CHAPTER - IV.

THE KALACHURI TEMPLES - NORTH OF RAJANADI.

Some minor temple-sites of Bilaspur District.
CHAPTER - IV

THE KALACHURI TEMPLES - NORTH OF MAHANADI

The Beginning: As has been stated at the outset of the first chapter, the Kalachuri's having come from Tripuri, had occupied Pali first and then tammang which was soon favoured as their capital. Naturally therefore, the rulers started their building activity at these two places and with the growth of their kingdom expanded it to other and far off places one after the other.

The Siva Temple of Pali:

This place is 61 Kms. north of Bilaspur falling in the Katghora Tehsil of the district. The early notices of the temple are to be found in Cunningham's Survey Reports\textsuperscript{1} followed by Baglār's.\textsuperscript{2} Then, on the basis of an inscription engraved on the door frame of the cella, Vikramaditya I, a ruler of the Bana dynasty, had ruled over this region from about 870 A.D. to 900 A.D. It was nearly 200 years later that Jajjalladeva I, a Kalachuri ruler of Ratanpur renovated this temple. This inscription also is to be found engraved on a Mandapa-wall, stating "Shrimajjalladevasya Kirti....."\textsuperscript{3} Hulzoh had regarded Banas as subordinates under Tamilians and who were sent by their masters to the far off regions on the

1. ASR..... VII, pp. 204-07, 217-19.
2. PR, ASI, WC, 1904 page 29
trading missions rather than on a war-campaign. They are found as the trading community at Takra-pa or Takopa in Wat-Namuang, a region in Malayan-Peninsula.\(^1\) Thakur on this basis does not credit the Bana Dynasty for having constructed this temple. They might have, because of their prosperity, donated huge amount as an assistance towards the project. The construction, according to him, should be ascribed to Jajalla deva.\(^2\) But this view is untenable as we find the reconstruction-standing work attempts at the temple. And then, the existence of the two inscriptions in the same temple and the script of the same belonging to two different and wide apart time shows nothing but the work at the temple conducted at two different time. It should be therefore, assumed that Vikramaditya I of the Bana dynasty was the actual builder of the temple and Kalachuris, under Jajalladeva rule merely reconstructed the damaged temple. The evidence of this renovation and the reconstruction can be noticed on the outer walls also were some of the sculptures and the grassed stones of the temple are found out of their real place and thus in a disturbed state of set up of the vertical aspect of the temple.

The Ground Plan: The temple standing on the bank of the tank is built on a plinth about 4 feet high and faces east. The various parts towards west are the steps

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1. Ibid.
2. Thakur, V.S. : Occupation of Dakshina Koala by the Kalachuris and their relations with the early rulers of Ratanpur; Madhya Bharti, Jabalpur, 1962, pp. 80-81.
to approach the terrace entrance of the mandapa, the narrow part of the mandapa looking almost like the arddha mandapa, the central mandapa, supported by the 4 central pillars and the pilasters on the side walls, the Maha-mandapa having besides mandapa two wide entrances and antarala separated from the mandapa with the help of two additional pillars and at the far end, the garabha-griha with its door-frame. The walls of the Mahamandapa are so projected out side that the temple gives an impression of a star shaped or asta-koniya (octagonal) appearance. The detached outer limbs represent the five right angles. The Maha-mandapa is about 27 feet by 21 feet from inside and the sanctum, a square of 11 feet aside. The antarala is as narrow as 5'3" x 2'9".

Exterior and the elevation - Now, from this temple onwards, the sikhara of fully developed Nagara style with subtle curves of the contours, the amlasila marking each bhumi, the two bands of sculptures on the jangha part (some temples have three also), the mouldings of the tala-jangha (lower wall) and the adhishtana (basement) with various motifs of ornamentation, become a regular affair. Similarly, the marked projections out of the cella walls clearly decide the ratha-type of the temple. This temple, in this respect, could be called pancha ratha type. Some of the images installed in the niches of the walls are sun-god chaturbhujja sthanake, the stalked lotuses shown prominently in his upper and right and left hand, the
tratha (chariot) that he is riding on is driven by the seven horses shown on the pedestal under him. Danda and pingal are shown on his lower flanks. He is wearing a large conical kirta mukata. This niche has two beautifully carved pilasters on the sides and huge canop above appearing like a separate shrine. The siva natesa in prasamsa mudra is depicted in the niche above. He is modelled in a graceful tri-bhanga mudra.

The Mukhamandala are sukhasana on the front side of the sikhara is of the enormous size and gives an appearance a separate sikhara filling the gap between the mandapa and the main sikhara.

Other sculptures shown on the walls are Andhakasura-vadha, arddha-marisvara, Lakshmi-Sarasvati, ascetics, guardians of the quarters of the earth kubera and other yakshas sura-sundaris and a few erotic couples in various positions.

The door frame: Besides the main door-way of the garbha-griha, the two additional pillars in front of it supporting the architrave above which in tur supports the roof above are decorated in the same fashion as the main door frame jams. This duplication is therefore due to the misplacement and disturbance caused to the temple at the time of its renovation. Besides the dvara pala groups Ganga and Yamuna each with the attendants, the jambs are divided in panels. In one of them, on the inner side siva-parvati are shown in an interesting act,
he trying to entice and arouse her. In another panel on the left middle jamb both are seated on Nandi.

