and mutilated from the trunks, arms, legs etc. The leonine trunk of a badly dilapidated image of Buddha, (1'8" in height) enshrines a series of inscriptions of sacred Buddhist formula Yedharmahetuprabhavā . . . . . . . . . .
in the typical Nāgari Brāhmi Character (recently discovered from the Lalitgiri village).

ROCK CUT RELIEF OF BUDDHA IN DHYĀNA OR SAMĀDHI MUDRĀ AT THE PEAK OF PĀRĀBHĀDI HILL :=—

An exceedingly rare and rock cut relief of Buddha foremost explored on the peak of the Pārābhādi hill adjacent to the present micro wave tower is in situ within a cave nearby. Draped in an antarvāsa as well as an uttarāsanga, worn in Ekāmsika (upaviti) pattern the image adorns the Viswapadma Vajraparyankāsana style. The only rock cut sculpture of Buddha gently placing both the palms on another displays the fervent meditative posture (i.e. Dhyāna or Samādhi Mudrā). The image popularly worshipped as Ghantāsuni, however bears the sacred wheels (Dharmachakras) on both the hand palms, and foot soles auspicious trivali marks around the neck, and a sacred urnāmark on the fore head. The rock cut Buddha, with an uncharismatic triangular face, unpolished modelling and corrugated anatomy amply attests its antiquity to the decaying period of Buddhism at Lalitgiri. However the image, which measures 1'10" in height is no doubt a unique piece in the annals of the rock cut Buddhist art of Lalitgiri.
COLOSSAL HEAD OF BUDDHA

Earlier installed on the apse (Sanctum) of the excavated apsidal Chaitya Griha, (at present lodged in the Lalitgiri sculptureshed), the grand and colossal head of Buddha is characterized by immobile serenity of the countenance of a grave gallant and half revealed benign smiling face absorbed in fervent mood of meditation and thrilling yogic ecstacy, an auspicious urna mark on the spacious forehead, the flamboyant short curly hairs on the head combined with an ushnisa of romantic short curls in dakshinavarta style, the exquisitely carved full blown lotus like half open down caste convexed yogic eyes, saturated in an exhilarating sense of universal compassion, sharp bridged piquant nose, straight slanting arched eye brows, dangling ears, sacred trivali marks around the neck and the tightly compressed over sensitive romantic curling lips. The stupendous and splendidly attractive head of Buddha (3'7" in height and 6'6" in circumference), which typically bears the Gupta art idioms of Sāranāth School, is no doubt a wonder and priceless gem in Indian art unparalleled in the world.

STAUNTED BUT SPLENDID HEAD OF BUDDHA

Installed on the pulpit of the Lalitgiri sculptureshed, a uniquely carved stupendous head of Buddha having the crest being sabred and staunted, exhibits a roundishly rendered
thrilling yogic face, absorbed in profound meditation and concentration, an auspicious urna mark on the sloping forehead, exquisitely carved romantic curling lips, the narrow and long perforated earlobes, the sharp edged prominent nose, the half shut down caste convexed yogic eyes, the quivering eye brows and two lines of luxuriant and short curly hairs in typical dakshinavarta direction devoid of an ushnisa on the crest of the head. The gigantic and colossal head of Buddha measuring 1'10" high and 5' in circumference, is an exceedingly rare master piece in the Buddhist art of Lalitgiri, unsurpassed in modelling and unparalleled in grandeur and workmanship. Stylistically and iconographically, the unique head of Buddha, which is a curious product of the Gandhara Mathurā Sāranāth art idioms, may be ascribable to the Gupta period.

IMAGES OF BODHISATTVA AND OTHER VAJRAYĀNIC DIVINITIES AT LALITGIRI

Lalitgiri has yielded a veritable treasure of exquisite and imposing colossi of the compassionate Bodhisattwas both in standing and seated forms with different hand postures (Mudrās). Particularly noteworthy among these are Maitreya (the future Buddha of Tusita heaven), Padmapani Avalokiteswara, Vajrapāni, Manjusri, Siddhaikavira, Sthira Chakra Manjusri, Jambhala and Vajrasattwa etc. The Bodhisattwa images at Lalitgiri are characterised by the
graceful thrice bent posture (Tribhanga) multiplied by gross anatomical grace and glamour, charisma and equipoise, superb aesthetic roundish fleshy charm and elegance, romantic suppleness and suavity, stupendous masculine vigour and vivacity pulsed in unprecedented effete Yogic calm and unparalleled divinity as revealed through the half open convexed yogic eyes of the gallant smiling faces saturated in the fervent mood of meditation and thrilling yogic ecstacy.

The seated Bodhisattwa images unlike those of the standing ones, are found gallantly poised on the Viswapadmas of full blown lotuses (utpalas) in some what graceful Lalitásana or Bhadrásana or Ardhaparyankásana attitude with the usual display of boon bestowing attitude (Varadá Mudrā) in the right hands and the long stemmed lotuses (utpalas) (or Nāgakesara flowers as in case of Maitreya) in the corresponding left.

Other noteworthy features and remarkable high lights of the Bodhisattwa images constitute the profuse embellishment of the celestial garments and ornaments namely the beaded bangles (Prakostha valayas), the compositely beaded and bejewelled armlets (Keyuras), the single stranded beaded necklaces (Kanthi hāra ekāvalis), the broad beaded necklaces, the beaded anklets (Nupuras) with the bells pendent, the
compositely beaded girdles (Katimekhalās or Kamarabandhas),
the triangular or crown shaped bejewelled Kiritamukutas and
the multibeaded Ratnopavitas or Yajnopavitas i.e. sacred
threads, clinged to the domical contours of the long tapering
youthful robust masculine bodies. But the images of
Manjusri are spectacularly glimpsed with the Srikhandaka
Kākapakṣya coiffure of elongated yogic hairs contrasted by
the typical necklaces of tiger nails and sophisticated rings
(Anguriyas) on the fingers.

