ornamentation. The door has unusually large number of eight jambs on each sides and the three lintels above. The first sakhā (jamb) depicts kanyavali, second shows various forms and incarnations of Vishnu, the third has within foliage Narāvali, fourth again has the foliage and kalpa-lata motif. The fifth jamb is decorated with twisted rope design and the figures of males, elephants, monkeys and lion etc. Within the twists. Besides these are depicted Narāvali (the frieze of the male human), pashuvali (the frieze of the animal), the sixth is like third, the seventh like fourth and the eighth shows within bigger twists varied figures like gandharvas, warriors, the mythical creatures, kitchakas, hamsas and lotuses.

Of the lintels, the lowest has Nagavalī (the frieze of the serpents), the second Śiva in the centre, Brahma in aruddha-paryanka asana on right and Vishnu lalitasana on the left. Navgraha (nine planets) are also shown within it. The third lintel has Śiva Nātesa in the centre and Narāvali on the flanks.

Devala or Bhimē deval temple, Paller

This temple came to light, in full, only recently when the Archaeological Survey of India cleared the debris of the mound of the site popularly known as Devala in January 1980. The site is just near Motisagar tank, popularly known as Mitri or Motia tank.
Tala-Chhanda (Ground plan): The shrine, unconventionally faces west. It has a spacious ardhamandapa 22'-8" wide and 10' in depth with steps on the front that lead to the plinth on which the whole temple is built. Then through the doorway of the garbha-grīha we enter the still wider and square interior of 20' aside. The same is about a square of 40' aside from the outside, thus much more spacious than the sanctums that we have come across so far. These two main parts of the temple are connected by an antarala only 10' x 7'. Small sized door-keepers are to be found on the insight pillars of the porth (lie Derani temple at Tala). Cella door is rather plain.

Elevation and exterior: The upper portion of the salls, the roof and the sikha are all gone, hence nothing can be said about the later's style. The pista (lowest, i.e. adhisthana) and the bada (jangha, i.e. the middle), parts are moulded and decorated with various motifs which include geometrical patterns, a few couples, Kirtimukhas and other figures. A few human figures have been shown within single or triple Kudu (Chaitya arches) also. This, with the changed material (stone in place of brick) follows sirpur, Kirwai Bazar and Palari.

Date of the temple: The described style of the ornamentation as well as the sculpture, lying in two-three rows on the side of the temple with the likeness to the art of Rajim, leave no doubt in assuming that this temple also was built during the Panduvansi rulers.
The Sculptural art: The resemblance between the art pieces that have been discovered from the clearance of this site now lying in the rows on one side of the temple and the sculptures of the Rajivalochana and Ramchandra temples at Rajim is not confined to the likeness of the art-style but also in the contents as well. There is a definite influence of the gupta art-style on both of these sides. The Nag and Nagi shown in half-human form and half-serpent form seem to be the popular depiction given this period. Then, sometimes they are shown in coils occupying the pillars or the pilasters of the temple. In Bhima deva although all the sculptures are now detached from their original position but they have the unmistakable pattern as noticed in the Rajim temples. Another popular depiction that connects the two places is the figure of Salbhaṅgika dvi-bhanga and tri-bhanga mudra (pose), nasagra-drishti (half-closed eyes fixed on the tip of the nose), beautiful hair style and the slim and slender body at both these places is remarkably similar. The pedestals of all these images are shown supported by the kishaka figures (dwarfs) also found at both these places.

Walls have only the slight projections giving the shrine a rudimentary form of tri-ratha type. Niches on the exterior, if there were any, are all gone now.

The door frame: The door frame of the porch is decorated with the typical Gupta and post-Gupta period dvarapalas—Ganga and Yamuna on the lower parts of the outer jambs,
purna ghata, foliage and the creepers designs on their upper parts as well as their inner facets ornament the remaining space of the jambs.

The Brick temple at Ranipur Jhural, Bastar

The place Ranipur Jhural is in Bastar district and almost on the Boundary of Orissa. The brick-temple, perhaps built during Panduvamsi or Nala dynasty rulers, is almost gone except the plinth and a part of the antarala and garbha-griha. The maha-mandapa in front of these two parts had three entrances and its walls had the projections also. The antarala and garbha-griha look like two separate cell, because the former had been closed by the walls two. Thus this arrangement of the inner walls as enclosure for the antarala and the outer wall left the pradakshina patha (the path of circumambulation) around the tri-ratha garbha-griha.

Gurur Temple

The small town of Gurur is situated on Durg-Dhamtari route 29 kms from the former and 14 Kms. from the later but just inside the boundary of Durg district. Though very small in size and devoid of any decoration on the walls and sculpture except the door frame keepers, the temple is unique in whole of Kosala from the point of view of the architectural style.
Garbha-sutra or ground plan: This aspect places the temple right into the Gupta period, with a 10' aside from the outside and 5'-6" within square sanctum on a low plinth, bound by the string courses on the lower, middle and the kapota (cornice) level, and a two pillared open portico in front of the former. The flat roof of the porch 9'8" x 7'9" is now gone.

Sikhara: Though belonging to the gupta period and falling within the sphere of the imperial dynasty also, the sikhara of the small square cella is a tiered formation, the gradual constriction of the square tiers (eleven in all) as they rise giving the sikhara a pyramidal shape,(built top being round)- the Dravidian or south Indian element. It is to be remembered that during this early and experimental stage, such temples were built in large number at Aihole, the first capital of the early Chalukyan dynasty and it was only during the last phase of their temple building activity at Pattadakal that the distinct Nagar- and Dravida styles had been established in the temples like Virupaksha and Papanatha etc.

That the southern dynasties and their temple style could influence the temple style here, can be seen from other examples at Rajim also. The temples of Kulesvara, Damasvara and even the rebuilt sikhara of Rajivalochana itself. Then, politically, this southern
area of Kosala had once or twice fallen to their forces. Pulakeśīna II in 634 A.D.¹ and Vijayaditya III later had subjugated parts of Kosala² Somesvara I and Vikramaditya II also ruled over, Chakrakuta (earlier occupied by the Vijayadityya III in Bastar district) with the local Nagavamsi rulers as thin sub-ordinates.³

The door frame: This is only partially preserved. The sakhās or the jambs are not clearly marked giving an impression of one flat face and its side facet. The dvarapalas on the left side alone are intact the river goddess and a male figure. The attributes held by them are mutilated defying any identification. Above them the kalpalata (creepers) decorates the rest of the jamb so is its counter part on the other side. The door lintel has a beautiful, little mutilated image of Ganesa, in arddha-paryanka-asana (seated, with one foot partly hanging down).

Above the door-way and also the flat roof of the prāṭico, the façade (mukha-mandala) or the lower part of the sikhara has an opening into the interior of the garbha-griha where the viṣā (ailing) is formed by the oversailing courses of masonry supported by the pilasters below and topped by the disc. decorated with ashta-dala-kamala.

¹. Aihole Ins.
Pandey, V.C. Vikramanka Deva charita, 4, p.30.
An inscribed pillar, discovered from the digging of a farm is to be found about 70 yards behind the temple. The inscription has been read and belongs to Vyaghra raja of the Somavamśi Naga rulers of Kanker. Apparently it has nothing to do with the temple, which is of much earlier period.