Ceiling of the mandapa: This feature of the temple is unsurpassed in the area. The arrangement of its as many as nine circular oversailing masonry courses, all decorated beautifully present a unique scene. Each is decorated differently presenting a great variety of expressions and motifs. The warriors, the riders, hamsavali, naravali, foliage, lotuses, gandharvas, apsaras and all possible figures that have come to the mind of the architect have been given place in them. The nett result of these courses is the dome shaped roof. This as well as the carving on the pillars appears to be of the same time as those of siva temple janggir, additions to the temples of seori–marain (main temples), to the mandapa of Lakhnesvara at Kharod and Vishnu temple at Narainpal. All these temples are supposed to be built by

Tumman: Also known as Tumman Khol 96 Kms. of Bilaspur, because of its peculiar geographical situation. There are two passes from or towards the otherwise hill surrounded place. As stated before, the place remained capital of the first three generations of the Kalachuri rulers. The remains of the royal palace and other buildings on the banks of Jatashankari river, are not only ruined, but during my recent visit to the place. I found that most of the finely dressed stone pieces earlier lying there, also, have been carried away.
Plan (Vinvasa) of the central semi-preserved temple: The high plinth, has a huge Nandi placed in front of it. The plinth is approached by a flight of steps, on the flanks of which are two extra cells, perhaps meant to enshrine the subsidiary deities in the panchayatan style of the temple complex. On the plinth a square mandapa of 26' aside might have contained pillars, side walls and the roof above. This part again has two side-transepts. Next comes the narrow antarala, followed by still narrower passage leading to the doorway of the garbha-griha. Though it the steps down lead to the interior of the sanctum, a square of 9'6" aside and supported by four corner and three side pilasters. Linga is installed within.

The tri-ratha shrine (sanctum) is of 16'4" side on the exterior.

Elevation (Utsadha vinvasa): Although the entire upper portion of the sikhara has fallen away and we can not make out the real shape of the same but the three different parts that compose the whole body can be studied by whatever part is intact now. The adhdisthan are the basement is heavily moulded, its courses receding in the size in manner of steps supporting talajangha and upari-jangha above. The tala or lower jangha also contains the sculptural band not found usually in the temples of this period. The upari jangha is separated from the tala jangha by three courses of the mouldings again. Finally the
upari jangha seems to have had three bands of sculpture running on all three side walls, the central part of which contains three niches each. Unfortunately sculpture on the projected rathas of the walls as well as the once, in central niches on each side are all missing now. Therefore, the artistic assessment of the temple can be solely based on the images of gods and goddesses that are found on the doorway of the cella.

Door-frame: Fortunately, this part of the temple is intact. The door-keepers of the tri-sakha-dvāra (triple-jamb door) have two figures on each side siva also along with Ganga and Yamuna occupies this position. There is depiction of the Gāshavatār figures (ten incarnations of Vishnu), in panels on the first sakha. Hiralal¹ was first to identify them all, the last two being Buddha and Kalki. The lintel has Natīsa in the centre, the bearded Brahma to his right and Vishnu on Garuda to his left. On top flanks, besides the garland bearing gandharvas, depiction of a tired sikhara is remarkable. On the chandra sila (moon stone) below, there is beautiful carving of Gaja-lakshmi.

The three niches of the door lintel containing the three chief gods topped by the tiered sikhara like composition is very interesting. The shape of these towers is pyramidal but the shape of the found object

obviously that of amalaka (ring stone) presents the composite character, combining the two styles of the temple architecture—Dravida or south Indian in its tiered arrangement and nagara or north Indian in its surmounting member.

The space between the three niches containing the deities, is occupied by navagrahas (nine planets).

**Ratnapur**

This place is about 26 kilometres north of Bilaspur and surrounded by hills like Tumman on two sides. It remained the capital of Kalachuris for several hundred years and the legends ascribe it several hundred tanks and a good numbers of temple, besides its antiquity to the period of Mahabharata. In its glorious past, it was of unsurpassed beauty and with its extent to several kilometres, both towards modern Bilaspur and ancient Pali.¹

More than a hundred tanks still exist in the town but unfortunately, none of the ancient temples, mostly dedicated to siva² are intact now. What we find of the early Kalachuri period are the ancient sculpture and the sanctum doorway fixed in the subsequently built temples, fort and bridge etc. Undoubtedly, the uncounted number of the pieces have been stolen away or utilised by the people for the

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2. Ibid.
building purposes.

**A Door-frame:** An ancient door frame belonging to some temple built during some early ruler of the Kalchuri dynasty is now to be found fixed as the door way to the Garba-griha of the mahamaya temple. The mandapa of this temple also was added during the king Baharsaya (mention of 1552 V.S. (1609 A.D. in the inscription is earlier,¹ and engraved on an image of Surya belonging to still earlier period).

The said door frame is decorated with dvaram-palas, the conventional Ganga and Yamuna, the two river goddesses, ornamental motifs and figures in the panels above. The door lintel is equally decorated, with the deities, flying vidyadharas and apsaras with garlands in their hands.

The garbha-griha, though reconstructed and plastered with cement and lime-washed a number of times is 8'3" x 10'2" and is tri-ratha type.

**A chhatri:** This is a shade raised on the pillars belonging to some mandapa of the ancient temple, in front of the mahamaya temple. Under its roof, a few sculptures of the early Kalachuri period, have been arranged in symmetrical way. They include an image of the river goddess Yamuna.

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¹ Cunningham, A.S.I., A.R. pp.72-78 and Beglar, PR, ASI, WC, 1904, pp. 31-32.
on Kachhapa (tortoise) in the graceful tribhanga pose, now all covered with sindur by the worshippers and the priest of the temple, Ganga, Chamunda, Mahishmardini and Uma mahesvara.

A twelve armed Bhairava, a form of siva, is a small courtyard shrine, also belongs to the early period.  