Commenting upon the Bodhisattwa images found at
Lalitgiri, Mr. Chanda speaks that "But even if the spiritual
significance of these images is ignored, no connoisseur will
hesitate to include the Bodhisattwa found on Nalitigiri
among the most lovely things shaped by the hand of man,
when compared with the contemporaneous Rāṣṭrakūṭa and
Pallava sculptures. These Orissan sculptures though lacking
the dramatic vitality of the former surpass them in serenity
and gracefulness". (72) He however reiterates that "But
artistically some of the images found in these hills (Lalitgiri,
Ratnagiri, Udayagiri) and at Jāipur rank as high as any produced
in any other part of India after the Gupta period and in
certain respects even higher". (73)
Critically appreciating the remarkable art sophistry of the Bodhisattwa images at Lalitgiri, Prof. D.P. Ghosh remarks that: "Among the sculptures of the Buddha and Bodhisattwa figures are undoubtedly the most remarkable. The Orissan artist created Buddha image of peculiar interest and characteristic local type. The earliest specimens perhaps belonging to the Naltigiri group of Bodhisattwas, are marked by great simplicity, slimness and inner absorption of their regular and transcendent vision."

(74) Establishing a higher degree of artistic homogeneity between the Bodhisattwa images of Lalitgiri and those of the Javanese counter parts, Prof. Ghosh reiterates that "following the Gupta formula again great care has been bestowed on the delicately curling sensitive lips, which bear striking resemblance to the elegant lips of the Bodhisattwa statues from Lalitgiri. The ruins of Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri provide this but important missing link." (75) Bringing about a remarkable degree of artistic affinity between the Bodhisattwas of Lalitgiri and those of the Javānese Buddhas and Bodhisattwas of Borboddur, Mr. S.C. Chandra comments that "From Vajrapāni and Padmapāni figures, we get an idea of the ideal technique used by the authors of the sculptures. The masterly expression of the face, smiling but calm, the superb modelling of the torso, the tribhanga pose, the schematic
arrangement of locks of long hairs over the shoulders and above all the surging linger rhythm distinctive traits and to indicate the highest state of plastic art which Orissa had attained in the early medieval period."(76) Critically appreciating the Buddhist sculptures of Assia range of hills, Dr. K. S. Behera, a distinguished historian and an outstanding art critic, comments as follows: "Buddhist sculptures are found all over this state, but they are seen at their best in Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri. Infact Lalitgiri (77) tradition provide the missing link in the long evolution of Orissa sculpture." COLOSSAL STANDING IMAGE OF MAITREYA:— Profusely draped, designed and decked in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments, the stupendous and colossal thrice bent standing (Tribhanga) image of Bodhisattwa Maitreya (now lodged in Lalitgiri sculptureshed) the future Buddha, enshrines on the bejewelled crown of chignon (Jatāmukuta or Jatābharana) an effigy of Chaitya or stupa. The gigantic colossus of Maitreya displays in right hand the boon bestowing attitude i.e. Varada Mudrā as well as a long stemmed Nāga- Kesara flower in the corresponding left. (78) Flanked on the lower bottom dexter and sinister edges by two bejewelled female devotees or donors (dānapatis), the grand and imposing colossus enshrines on the top most dexter and sinister terminal corner edges two garland bearing bejewelled Vidyādharas
or Gandharvas. Flambouyantly depicting the lulling tongues of fires on both the peripheral edges of the oblong back slab as well as a long tapering elliptical nimbus (Prabhāmandala), the stupendous image of Maitreya, which is the only unique masterpiece amidst a granary of Buddhist monuments at Lalitgiri, however measures a remarkable soaring height of about 8'. The gross magnitude of the oblong back slab is being 7'6" by 3'2" respectively. Stylistically, the grand and landmark sculpture of Maitreya bears the stamp of post Gupta art idioms.

THRICE BENT STANDING COLOSSUS OF MAITREYA

Characterised by identical anatomical traits, artistic modelling, ornamental trends and iconographic features, as in case of the preceding prototypes, the profusely bejewelled image of Maitreya, which stands on a Viswapadma in typical thrice bent posture, however displays the varadā pose and a long stemmed Nāgakesara flower in right and left hands respectively. The grand and stupendous image of Maitreya, the future Buddha, measuring 5'8" by 6'1" by 2'8", enshrines on the mid oblong back slab a sacred Buddhist Dhārani Mantra "Ye dharma hetu prabhavā hetum teshām Tathāgato hy avadat/Tesām chayo nirodha evaṁ vādi Mahāsramanah/" The gigantic image of Bodhisattwa Maitreya, on paleographic ground, may be ascribable to the post Gupta or Bhaumakara period.
As many as three similar thrice bent standing images of Maitreya (one being headless) measuring 5'7" by 6'8" by 2'9", 4'7" by 5'3" by 2'8" respectively, are housed in the nearby Lalitgiri sculptureshed.

HEAD OF MAITREYA

Unlike the preceding counterparts, the intriguing head of Bodhisattwa Maitreya, adorned with the matted locks of hairs on the crest of the head, exhibits a disrupted but gallant smiling round yogic face. The top dexter and sinister edges of the damaged oblong back slab enshrine two garland bearing bejewelled Vidyādharas. The apocryphal head of the Bodhisattva Maitreya measures 1'6" high.

COLOSSAL STANDING IMAGE OF TWO ARMED STHIRACHAKRA MANJUSRI

Worn and articulated in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments, the stupendous and thrice bent standing colossus of two armed Sthira Chakra Manjusri of about 5'8" high displays in the damaged right hand the Varadā Mudrā. The corresponding left carries a long stemmed lotus (Utpala) with a sacred Prajñāpāramitā text on the crest surmounted by a vertical sword, (Anuttara Prajñā khadga). (79) The principal deity is flanked by two bejewelled female devotees, presumed to the consort or Prajna, in Maharajalila sitting posture. The dexter and sinister lateral edges of the oblong back slab
are emarginated by the lulling tongues of the violent and smokeless fire. The mid oblong back slab shows the sacred Buddhist creed Yedharma hetu-prabhavā. . . in the typical post Gupta Brāhmi character. The grand and colossal sculpture of sthirachakra Manjusri, is no doubt a unique innovation in the Mahāyānic Buddhist art of Lalitgiri, unparalleled in India and world.