Kanthi Deva: This temple is supposed to have been built by Brahmadeva, a feudatory of Prithvi deval though in the present form it seems to have been renovated subsequently. During the reconstruction the upper stories and the side eaves on its second story were added. However, the temple still contains quite a few early sculptures that have been fixed on the walls during the time of renovation. Some of the original sculptures are now safely preserved in Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum, Raipur. One of them is a beautiful Kalyana sundaram image (depicting the scene of the marriage between siva and Parvati. In the jangha part of the temple, a scene of the worship of the Mukha linga form of siva is particularly interesting. It is belong worshipped by Vishnu. The siva linga is extended above and divided in two vertical sections. The middle one shows Brahma in abhaya-mudra and the upper one also Brahma in adoration or namaskar mudra. On the back wall facing the pushkarini (tank) on the bank of which the temple is situated, a tastefully modelled figure of

salabhanjika can be seen. She is shown, being attended by suparna.

Fort: Though much later, its existing gate also has, fixed in it, a number of sculptures of the early period. The most interesting of all, is the scene of Ravana offering his head to the sivalinga. Then other forms of Siva include eight-armed siva, prasanna mudra Natessa (jubilant Nataraja) etc. Inside the fort, Rama is shown with two pointed arrows, Lakshmi with lotuses in her hands, purna or mangala ghata etc.

On the road towards Bilaspur about 2 kilometres away from mahamaya temple and just before the Bhairava Baba temple, there is a bridge over a nulla in which the A.W.D. has ignorantly fixed a number of sculptures belonging to ancient temples of Ratanpur. They represent a great variety of gods and goddesses. Sura sundaris in various postures and the stones slabs decorated with various designs. The similar ignorance seems to have been shown by the builders of the fort, referred to above who on the inside walls have fixed such sculptures of the temple. They have been, however, judicious in arranging them in two bands, one representing the gods and goddesses and another by the sura sundaris presenting a number of scenes from the every day life of the people. This whole arrangement has the resemblance with the decoration found on the wall exteriors of the temple of the Kalachuri period.
Ganiyari (Deur Temple)

Ganiyari is a place about 30 km. north-west of Bilaspur on the Kota road. This temple in the state of semi preservation and stands on the bank of a tank, also known as Deur Talab behind Deur ward of the town. The bhumija style temple faces east and consists of a grabha-griha (cella) and its sikhara, the top of which is gone now. The Cella is a small square of 6'6" aside and its dome-shaped ceiling with over sailing courses of masonary is supported by four substantial corner pilasters. From the outside, the chamber is 15'2" x 8'4". The partially preserved sikhara is of the curvi-linear Nagara style with its bhumis marked by the corner Amlasilas (ring stones) the top huge amalaka and some bhumis under it are missing now. But the exterior has all the essential parts in its elevation - the moulded and decorative adhisthana, tala and uparit - jangha divided and decorated with the sculpture, some of the images of gods and goddesses still occupying the niches in the ratha paga (central projection) of the panaha-ratha type of temple and the sikhara with the pagas or projection continued to tap.

Exterior decoration: The three niches contain, from below above, Surya with stalked lotuses in both of his hands, Ganesa and a goddess, perhaps Parvati, whose lower left hand holds Kamandalu, rest of her hands and objects
held in them being now broken. The depiction of sura-
sundaris, in the recessed parts by the site of the projections
and even in some of the later mutilated now when intact
must have presented a panoramic view, but unfortunately
most of them are deprived of their original grandeur.
One of such female figures is shown playing on the drum.
The lowest moulding of the adhisthana presents Gajavali
or a row of elephants. The konaka paga rearer to Cellar-
door-way is decorated with full bloomed eight petalled
lotoses.

One of the niches on the left wall contains
an eight hundred shive natesa in tri-bhunga mudra and in
pleasant mood (prasanna mudra). It has much likeness
with the similar depiction of the God at Pali and Tumman
examples referred to earlier.

Door-Frame: The small (5 feet high) entrance to the
sanstum is a tri-sakha or triple jambed door on the lower
part shows a group of dvarapalas three on each side. The
river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna retain their mounts very
faintly visible now with their pedestals borne by the
Kishakas (dwarfs). The mutilated hands and attributes
on the flanking figures make it difficult to identify them.
Since they are both males and of the same size as the
godesses themselves they can not be treated as mere attendants.
In the temples built during this period in Kosala we often
find Siva also as one of the dvarpalas occupying the place
next to the main dvarpala that is the river goddesses. In
practically all the Siva temples of the area, namely
Pali, Janjgir, Patalesvara (Kedaresvara), Mallar) in Bilaspur district; Bhoramdeva, Madwamahal, Gandai in Rajnandgaon district; Devabaloda and Nagapura in Durg district etc. show the representation of dvarapala groups in the similar fashion. On the basis of this style having established itself in the region, the male figure of this group here also may be Siva.

An image of a goddess is also carved on the pedestal of the door-way. Lowest of the triple lintel has Gaja-lakshmi in the centre with Ganesa and Parvati on her immediate flanks. The remaining space intervening the three niches containing the three images just referred to, is occupied by the navagrahas (nine planets). Second dvar lalat bimba (lintel piece) is Siva Nataraja. This flanks being mutilated now. Similarly, the upper most lintel has only faint traces of Caruda. On the inner jambs of the door, above the dvarapalas there is depiction of, in vertical panels, from below Siva-Veenadhara, Arddha-Narisvara and some unidentified figures on the left jamb. The remaining space is decorated with usual floral design.

Other sculptures, dug out recently from the Deur tank and now placed inside the garbha-griva include Surya, Ganesa, Natesa, Vishnu in arddha-parvanka asana, Siva linga, Surya riding on a charriot driven by the seven horses. Aruna the charioteer, at his feet controlling the horses with reins in his hands and god's daughters Usha and Pratyusha on his flanks below. There is an interesting
scene showing Ganesa picking his favourite sweets Laddus with the help of his trunk from a dish, that is placed on his hand.

Deokirari

This is a village of Bilaspur district, about four kilometres from Belha R.S. of S.E.Rly. and about 29 kilometres west of the former has the remains of a Siva temple on the bank of a tank. Though the temple is ruined and only the plinth of the mandapa and antarala besides back-side of the shrine is intact, their dimensions are indicative of the fact, that, when intact, the spacious mandapa, tall and tapering sikhara with decorated exterior and the door frame of the garbha-griha would give it a domineering character. Hence the name Deo Kirari was fully justified. Then, perhaps, Kirari is a purvert form of Kiratari, a form of Siva.

Garbha Sutra (Ground Plan) As it is, the low plinth (4' high) on which the temple was placed leads into the mandapa, a square of about 21' aside, followed by a narrow antarala and finally the sanctum, again a square of 9' aside from within and 15'10" from outside. Due to projections of the walls (only the back and a portion of the left wall is intact) it is of pancha ratha type.

Brahma-sutra (Elevation) and decoration: The lowest part, the adhisthana of the shrine alongwith tala-jangha have the decorative frizies of the usual elephants (gajavali, simhavali (lion) full bloomed lotuses, the floral designs etc.
The images of Surya (sun god) are enshrined in the two
niches with Siva shown on his flanks. On the left wall,
also in a niche, is Nataraja. A small Kalyana sundaram
image is lying in the mandapa. A group of dancing figures
is depicted below, celebrating the occasion of sivas
marriage with Parvati. On the walls above, a nayika is
shown picking a thorn from her raised foot.

Scattered sculptures: Scattered sculptures in the village,
some which must belong to this temple, include Chaturbhuja
Vishnu, Brahma, both heavily ornamented, goddess Kamakhya,
an amorous couple, manini (a male trying to woo the
female) into the mirror and a salabhanjika.

Seorinarain

This place, about 62 kilometres east of
Bilaspur, is situated on the northern or left bank of
Mahanadi has been a great cultural and religious centre
of Kosala. The only other places of equal importance are
Mallar, also in Bilaspur district and Sirpur and Rajim
in Raipur district. But whereas Mallar and Sirpur, with
the passage of the time and the damage caused to their
temples, have gone into oblivion and remain only as the
sites of the ancient ruined temples, rest of the two i.e.
Seorinarain and Rajim retain their importance as the
places of pilgrimage till this day.
Secinarain name also, as per the legends prevalent in the area, indicates its antiquity of the period of Ramayana. The neighbouring Kharod also has a brick temple named after Savari; some scholars attribute the name Secori to Sauri, a form of Vishnu, prevalent in Orissa. The name of the temple here, dedicated to Vishnu, they opine, suggests it. But nothing certain can be said about it.

The temple is situated in the Bhogapara of the town. It is worth noticing that word 'bhoga' has been used in the sense of 'seema' or boundary by 'Sarabhapuriyas rulers.' Then, the fact that the Mahanadi here forms the boundary between Bilaspur and Raipur districts may have something to do with the revenue areas divided since the time of Kalachuris, if not earlier.

The Main Temple: By appearance of various parts of the temple itself, it has been undoubtedly renovated and reconstructed more than once. The temple complex is presently surrounded by a prakara. Although very plain and simple some images of the main gods and goddesses belonging to the early period have been fixed in the surrounding wall at the time of its construction. They are mostly to be found by the side of the entrances to through this prakara. A few of them are fixed on the inner side of the same. One of such, and unique in itself, is the composite icon of Harihara-Nirayanagarbha (Vishnu, Siva

1. Kurud copper plate ins. of Narendra.
and Surya in one) fixed near the second entrance to the complex. Ancient silpa texts state all the main gods are non-different. The stalked lotus held the upper right and left hands symbolise the Surya or Hiranyakarbhha, the rest of the six hands hold the attributes belonging to Vishnu (Hari) and Hare (Siva). Nandi is shown at the feet.

**Bhumi Vinvas (Ground Plan)**: The disturbed plan (due to the renovation and reconstruction of the damaged original temple) of the temple has double mandapa, the outer one with four rows of pillars out of which two are in the conventional manner occupying the centre of the mandapa and rest of the two rows of the pillar are actually the dwarf pillars built on the half walls. These outer half-walls and the pillars leave this mandapa half closed and half open in the fashion of the similar mandapa found in Siva temple at Deobaloda and Narayan temple at Narainpur. The later mandapa, of course has been closed up at the time of the renovation of the temple. This mandapa (see nirnarin) is a square of 25'9" aside. The second or the closed mandapa is a usual 4 pillared square central chamber the flat roof supported by them as well as the pilastered walls. Finally the garbha-griha with the original interior including its beautifully and intricately decorated door-frame has been renovated from the outside.

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1. Mark Pu 109, 71, Aparajita Prichha, 213, 32-34 and Sarada Tilakatmantra, 14, 41-42
The projection from its walls make it a panchanga type or pancha ratha.

Sikhara: The central, sharply curved sikhara surrounded by the anga sikharas (miniature towers) thickly plastered and lime-washed a number of times hides its original character. It goes to the credit of this temple however that its sikhara is unique in whole of Kosala for nowhere else do we find the arrangement of the anga sikharas. The source of its inspiration lies far beyond the limits of Kosala, in the Jajela region in the temples of Khajuraho.

Sculptures: Fixed in the walls of the open outer mandapa include Parvati.

The door frame of the cella depicts Lakshminarayana to which this temple is dedicated. The tri-sakha dvara (tripple jambed door), in panels, dasavatara or ten incarnations of Vishnu, Narasimha and Varaha are the two most popular of them, being on the left and right respectively.