COLOSSAL STANDING IMAGE OF TWO ARMED MANJUSRI

Glimpsed with homogeneous anatomical traits, artistic modelling, ornamentation and iconographic features of an archangel, the grave and gallant looking, compassionate and half revealed mild smiling Colossus of Manjusri, the bestower of wisdom, eloquence, intelligence and retentive memory stands on a Viswapadma in thrice bent (Tribhanga) posture. The profusely bejewelled Bodhisattwa Manjusri, with Srilkhandaka kākapakshya coiffure of the matted locks of yogic hairson the crest of the head, exhibits the Varadā Mudrā in the right hand. The left hand carries a long stemmed utpala, super imposed by the sacred text of Prajñā-pāramitā (80). The grand and imposing image of Manjusri, of about 5'6" in height (and 6'7" by 2'7" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab) is flanked on the lowest extreme bottom sinister terminal edge by an aweinspiring effigy of
two armed Yamantaka or Yāmari with a mace (gadā) and a noose (kālapāsa) in the right and left hands respectively.

As many as three such grand and colossal thrice bent standing images of Manjusri (one being sthira chakra) with identical heights, are found lodged in the same Lalitgiri sculptureshed.

SEATED IMAGE OF TWO ARMED MANJUSRI:

Draped in Upavīti fashion, a highly bejewelled image of two armed Manjusri with the elongated matted locks of yogic hairs arranged in typical Śrīkhandaka kākapakshya style, adorns the lotus throne (Viswapāda) in Lalitaśana attitude. The present image which displays the Varadā Mudrā and a soft stemmed lotus (utpala) with the sacred Prajñāpāramitā scripture in the right and left hands respectively, iconographically corresponds with Bodhisattwa Manjusri. (81)

The profusely bejewelled image of Manjusri contrasted by a necklace of tiger nails, is flanked on the lowest bottom peripheral dexter and sinister edges by two terrible and aweinspiring lions with the bare fangs, lulling tongues, the bulged out frowning eyes, the protruding teeth and copious manes with special high light to a prostrated and folded handed devotee or donor (dānapati), a tripod with a flower basket. The principal image measures 2'4" high.
and 2'4" by 1'8" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab. Another identical image of Manjusri in Bhadrasana sitting posture is too found in situ on the raised platform of the Lalitgiri sculptureshed. The spectacular images of Manjusri both in standing and seated forms are no doubt, the remarkable gems amidst a huge bulk of Buddhist sculptures at Lalitgiri.

**COLOSSAL STANDING IMAGE OF TWO ARMED VAJRAPANI BODHISATTWA**

Draped and decked in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments, the thrice bent colossal standing image of two armed Vajrapani with a serene and half revealed gallant smiling yogic face displays the Varadā Mudrā in the right hand. The corresponding left carries a heavy and long stemmed utpala, surmounted on the pericarp by a thunder bolt (Vajra). (82) The principal image is flanked on the bottom dexter and sinister edges by two bejewelled images of Tara in Vajraparyanki pose. The lowest bottom sinister corner enshrines a bejewelled female devotee, with a thunder bolt (vajra) in the right hand, presumed to be the Sakti of the principal deity. The garland bearing bejewelled Gandharvas are seen hovering at the Bodhisattwa through air. The gigantic colossus of Vajrapāni measures 5'7" high and 6'9" by 2'9" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab.
The prototype of such image is exceedingly rare not only in any other Buddhist site of Orissa, but also in India and world.

**SEATED IMAGE OF TWO ARMED VAJRAPĀÑI**

Draped in upavīti fashion, the highly bejewelled image of two armed Vajrapāñi is elegantly poised on a Viswapadma in Ardhaparyankāsana attitude. The principal image in the right hand bestows the Varadā pose, while the corresponding left holds a long stemmed utpala surmounted by a thunder bolt (Vajra). Flanked by two garland bearing bejewelled Vidyādharas, on the top dexter and sinister corners and two bejewelled chauri bearers on the lowest bottom dexter and sinister corners standing in graceful thrice bent posture, Vajrapāñi, enshrines on the roundishly rendered prabhāmandala behind the crest of the head, the sacred Buddhist formula "Ye dharma hetuprabhava . . . . .

in the typical Nāgari Brāhmi character. The image measuring 2'9" high is a unique specimen in the Mahāyānic Buddhist art of Lalitgiri, ascribable to early medieval period.

**COLOSSAL STANDING IMAGE OF PADMAPĀÑI AVALOKITESWARA**

Magnificently draped, designed and decked in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments, the grave and serene looking, compassionate and gallant smiling colossal image of two armed and one faced Padmapāñi stands on a
Viswapadma in graceful thrice bent posture. Bodhisattva Padmapānī enshrining on the crest of the bejewelled crown of chignon the effigy of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha, displays the Varadā pose and a long stemmed utpala in the right and left hands respectively. (83) The roundish Prabhamandala behind the crest of the head, enshrines the sacred Buddhist creed "Ye dharma hetuprabhavā . . . in the typical Nāgari Brahmi character. Flanked by two garland bearing bejewelled Vidyādharas, grand and colossal statue of Padmapānī Avalokiteswara measures 4'3" high. The magnitude of the oblong back slab is being 5' by 2'5" respectively. The principal image, on the basis of its iconographic features, approaches to the flourishing period of Vajrayāna i.e. circa 8th century A.D. onwards.

GIGANTIC STANDING COLOSSUS OF TWO ARMED PADMAPANI AVALOKITESWARA

Homogeneously worn and articulated in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments in the preceding marvel, the grand and stupendous colossus of two armed and one faced Padmapānī Avalokiteswara, enshrining the effigies of Dhyāni Buddha Aksobhya and Amitābha on the top dexter and sinister corners of the partially damaged oblong back slab, however represents Varadā Mudrā and a heavy cable like long stemmed utpala in the right and left hands respectively. (84)
The image, enshrining two garland bearing bejewelled Vidyādharas on the top most dexter and sinister corners, measures 4'3" high and 5' by 2'5" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab.

**MINIATURE STANDING IMAGE OF TWO ARMED PADMAPÂNI** :-

Draped in a diaphonous antarvāsa or antariya, held by a composite beaded girdle i.e. Katimekhalā or Kamarabandha, the highly bejewelled image of two armed and round faced Padmapani displays Varadā Mudrā and a lotus (utpala or Padma) in right and left hands respectively. Flanked on lowest bottom sinister and dexter bottom corners by thrice bent standing bejewelled male and female devotees, an exceedingly rare and attractive image of Padmapâni measures 1'3" high, and 1'6" by 11" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab.

**GIGANTIC STANDING COLOSSUS OF PADMAPÂNI AVALOKITESWARA** :-

Homogeneously designed draped and decked in celestial garments and ornaments, the gigantic and picturesque colossus of two armed Padmapâni stands on the moon over Viswapadma in graceful thrice bent posture. The grand image of Avalokiteswaradisplays Varadā pose and a long stemmed utpala in right and left hands respectively. Flanked by a bejewelled female devotee, presumed to be consort or prajnā or Sakti i.e. pândarā
as well as another two armed bejewelled female in Anjali or Namaskāra Mudra with Mahārajalīla sitting attitude, the image measures 6' in height and 7'6" by 3'4" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab. The burning flames of the smokeless fire are found depicted on the extreme lateral edges of the dexter and sinister back slab. Stylistically the unique image of Avalokiteswara bears the stamp of Bhauma art idioms.

HEAD OF AVALOKITESWARA:-

The intriguing head with a compassionate and gallant smiling yogic countenance of the face as well as a highly ornate crown of chignon i.e. Jatāmukuta enshrining the miniature effigy of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābh, no doubt corresponds with the head of an Avalokiteswara. The unique head with the fanshaped projections of the bejewelled ribbon on both sides, measures 1'1" in height.

Apart from those above noted images, as many as seven number of similar images of Padmapāni either in perfect state of preservation or in truncated and mutilated forms are in situ in the Lalitgiri sculptureshed.

STANDING IMAGE OF VAJRASATTWA,
A VARIANT OF MANJUSRI :-

Worn and articulated in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments with special high light to a necklace
of tiger nails, an excellent and imposing image of two
armed and one faced Manjusri, stands on a Viswapadma in
thrice bent posture. Manjusri, in the right hand displays
the varadā Mudrā. The corresponding left carries a long
stemmed utpala with sacred prajñā pāramitā scripture on the
crest super imposed by a crescent moon (Ardhachandra).
The unique image glimpsed with the Srikhandaka kākapaksha
coiffure of matted yogic hairson the crest of the head,
iconographically corresponds with the Ādi Buddha-Vajrasattwa
a variant of the Bodhisattwa Manjusri according to the
Northern Buddhist Tantric texts (85) The rare image of
Manjusri turned Vajrasattwa of about 4'3" high is no doubt
a wonderful innovation in the Buddhist Tantric (Vajrayānic)
art of Lalitgiri, unparalleled in India and world.

_IMAGES OF TWO ARMED JAMBHALA:_

Worn and bedecked in all kinds of celestial garments
and ornaments; the pot bellied (Lambodara) and dwarfish
(Kharvakāya) image of two armed and one faced Jambhala is
poised on a Viswapadma in Bhadrāsana posture. Jambhala, an
emanation of the Dhyāni Buddha Ratnasambhava, as well as
the bestower of riches, in the right hand displays a citron
or magic jewel (Chintāmani or Bijapuraka). The corresponding
left gently strangles the neck of a mongoose (Nakuli)
disgorging an intermittent drop of beaded pearls and gems
in to a row of exquisitely carved eight nidhi kumbhas (Astanidhikumbhas) namely Mahāpadma, Padma, Sankha, Makara, Kachhapa, Kundā, Mukundā and Nila respectively. (86) The image measures 2'9" high and 2'10" by 1'8" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab. Stylistically, the typical Buddhist Tantric images of prosperity and affluence may be ascribable to the booming period of Vajrayāna.

Besides, another image of Jambhala in identical marvel, workmanship and magnitude, is still in situ in the Lalitgiri sculptureshed.

FEMININE VAJRAYĀNIC PANTHEONS AT LALITGIRI:

The sophisticated and large scale scientific excavations at Lalitgiri under taken by the Archaeological survey of India (A.S.I.), Orissa Circle, Bhubaneswar under the scholastic guidance of Dr. G.C. Châuley, the superintending archaeologist have already brought to light the remarkable treasure of the exceedingly rare pantheons of the Buddhist Tantric (Vajrayānic) divinities, unique in workmanship and unparalleled in iconographic characteristics. Particularly noteworthy among those are Tārā, prajnāpāramitā, Vasudhārā, Aparājita, Hāriti, etc.

Besides those above sculptures, already preserved in the Lalitgiri sculptureshed, a galaxy of such female
Buddhist Tantric images are lying scattered not only on the sloping terrace of Landā down to the Parabhādi hills covering the entire village, but also buried in the huge accumulation of the ancient bricks and brick bats. The slim, slender and slightly swelled youthful sexy anatomy contrasted by the ball like balanced breasts with pin pointed nipples, the over intoxicating sexy abdomen gravitated by the sharp pointed deep navels, the tightly compressed over sensitive curling lips, the bun shaped coiffure of the elongated and luxuriant hairson the crest of the heads, the aggressive sexy radiance and unbridled juvenile charm, the tremendous adolescence and high degree of aesthetic elegance combined with the celestial virginity, serene contemplative yogic calm and the half revealed mild smiling faces constitute the salient iconographic features and the remarkable artistic high lights of the rare feminine Vajrayānic pantheons at Lalitgiri. Further, the female Buddhist Tantric images at Lalitgiri, as in case of the male counter parts, are characterised by the conventional pose of Tribhanga multiplied by the naturalism and grace, the suppleness and suavity, the dynamic vitality and unparalleled divinity. Those female Vajrayānic sculptures, worn and bejewelled in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments with special high light to the typical necklaces (Hāra)
of Chhannavira patterns, stylistically bear the stamp of Bhauma art idioms.