The usnisa (coping stones) on the top of the panels are decorated with tiered sikharas with an amalaka atop. This may be regarded as the rudimentary composite Dravida and sikhara Nagara styles of the sikhara belonging to southern and northern India respectively. The temple complex in fact, is the in the compound within the prakara, shrines of such style, most probably
modelled after the miniature decoration of the cella
door frame. Noteworthy features among the Vishnu image
are Chakrapurusa and Sankhapurusa, the human shaped
versions of the otherwise inanimate attributes of the
god.

Mallar

Mallar also spelt as Malhar, is a place about
34 kilometres east-south-east of Bilaspur. It is a
place of hoary antiquity as revealed by the excavations
conducted there by the department of Ancient Indian
History, Culture and Archaeology, University of Saugar
between the years 1975 and 1978. A reference has been
already made to the inscribed Vaishnava image of 2nd-
1st century B.C. Then, the lately brought to the light
Bhima sent or Devala as it is popularly known, also has
been discussed in the last chapters. The remains of a
number of temples, pieces of sculpture, most of them
placed now in the museum out of the village, leave no
doubt that the place once had the temples and shrines
belonging to practically all main religions and sects
of India.¹

Kalachuris: The inscriptions of Kalachuri rulers
speak of the construction of a number of temples at this
place. Thus, the Ratanpur stone inscription of the year

¹. Cunningham, ASIR, Vol.VII, p. 204
915 of the Kalachuri era (Cir. 963 A.D.) states the
construction of the temple, dedicated to Dhurjati Siva
and ten more of Trayambaka at Mallar (or Mallala-Pattana,
as the place was known then) by Prithwivdeva II. Another
inscription, of the slightly later period speaks of
the construction of the temple of Kedaresvara (also
known as Paraulesvara by Somaraja or Gangadhara, a
Brahmana. But unfortunately only one temple of this
period that co with its walls, roof and sikhara gone,
is to be found.

**Kedaresvara (or Paraulesvara) temple:** The later name
is perhaps due to the Siva linga being installed in
the garbha-griha, the interior floor level of which is
much lower than the mandapa plinth, and has to be
approached by climbing down nine steps.

**Garbha-Sutra or Bhumi Vinyas** - The unorthodox plan
besides the above fact, facing west starts with a stair
of six steps to climb the plinth. The spacious mandapa
almost a square of 31' aside had two more entrances on
north and south each as the steps on those sides indicate.
It would seem that temple, when completely intact had
the likeness with the main Siva temple of Bhoramdeo.
The later, apart from the three entrance porches, has
the Siva linga installed in the garbha-griha, much
below the floor level and thus the dark interior

2. Year 919 K.E. or Cr. 1167 A.D.
enhanced the spiritual atmosphere near the deity. The cella here, is a square of 11'6" aside within and 22'4" outside.

**Elevation and exterior decoration:** Though much of the walls, entire a roof and sikara are gone, the moulded adhisthana has decorative bands each depicting a different motif. The first has a frieze of elephants (gajavali) and the second the mythical lion sardula (simhavali and Saiva ascetics. The portion of the jangha part of the wall that is intact suggests that the shrine was of tri-ratha type.

**The door frame:** Fortunately door-jambs of the cella entrance has somehow stood the vicissitudes of the weather over centuries. The dvara-pala group of three figures from outside in, the river goddess (Yamuna), Siva and Vishnu. Siva is shown holding a large kapaladanda in his right hand. Under the pedestals of the three figures, kishakas are shown supporting the former on their hands and the head. Yamuna has a chhatra (umbrella) over her head.

Some of the sculptures lying in the local museum and belonging to the Kalachuri period either belonged to this temple or some other contemporary temple. To mention a few, a rajapurna in Padmaasna and an anjali-mudra, two architectural pieces depicting, in friezes, the processing of horse-riders and the elephants. One of the horse-riders, because of his attributes, mainly
the Chakra-dhwaja symbolising Surya or the sun-god, can be identified as his son Revanta. The two interesting pieces one of them not really in the museum but enshrined on the other wide of the village are the eight armed Nataraja and a female worshipper and goddess popularly known as Didina Dai (Mother Didin). The first, placed in the museum, is a rare scene of Tandava (the dance of destruction) in Kosala area. Invariably we find god Siva dancing rather in prasanna mudra and hence styled as Natisa. But, here the expression on his face is so furious and the gestures of his dancing feet as well as various seapons held by him in his hands, make him all the more fierce. Didina Dai, on the other hand, has the peculiarity of being a worshipped herself with folded hands and in padmasana, as if about to offer lotus on her hands to her god Siva.

But the halo behind her head, makes her something of a goddess also, The popular legends suggest that she was the Kuladevi of the Kalachuris rulers. But all we know is that they were devout Saivites.

Sargason

This a place 25 kilometres west of Bilaspur on the Bilaspur-Raipur road. It is a big village and the Siva temple of the Kalachuri period, known as Dhumesvara, suggests that at one time it was a flourishing town.
Bhumi Vinyas (Ground Plan): The temple is now right in the centre of the village with houses first all but covering most of its original mandapa and ardhamandapa and antarala etc. eastern side parts. Fortunately the garbha-griha along with its curvilinear Nagara style sikhara has been some how spared by the temple. The left wall of the garbha-griha in fact has been used as a courtyard wall by the house-owner behind the temple.

The shrine is of the Bhumija style (starting right from the bhumi or the earth, without any plinth supporting it). The temples of similar style and contemporary period include Siva temple at Janjgir in the same district, Devarbija and Nagpara in Durg district. Though without plinth the cella door has been raised to some height (5') by the moulded bands of the adhishthana and has to be approached by three steps. This was necessitated perhaps by the lower level of the shrine interior where the Sivalinga has to be approached by climbing down six steps after the fashion of Ratalesvara temple at Mallar.

Elevation: Above the adhishthana, the jangha part of the elevation, divided by a band in two, i.e. tala jangha and upari-jangha with the friezes of sculptures decorating them, is rather stunted. This is due to the fact that the total height of the sikhara is not more than 25'. There is clear demarcation of the projections, not only making it a tri-ratha type (trayanga) and the
niches of the central or the ratha paga containing the images of the deities but also of the Konaka-pagas (corner) ones indicating the bhumis (tiers) of the sikhara with the help of the amlasilas (ring stones). The top amalaka is now gone.

On the basis of the projection on the outer walls the temple is of three ratha type, the niches occupy the central projection or the ratha paga whereas the konaka paga and Anuratha paga projections are somewhat recessed but also contain the sculpture. The whole composition is unique in the sense that the height of the two bands of the sculpture is hardly about 3' from ground level.

**Exterior decoration** - Not only images of the chief deities of the Hindu pantheons scenes of dance and music and nayikas but temple walls are studded with erotic couples engaged in the act of sexual conjunction in various asanas (positions) and the sexual fore-play described in Kamasutra and other ancient Indian sastras on this art i.e. sexology. The left wall has, in its main niches, installed the images of Natesa, Siva-Parvati, Ganesa on left, Karttikeya above the peacock, his mount being unusually large and wingless in the lower central niche, Karttikeya again is depicted to the left of this niche. On the right wall again Natesa occupies the lower niche and bearded Brahma the upper Chamunda to the left flank of the later and Mahisasuramardini
the goddess mounted on the lion with weapons and other attributes belonging to her held in the hands is depicted killing the demon Mahisasura, half human shaped and half (upper) in the shape of a buffalo. The lion also is shown in an aggressive posture trying to grab at the demon. This scene is on the flank of the image of Brahma, whose attributes are all mutilated now and but for his visible three heads and the beard, it would be difficult to identify him. There are the scenes of dance and music decorating the remaining projected or recessed parts of this wall. These scenes present a variety of posture of the dances and the musical instruments they are playing on.

It is the left wall, however, which draws the attention most. The upper niche contains Mahisasuramardini. Then, in continuation, two Vyalakas (mythical lions), four handed mutilated hence unidentified deity, an erotic couple in standing position, a four handed deity again in padmasana. The stalked lotuses in held/both the upper hands have the suggestion of its being Surya. Next panel depicts an unusual erotic scene, the male exhibiting his erect organ with his feet raised up. Then comes of moustached bearded ascetic with jata-jute hair. Undoubtedly he is the follower of the Kaula-kapalika sect of Saivism, to whom such orgies as described above was a part of his Sadhana (worship).
The lintel of the door has Siva in the centre holding damaru in left trisula and serpent in his right hands. On the flanks of Siva, we find Brahma to his left and to his right, a mutilated figure perhaps Vishnu, the surmise being on the basis of this arrangement generally available in the temples of the area.

**Siva Temple Janjir**

Janjir is a flourishing town and the tehsil headquarters of Bilaspur district. It is about 2 kilometres south of Railway station of Nails, another half of the town. The name Janjir is derived from its ancient form Jajallanagar and was most perhaps founded by Jajalla deva I, the great ruler of the Kalachuri dynasty of Ratanpur. It was under him that the dynasty expanded its empire to the far flung areas of Kosala and some districts of the bordering regions of present Orissa, Maharashtra and western Madhya Pradesh. There are two temples, one dedicated to Siva and another to Vishnu, now to be found in the old township on the banks of a huge tank and perhaps both built by Jajalladeva.¹

**Dhumi-Virvase (Ground Plan) of the Siva temple** : The temple looks much smaller than the Vishnu temple on the other side of the street and thus is not able to attract the attention on the first sight. It is to be remembered that the later is situated on a bank of huge

tank and also on a high plinth and coupled with the fact that the dimensions of the temple are much bigger than the temple in the question. What remains of the temple now, is a square garbha-griha of about 15 feet aside from the exterior and 7'4" from inside. The shrine has a curvilinear Nagara style sikhara. When Beglar visited the site, he saw the ruins of a mandapa in front of it, covering a portion of what is a street now. Henry Cousens also reported a part still intact and the fact was reported in Bilaspur Gz District Gazettier with a photograph of the temple.¹

The temple has an adhiasthana plain but heavily moulded. Side walls are divided into two parts i.e. taljangha and upari-jangha for the purpose of decoration. The main niches (rathika-bimbas) are to be found on the northern and southern walls flanked by other niches and the projections in the walls, all studded with the sculptures, mainly images of deities. Though tri-ratha in style an impression of pancha ratha is given by the minor projections out of the walls. The five bhumis (tiers) of the sikhara are demarcated by the amlasilas (corner stones) on the Konaka paga section of the sikhara. The surmounting member, the huge amalaka is now gone. A part of the sikhara is disturbed perhaps at the time of

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¹ PR., ASI, W.C. 1904, page. 29.
renovation of the temple. The vitana (ceiling) of the
garba-griha is made of the usual courses of over sailing
masonry, the upper one intersecting. The lower as they
rise and recede in the size. The top of this dome is
decorated with astadala-kamala (eight-petalled lotuses).

On the front side of the sikhara just between the
derow way below and the surmounting member the amalaka
above the sukhanatha or mukhmandala is a replica of the
main sikhara without its top. It has a rectangular
opening of the shape of a window in its centre. Like a
shrine it is divided in the form of adhisthana, moulded
in courses and the jangha part on the flanks of the
window and tiers of the sikhara above.