TWO ARMED ONE FACED (IMAGE OF HĀRITI) :-

Worn and articulated in all sorts of eternal garments and ornaments, an attractive and excellent image of two armed round faced Hariti, the bestower of riches and the mother of five hundred sons, is poised on a Viswapadma in Lalitāsana attitude. Glimpsed with a full blown adolescence and fiery radiance as if a celestial virgin of early sixteen, the profusely bejewelled image displays a smolten pearl or Bijapuraka or mātulunga in the right hand. The corresponding left is seen embracing a child against the left hip, presumed to be the most beloved youngest son of the Yakhini Hariti, namely priyankara (87). The unique image of Hāriti, which is usually installed in front of the door, or in the porch leading to the refectory however measures 2' in height. The hovering Gandharvas are found depicted on the top dexter and sinister corners of the oblong back slab that measures 3' by 2' respectively. The rare image of Hariti, on stylistic ground, may be ascribable between A.D. 8th and 11th century.

STANDING IMAGE OF FOUR ARMED VASUDHĀRĀ :-

Draped in a diaphonous sāti, securely held by a chain shaped beaded girdle, an exceedingly rare image of four armed and slightly oval faced Vasudhārā elegantly
stands on a Viswapadma in graceful thrice bent (Tribhanga) posture. The profusely bejewelled Buddhist Tantric goddess of fortune, prosperity and affluence and the consort of Jambhala, displays varadā pose and a beaded rosary (Akshamālā or Rudrākshyamālā) in two right hands, a sheaf of corn (Dhānyamānjarī) and an effigy of thunder bolt (Vajra) in her corresponding two left. The principal image is flanked by two bejewelled female chauri bearers (chhatradharins) presumed to be the attendant goddess Vasusri in right and Vasumatisri in the left as well as two garland bearing bejewelled vidyadharas on the top dexter and sinister corners. The present image (4'9"X6'X 2'4") which sculpturally represents the only Dhyāna of Vasudhārā, as mentioned in sādhanamālā, is no doubt a priceless gem amidst a granary of Buddhist sculptures at Lalitgiri, ascribable to the flourishing period of Vajrayāna.

STANDING IMAGE OF TWO ARMED APARĀJITĀ:

Magnificently designed, draped and decked in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments, the terrific and the violent tempered Buddhist Tantric (Vajrayānic) goddess of two armed Aparājītā, vigorously tramples on the left foot the head of a prostrated reclining Brāhminicāl god of learning namely Ganapati or Ganesa and on the
corresponding right the head of Mara, the most malevolent god of worldly passions and temptations. An exceedingly rare and gruesome Vajrayānic goddess, glimpsed with unbridled juvenile charm, aggressive fiery radiance and the tremendous adolescence of a celestial maiden of early sixteen, in her upraised and out stretched right hand displays the attitude of dealing a slap or so called the Trailokya Vijaya Mudrā. The corresponding left represents the Tarjani pāsa against the breast. (89) The image, concurring with the Dhyāna and Sādhanā of Aparājitā, the exterminator of all the Mārās, is the only masterpiece amidst a huge bulk of Vajrayānic sculptures at Lalitgiri. It measures 4'7" high, and 5'7" by 2'7" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab. Stylistically, the image, which resembles with the prototypes at Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Kharimundā (all in undivided Cuttack district) and Nālandā (Bihār) bears the typic brand of Bhauma art idioms.

**IMAGE OF TWO ARMED TĀRĀ:**

Worn and bedecked in all sorts of celestial garments and ornaments, an attractive but slightly oval faced image of two armed Buddhist Tāntric goddess Tārā, or Tārini i.e. the sole protectress of the universe, sits on a Viswapadma in Bhadrāsana posture. Tara displays the Varadā Mudrā and a long stemmed utpala in right and left hands.
respectively. The image, enshrining the effigy of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha, the spiritual sire of the goddess Tārā, iconographically tallies with the Dhyāna of Red Kurukullā or Red Tārā, a variant of ordinary Tārā, as depicted in Sādhanamālā. (90) The principal image, with a bun shaped coiffure of hair on the head, measures 3'8" in height and 4'8" by 2'4" as the magnitude of the oblong back slab. The long tapering elliptical nimbus behind the head of Tārā enshrines the mystic syllable (Vijamantra) in typical Nāgari Brāhmi character depicting "Om Tāre Tuttāre Ture Swāhā/". The ten letters of the syllable represent the Ten āṛṣṭās of Mahāyāna. (91).

Another identical image of Tārā (5' in height) recently explored by me in the heart of the Lalitgiri village, and now in the Lalitgiri sculpture shed, equally bears on the front oblong slab the mystic syllable in Nāgari Brāhmi character.

THRICE BENT STANDING COLOSSUS OF TWO ARMED TĀRĀ WORSHIPPED AS VĀSULEI

Installed in the sanctum of a dialapated temple of traditional Pancharatha order, a grand and thrice bent standing colossus of two armed Tārā, which commands habitual the worship in the name of Vāsulei, displays, Varadā Mudrā and
a long stemmed lotus (utpala) in the right and left hands. Resplendent in an unparalleled transcendent glow and fiery radiance, a celestial damsel of early sixteen, the stupendous image of Tārā enshrines its mystic syllable in Nāgari Brāhmī character. The image draped and decked in celestial garments and ornaments measures 6' high and 7' by 3' as the magnitude of the oblong back slab. The garland bearing bejewelled Vidyādharas are found depicted on the top dexter and sinister corners. The large standing image of Tārā, which is indeed a unique innovation in Vajrayānic art of Lalitgiri, is exceedingly rare in India and world.

**IMAGE OF FOUR ARMED PRAJNĀPĀRAMITĀ WORSHIPPED AS OLĂSUNI**

An exquisite image of four armed and one faced Prajñāpāramitā, the divine mother of all Tathāgatas, installed in a natural cave of so called Olāsuni hillock facing east, is being theriomorphically worshipped by the local inhabitants as a mysteriously turned Hinduised godling namely Olāsuni Thākurani. Ablazed in all sorts celestial garments and ornaments as if an eternal maiden, the lone Buddhist Tāntric image displays the Dharmachakra pravartana Mudrā in first pair of hands. The corresponding secondary pair carries a sword aslant and the sacred Prajñā pāramitā texts. In lieu of the iconographic attributes, the intriguing image of Olāsuni is identified with the four
armed Sita Prajñāpāramitā, whose prototype is rare in India and world. The image (2' in height) on stylistic ground, may be ascribable in between the A.D. 8th and 11th century.