**Exterior Decoration and the Main Sculpture**: In the Bada
(jangha) niches of the temple are installed the images
of Karttikeya, Ganesa and Surya (the sun-god). Normally
various forms of Siva such as Natesa, Umapahesvara
and Ravanamukraha etc. occupy the main position in the
temples dedicated to Siva and the other main gods i.e.
Vishnu, Brahma and Surya are depicted as the subsidiary
deities. But it seems to be a peculiar feature of this
region, like in the present example that the subsidiary
gods of Siva Parivara, particularly Ganesa, have been
accorded an important position. Thus Surya in the
temple at Pali and Buddha at Narayanpur follow this norm.
Ganesa, it appears has grown in importance with the passage of time for at Nagpura and Devarbija in Durg district and Gandai in Rajnandgaon district also, Ganesa is occupying the main rathika (niches) on the side and the back wall. In the temple of Devarbija, in fact, he is depicted in dancing pose like his progenitor i.e. Siva.

The Door Frame : The tri-sakha dvara or the triple-jambed door is an important feature of this temple. The lower lintel piece shows four armed Siva in Sukhasana flanked by Brahma and Vishnu and as Natase in upper. His ganas are shown rejoicing by dancing and playing on musical instruments on both upper and lower flanks.

An interesting and unusual scene is that the Nandi (bull) the mount of the god Siva) is being anointed by the worshippers. The similar type of depiction is found in the temples at Devarbija and Ratanpur. Though this representation of Nandi is a development of the later period, it has become a part of the style in Kosala. Twenty four incarnations of Vishnu besides the ornamental motifs like the foliage, the creepers etc. decorate upper part of the door jambs. Dvarapala groups, as usual, occupy their lower parts. The second lintel piece depicts Uma-Mahesvara in the centre and the decorative motifs on the flanks.
This temple has an unconventional architectural feature in the form of the huge pillars spacious and divided in a number of panels posted on the flanks of the main doorway. These panels have the decoration of different design which presents a variety of scenes like dance and music apart from the conventional gajavali (the frieze of the elephant), Hamsavali and Naravali on the inner facets of these pillars also we find the continuation of these scenes.

Vishnu Temple: In dimensions, this is one of the biggest temples in whole of Kosala. But apparently it was never completed,¹ for, its high (9'-4") and solid plinth is without mandapa in front of the garbha-grīha, and the tall magnificent sikhara is also top-less (amalaka and a few bhūmis just under it). Locally, the temple is, therefore, called 'nakta mandir', i.e. the temple without nose.¹

Bhumivinyas (Ground Plan): The high terrace, approached by equally high flight of steps, is 34'4" east-west and 25'4" north-south. Besides, the pancha-ratha shrine is a square of 12'6" wide within and an oblong (north-south) vestibule also approached by a flight of five steps just after its tall and wide entrance, make it quite an imposing affair. From the outside, its walls measure 31'8" and 22'2". Inside the shrine, the pilasters, 13 in number on the three walls, are so arranged that each wall seems to have five of them. There is a huge tri-forium supported on these

pilasters, which, in turn, support the square and decorated courses of over-sailing masonry, the upper ones intersecting the lower and receding in size, as they rise. On thus formed dome-shaped ceiling (vitana), there is as its top central decoration, the depiction of astadala-kamala (eight-petalled lotuses).

Elevation: In this aspect of the architecture as well as in the treatment of its various exterior parts, the temple acquires an additional grandeur. The lowest part, i.e. adhishthana, has deeply carved and bold mouldings, each successively one lesser in size than the lower giving the basement a sloping appearance. Then, the walls divided not only in the usual tala jangha and upari jangha parts, but here further up, they are separated from the imposing sikhara by several string courses or barandas, as they are known in the neighbouring area of Orissa.

Exterior Decoration: The sculpture and the ornamental motifs, decorate the walls. The ratha paga or the central projections have the bigger niches to instal the images of the chief deities of the Hindu pantheon. The smaller ones and the projections ones just shown against the walls, are those of the subsidiary deities, the demi-gods like dikpalas the nayikas or apsaras in various postures ascetics and a few mithuna (only embracing) couples. The right wall depicts Vishnu, Nrisimha and Chaturbhuja Vishnu again, etc. The pedestals of all the niches and projections containing the images of
deities are supported by the Kichakas. Then, in place of the pilasters that usually enclose the sides of the niches, graceful figures of female attendants are positioned there. Nayika or Apsaras are modelled as per the poetic concept of female beauty - the slim and slender body, graceful tribhanga (three-bent) posture in which they stand etc.

The left wall, as its main images, installed in the niches, has chaturbhuja sthanaka (standing four armed) Vishnu in the lower and his Nri-varaha incarnation of Vishnu in the upper niche. Besides, these, in the two bands of the sculpture on the upari-jangha part, on the lower jangha also, just above the adhisthana, smaller niches, in a horizontal frieze, with all the paraphernalia of pilasters on the sides and the sloping coping stones above, have the appearance of miniature shrines. It is perhaps, thus, that the popular belief about the temple containing thirty three crore of gods, has gained ground.

The door frame: We have seen the doorways of the temples built during the Panduvansi rulers, preserving the highly developed plastic art of the Gupta and post-Gupta period. The essence of that art was simplicity combined with beauty and artists' imagination. This temple similarly represents the best examples of highly imaginary and intricately carved temple door-ways of the Kalachuri period. In fact it is not merely a gate
but a temple facade reminding us of the Buddhist Chaitya temples. Besides triple-jambéed and lintelled (tri-sakha and tri-torana) arrangement, usual with all other temples, it has two side pillars, wide and tall like its smaller counter part in the Siva temple in the neighbourhood, an every inch of which is studded with ornamentation, panelled, as it is, both horizontally and vertically.

The dvarapala groups, besides conventional Ganga and Yamuna, include two male deities also on each side, one of them perhaps Siva, the attributes held by him being mutilated. Their pedestals are shown supported by kichakas like Patalasvar temple Mallar. The upper portions of the jambs depict usual decorative designs. The lower lintel has, within a small niche chaturbhuja asana (sitting) Vishnu and on the flanks similarly Brahma and Siva. Remaining space of this lintel is occupied by navagrahas (nine planets). The second or the middle dvara balata -bimba (lintel piece) depicts Chaturbhuja sthanaka (standing) Vishnu and his flanks are the continuation of the twisted rope or snake decoration of the second dvara-sakha (door jamb). Gajavali (frieze of elephants) hamsavali and gajavali again, decorate the adhisthana (the lowest part) of the whole facade.

The Miscellaneous Temples of Bilaspur District.

In the Mungeli tahsil of Bilaspur district, there are some ancient temples either in the state of ruins or a dump of sculptures collected at certain villages mostly lying in the interior regions away from the traffic
roads. In some cases the ancient temples have completely disappeared but after they were ruined, their sculpture was installed in the garbha-grihas are fixed on the walls subsequently in the modern shrines built by the local people.

The Temple of Vijaypur: This ruined and reconstructed temple is approachable via Jarhagaon on the Bilaspur-Mungeli Road. Another ancient place in the neighbourhood is Semarsal which continues to be a place of pilgrimage and a huge annual fair takes place on the bank of the river Maniyari. Both the places, inside their modern shrines contain a few ancient sculpture the noteworthy among them is the door frame of the garbha-griha. Most of the decoration on upper parts of the door jambs is now mutilated but the dvarapala figures of Ganga and Yamuna with their attendants bearing Chauri or Chattra (umbrella) are still to be seen. One thing most common in Kosala which we noticed here also, is that though built during the modern times, the builders of the temple have taken care to maintain the curvilinear sikhara of Nagar style in the shape of a tall tower which attracts the attention of the people in general and the devotees in particular from the distance.

The Temple of Sehanga: This is also a reconstructed modern shrine situated on the bank of Pushkarni (small artificial tank) a little way from the river Agar which although not a considerable screen, among the local
populace out of their devotion for the river was perhaps called Svetganga. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to assume that the present name of the place Svetganga is derived from Svetganga. As seen in the modern temple at other places in Kosala, the temple here also has a nagara style curvilinear sikhara on a square garbha-griha. In front of the garbha-griha there is a pillared portico supported by the two pillars in front and the two pilasters in the front wall of the garbha-griha. But of all important in this temple is its door-frame which by appearance itself represents the stylistic features of the Kalachuri period. The dvarpalas occupying the lower parts of tri-sakha dvar (triple jambed door) is a group of four on each side. Although the parts of their bodies down their knees and some of the objects held by them are broken or mutilated, the presence of river goddess Ganga and Yamuna, one on each side seems to be the pattern here. Of the remaining three figures two male figures on the flanks are obviously the male attendants one of whom is holding a Chauri or Chattrra in his right hand. All the four figures are modelled in graceful dvi-bhanga and tri-bhanga mudras (three band body). The upper parts of the three jambs are decorated with the conventional foliage design in the inner jamb, the kalpalata or the creeper design on the middle jamb and the lying moulding on the outer jamb.

The interior of Garbha-griha also retains some original features in the form of, firstly, the Siva linga installed inside and secondly in the vitan (ceiling)
composed of the square courses of oversailing masonry culminating in a round top giving the whole a shape of a dome.

Panda Tarai: This is a small town on Mingeli-Kawardha road on the banks of a tank by the side of the village, there are some modern temples containing some of the ancient images of gods and goddesses. The prominence of these sculptures can not be ascertain now. Therefore, for the sake of convenience we have shown them belonging to this place of the special mention is an unusual statue of Lakshminarayan seated in Arddha-pariyanka asana. The human shape Garuda supporting their coach is shown in such an attitude as if he is about to fly. But what interests most is that Lakshmi is sitting on the left thigh of Vishnu with her right hand on the shoulder of the God. The left hand of Vishnu is also shown around the goddess in an embracing position, with the fingers touching her breasts. Normally, we find the representation of Uma-Mahesvara or Hara-Gauri in this posture, whereas in case of Vishnu and Lakshmi it is something rare.

The statue is somewhat mutilated and only some of the ornaments worn by the gods and goddess can be seen now. So is the case with the dress that they have put on.

Devsara and Bakela: These two villages are situated within the forest area on the eastern slopes of maikal range just on the border of Bilaspur and Rajnamigaon districts on the east and Mandla district on the west.
The places are approachable from Pandā-tarai, the place described above by a forest road via Kharjhitī and Limaipur. The former is a proposed dam site. The name Devasara has religious and cultural connotation. Perhaps the two places, in an ancient period was a single and vast town, but at present the ancient sculpture that is found scattered on the banks of the river half on which the Kharjhitī dam is to be built false within the neighbourhood of Bakela in Pandariya tehsil of Bilaspur district. Across the river the site of Kankalin false within the Kawardha tehsil of Rajnandgaon district.

Of the broken sculpture found at Bakela the most noteworthy is that of Jain tirthankara Parsvanath about 4: x 2: The seven hoods of serpent king are shown above the head of the tirthankara image. Apart from that the flying Gandharvas are shown with garlands in their hands on this top flanks. The pedestal of the image is divided in horizontal sections each decorated differently. Another interesting point about the statue is that it is inscribed and the name of the donor-builder is also given in it. The inscription reads, "Nahila Suta Ashila --- Parshava Pratima Karapatiyam" i.e. Ashila, the sun of Nahila causes the erection of the God Parshavanatha. The script of the inscriptions belongs to 11-12 century A.D. The art style of the statue also corroborates the time factor. On the basis of this and other finds at the place, it can be surmised that in ancient times, atleast during the reign period of Kalchuris Bakela to Devasara was a flourishing habitation.