SCULPTURED DOOR JAMB AT LALITGIRI

Lalitgiri has however yielded an exquisitely carved sculptured door jamb, at present lodged in the Lalitgiri sculpture shed. The spectacular door frame, devoid of lintel, is chiselled out of the coarse grained pinkish Khondolite, available at Lalitgiri. The present jamb, unlike the sculptured door frames unearthed so far from Udayagiri and Ratnagiri, circa 8th century A.D. onwards, stylistically bears the stamp of typical Gupta art idioms as is indicated by the microscopically relieved full vase medalions (Purnaghata kalāśa) super imposed by the flambuoyant foliages. The minutely carved door jamb is contrasted by the sculptured panels in four compartmentalised vertical ribbons with special high light to a panel of aesthetically carved bejewelled amorous couple (Mithuna) in graceful thrice bent dancing posture. Slight above the panel are the delicately carved intricate arabesques, magnificent floral designs, luxuriant scroll works and other decorative motifs comprising the magnificent creepers foliages and the pine apple motifs. The second vertical
ribbon is illuminated by the microscopically carved sculptured motifs with the centrally projected clasp like buds from which emanate the delicate petals on both the sides. The extreme bottom part of the corresponding sculptured ribbon is neatly relieved with a full vase medalion. Just above it, is approached by the uniquely sculpted amorous couple (Mithuna) with the transparent uttariyas on their shoulders, who are actively indulged in an unprecedented exhilarating mood of sexual discourse and romantic enchantments conveying their fastidious appetite for love and romance. In this order of succession the noted decorative designs have been meticulously depicted. However, the top most edge of the narrow and vertical jamb is exquisitely relieved with a pair of full blown lotus (Utpalas) medalions from left to right.

The corresponding right side vertical jamb of the sculptured door frame stylistically bears the homogeneous marvel and workmanship as in case of the left side jamb. The magnificent door jamb, (6'6" by 2') which nurtures the typical Gupta workmanship, is of course a rare master piece in the Buddhist art of Lalitgiri.
MONOLITHIC STONE SLABS INSCRIBED WITH
BUDDHIST DHARANIS AND OTHERS

The large scale systematic and sophisticated seasonal excavations at Lalitgiri since 1985 have yielded a good number of inscribed stone slabs. Particularly noteworthy amidst those are the donatory inscriptions of rare Kushāna Brahmi (circa-2nd-3rd century A.D.), the ornamental Brāhmi inscriptions of typical conch shell character (Sankhali) engraved in bold relief on the excavated stone pedestal (sailamandapa) in front of the huge apsidal Chaitya Griha. Those above inscriptions of Kushān Brāhmi and ornamental Brāhmi are yet to be deciphered by the experts. Besides, a fragmentary stone slab (1'3" X 10") neatly engraved with a series of inscriptions in typical Gupta Brāhmi character bears the sacred Buddhist creed of Yedharmahetuprabhava hetum teshām Tathāgato hyavadat/ Teshām cha yo nirodha evam vādi Mahāsrmanah/". That means, everything springs from a common cause. The Great Ascetic (Mahāsrmanana) Tathāgata (Buddha) has explained the cause and its cessation. Another rectangular stone slab (1'6" by 9") bearing a series of undeciphered inscriptions of typical Gupta Brāhmi character (circa 4th-5th century A.D.) is now under the custody of A.S.I. Orissa circle, Bhubaneswar.
GUPTA PILLARS:

A good number of square shaped and monolithic sculptured pillar posts have been yielded not only from the excavations, but from an intensive exploratory field study in around the Landā and Pārābhādi hills. Those rectangular pillars (3'6" by 1') depict the microscopically carved delicate foliate motifs, intricate arabesques, flambuoyant scrolls and foliages, the half and full blown lotus medalions, the gruesome and terrible Kirtti mukhas with bare fangs as well as the full vase medalions (Purnaghata Kalasa) super imposed by the luxuriant creepers and flambuoyant foliages. One such pillar, unearthed from the monastery No.3 is now in situ in Lalitgiri sculptureshed. Another sculptured pillar post, installed underneath a vast banyan tree, very close to Matha temple, is being worshipped as a Brundāvati Chaurā. Further research has however brought to light the fragmentary portion of an identical pillar post (1' X 10'') lying weather beaten on the terrace of the Pārābhādi hill.

DISCOVERY OF MONASTIC SEALS, SEALINGS, TERRACOTTA DHARANIS AND OTHER FIGURINES:

A large scale sophisticated and seasonal excavations at Lalitgiri have already brought to light a convincing hoard of important and informative terracotta monastic seals, sealings, Dhāranis, figures and other figurines.
Those excavated monastic seals, when deciphered will no doubt solve the puzzle of the disputed Pushpagiri Mahāvihāra of Odra desa (Orissa). However, a monastic seal, unearthed from the monasteries No.4, adjacent to the APSIDAL super structure, depicts the name of the intriguing monastery as “Sri Chandrāditya Vihāre Samagra Ārya Bhikshu Sangha” in cursive Gupta Brāhmi character. Evidently, Vishnu Gupta, entitled himself as Sri Chandrāditya (following the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor Narasimha Gupta, designated as Bālāditya) is believed to have constructed a monastery (vihāra) for the congregation of the Buddhist monks of all the divergent sects.

Besides, in November, 1992, I could have yielded three terracotta seals and an oval shaped tiny terracotta tablet. The tablet bears the sacred Buddhist dhārani of Ye dharma hetu prabhava . . . in typical Post Gupta Brāhmi Character.

The three terracotta seals, neatly stamped with the Gajalaxmi motifs including two seated Ācharyas in Vyākhyāna Mudrā with a singular script of Gupta Brāhmi character, are yet to be deciphered. Unlike the traditional monastic seals, these three terracotta seals or sealings legibly depict the Gaja Laxmi motifs in close affinity to the prototypes at Khandagiri and Udayagiri.
Those seals, no doubt, record the name of the donors or the kings. The excavations in 1992 have however yielded a buffgrey miniature steatite image of Avalokiteswara, an earthen bowl preserving a few pieces of gold, silver, lead, (zinc) totalling 29, a terracotta seal stamped with Gaja Simha motif, as well as a tiny brick image of Jaina Tirthankara.

CERAMICS AT LALITGIRI :-

The large scale and long term sophisticated seasonal excavations under the spade work of A.S.I. Orissa circle Bhubaneswar, have unearthed the stupendous ceramic hoards, which can be categorically summarized as follows.

THE IMITATED NORTHERN BLACK POLISHED WARE (N.B.P.W.) AND BLACK AND RED WARES :-

The systematic and intensive archaeological excavations conducted at the Landa hill, Lalitgiri, underneath the banyan tree, down below the Mainstupa area, have yielded a scanty hoard of lustrous black slipped imitated Northern Black polished (N.B.P.) deluxe wares in close affinity to the prototypes at Sisupalgarh (94), Dhauli, Jaugada, Asurgarah, and Mārmundā. (95) Stylistically, this typical group of ceramics, as already reported from the historic sites like Sanghol (Punjab) and Thāneswara (Hariyāna), can be well ascribable in between the Maurya or exactly
post Maurya-Sunga Chedi periods. The wares are well characterized as the post Northern Black polished ware (N.B.P.W.) Phase in the context of Lalitgiri in particular and Orissa in general. (96)

**BLACK AND RED WARE**

A few pieces of black and red wares have also been unearthed from the same cultural level in the wake of the N.B.P. deluxe wares from Lalitgiri excavations, somewhere at the banyan tree area down below the Mahâstupa of Landâ hill. Stylistically, the unique pieces of Black and Red wares point to the post N.B.P. ware phase lying between 3rd-2nd century B.C. and 1st century A.D. On the basis of such important ceramic finds, the imitated N.B.P. and Black and Red wares are presumed to have been manufactured at the local ceramic industry already flourished in around the close vicinity of Lalitgiri.

It is noteworthy to suffice that, the spectacular groups of these ceramics comprise the inturned featureless bowls, dishes, large shallow bowls with sa...
corroborated by the discovery of a Sunga medalion at the same
level, adjacent to the Apsidal Chaitya Griha area. (97).

KUSHĀN POTTERIES :-

Lalitgiri, like those of Sisupālgarah and Asurgarah
has categorically yielded the unique ceramic hoard of inscribed
potshreds of typical Kushān Brāhmī character in the wake of
the Kushan Brahmi inscriptions engraved in bold relief on
the stone pedestal (Sailamandapa) or moon stone (Chandrasilā)
of the excavated apsidal super structure. The remarkable
ceramic hoards, noticed at Lalitgiri, mainly comprise the
typical red slipped laminated ware and the scarlet red ware.
The principal categories include Handi with concave base
lid with Saggar base, cylindrical rim of pot, sprinklers
relatively smaller with reduced nozzle, miniature spout
with flat base, incurred bowl with thin fabric, Bowl with
stand or dish on stand, spout, shallow bowl with normal base,
flaring rim of dish. The spouts are commonly small and of
red polished ware. Other noteworthy associated wares of
such types already reported so far, comprise chocolate buff
ware, course rough dull grey ware, which are all reported
in this particular level through out India. Terned as the
Northern Indian Kushān ceramics, the newly discovered
pot shreds at Lalitgiri chronologically approach to circa
2nd-3rd century A.D., i.e. Kanishka Huvishka times. (98)
The Kushān phase (level) potteries at Lalitgiri are associated with a distinct cultural hoards ascribable to the Gupta period i.e. circa 4th-5th century A.D. The ceramic industry of Gupta level can be well visualised in two excavated leading Buddhist sites namely Lalitgiri and the lower most deposit at Ratnagiri and Udayagiri as well. The cultural substratum of this phase at Lalitgiri has however yielded a good number of inscribed pot shreds of Gupta Brāhmi character, along with two varieties of pot shreds of red ware exhibiting applique designs. A pot shred, stamped with a lion slayer motif (especially depicted on the coins issued by Samudra Gupta) practically nurtures the view of strong Gupta influence at Lalitgiri. The major characteristic potteries are of Red polished ware of fine fabric together with buff and grey ware. These groups are represented by the sprinklers large with elongated nozzles and decorative spouts, deep bowls with clear cut corrugation marks, carinated handis, handi with collared rim, trough with thick collar made of course grit grey ware, earthen lamps, handled frying pans (Kāriā) etc. (99)

On the basis of the available surface finds and Ceramic industries, the cultural strata of Lalitgiri may be well ascribable in between A.D. 4th and 6th century.
Broadly speaking, the successive cultural deposits at Lalitgiri are represented by the early medieval pot shreds as already reported from Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Kuruma, Ghodkāpāta, Jáipur, Brahmāvana, Sālipur, Rāmeswara, Eradā, Kapilā, Solampur, Tarāngāgarpur, Bhārdā Cuttack, Paeschimeswar temple complex, (Dhenkanāl) Tālcher, Dhenkanāl district, Orissa.

Summarizing the whole, I would like here to suffice that, the most important and informative ceramic hoards, of imitated N.B.P.W., the Black and Red wares, the inscribed Maurya Brāhmi pot shreds, the Āndhra Sāvatāhana ceramics, the Kushān potteries, the Gupta ceramics and the post Gupta pot shreds already excavated and explored so far from Lalitgiri and its environ will no doubt usher a new vista of archaeological and intra departmental research bridging a long cultural hiatus, that lasted for centuries.

AN ESTIMATE OF LALITGIRI EXCAVATIONS

The systematic and large scale sophisticated seasonal excavations undertaken by the Archaeological survey of India (A.S.I.) Orissa Circle, Bhubaneswar, on the slope of the Landa hill, Lalitgiri, have yielded the huge bulk of archaeological finds as reported by his excellency Dr. G.C. Chāuley, the superintending Archaeologist. The antiquities, exposed so far, comprise as follows:
(1) **KHONDOLITE OBJECTS** :-

Comprise three relic caskets of gold successively encapsulated by Silver, steatite, and khondolite votive stupa shaped containers respectively. One of the gold reliquaries, enshrining the sacred relics, is missing.

(2) **BUDDHIST SCULPTURES** :-

The Buddhist sculptures numbering 95, mainly comprise the attractive colossi of Buddha in standing and seated forms with various hand postures, (Mudrās), Muchalinda Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Padmapāni Avalokiteswara, Vajrapāni, Maitreya, Manjusri, Vajrasattwa, Jambhala and other noteworthy feminine Vajrayānic sculptures namely Hāriti, Aparājitā, Tārā, Vasudhārā and Prajnāpāramitā etc.

(3) **ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS** :-

About 91 number of important architectural fragments have been exposed from the excavations. Noteworthy among those are the sculptured door jamb, Chaitya motifs, Gupta pillar posts, octagonal monolithic khondolite pillar fragments, the basement of a pillar showing half lotus medalions, the ruins of the ancient stupa railing posts (Vedikās) in shape of lenticular sockets, coping stones (Ushnisas), Chatrāvalis, Chatrayastis, harmikās, the drum slabs of the huge rubble built stupendous stupas and
other remarkable architectural pieces exquisitely relieved with the luxuriant creepers, intricate arabesques, full vase medalions (Purnaghata Kalasa or Purna Kumbhas), delicate floral designs and other decorative motifs.

(4) **VOTIVE STUPA INSCRIPTIONS AT THE BASES** :-

The inscriptions in typical Gupta and post Gupta Brāhmi characters, engraved on the circular bases of the monolithic votive stupas, mostly depict the name of the donors (dānapatis) and the sacred Buddhist creed of "Ye dharma hetu prabhavā . . . . . . Three inscribed votive stupas already unearthed from the excavations, are found in situ in the Lalitgiri sculpture shed.

(5) **STONE SLAB INSCRIPTIONS** :-

As many as five rectangular stone slabs, recovered from the excavations, are neatly incised with the inscriptions of typical Gupta Brāhmi character. Those inscriptions are yet to be deciphered by the experts.

(6) **TERRĀCOTTĀ (MONĀSTIC) SEALS AND SEALINGS** :-

The excavations have already brought to light as many as 26 number of important terrācottā seals, sealings Tablets and Dhāranis respectively. One such monāstic seal, recovered from the excavated monāstery (Vihāra) No. 4 depicts the name of the apocryphal Vihāra as "Sri Chandrāditya
Vihāre Samagra Ārya Bhikshu Sangha in typical Gupta Brāhmī character. Another badly defaced monastic seal, exposed from the monastery No. 1, if deciphered by the experts, may throw considerable light on the existence of the disputed Pushpagiri monastery (Sanghārāma) of Odra country at Lalitgiri.

(7) TERRĀCOTTĀ PLAQUES, ANIMAL FIGURINES, HEADS, AND MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS:

The excavations at Lalitgiri have yielded as many as five important terrācotta objects comprising the terrācotta plaques, animal figures, figurines, the heads and the miscellaneous objects.

(8) INSCRIPTIONS ON BRICK:

A burnt brick, recovered from the excavation, shows the inscriptions yet to be deciphered.

(9) BRICK IMAGE OF JAINA TIRTHANKARA:

An extremely rare and tiny brick image of Jaina Tirthankara has also been unearthed from the excavations.

(10) INSCRIBED POTSHREDS INCLUDING THE MAURYA BRĀHMĪ INScriptions:

The excavations have brought to light as many as 10 inscribed pot shreds. Particularly noteworthy among those are the inscriptions of typically Maurya Brāhmī character of 3rd century B.C., Ændhra Sātavāhana character of 1st century B.C. and A.D. etc.
(11) Kushān Brahmī and Ornamental Conch Shell Brahmī Inscriptions (Sankhalipi):-

The excavations have already yielded a galaxy of Kushān Brahmī (circa 1st-2nd century A.D.) and ornamental conch shell type inscriptions (Sankhalipis) neatly engraved in bold relief on the semicircular stone platform (moon stone) i.e. Sailamandapa of the excavated huge brick built apsidal Chaityā Griha at Lalitgiri. Those rare and informative inscriptions are yet to be properly deciphered by the experts.

(12) Besides, the excavations have unearthed 64 number of copper fragments.

(13) One silver ring (Anguriya) has been yielded.

(14) The silver slags, already unveiled, approximately measure 200 grams.

(15) About 8 iron objects have already been recovered from the excavations.

(16) As many as 8 number of faences bangles have been recovered.

(17) One tiny inscribed agate, a miniature whitish stone (steatite) Avalokiteswara, an arabesque and a tiny white stone Lion Elephant (Gaja-Simha) pendent with sealing on base, have been unearthed from Lalitgiri excavations.
Apart from the above antiquities, Prof. Dr. K.S. Behera, the foremost excavator of Lalitgiri, excavating the site on 1977 has already recovered the mushroom hoards of brick and stone built structural stupa ruins, adjacent to the excavated apsidal super structure, an archer type Gupta gold coin of Chandragupta-II, Vikramādiṭṭya, (4th century A.D.) already preserved in the Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar.

Over and above the excavated antiquities, other remarkable archaeological finds have already been met with in course of my whirl wind exploratory field survey, conducted in around Lalitgiri and its environs. Particularly noteworthy amidst those are enlisted below.

1) **TERRAÇOTTĂ SEALS AND SEALINGS**

About 4 number of rare terracotta (Monastic) seals and sealings unlike to those of the preceding ones, have been noticed, one such seal depicts the name of a Vihāra as "Sri Chandrādiṭṭya Viḥāre Samagra Ārya Bhikshu Sangha" already discussed earlier, other seals and sealings legibly stamped with the Gajalaxmi motifs in sharp contrast to the traditional ones, are yet to be properly deciphered by the experts.

2) **STONE SLAB INSCRIPTIONS**

A rectangular stone slab (9" by 4" by 1'5") shows a series of inscriptions of typical Nāgari Brāhmi character
depicting the sacred Buddhist formula "Ye dharma hetuprabhavā hetum tēśhām Tathāgatoḥyavadat/ Tēśhām chayo nirodha evam vādi Mahāsrāmanah/" "That means every thing springs from a common cause. The great sramana Tathāgata (Buddha) has explained the cause and its cessation."

3) **TERRĀCOTTA DHĀRANIS**

Two such terracotta tablets enshrine the auspicious Buddhist creed of Yedhārma hetu prabhavā. . . . . in the typical Gupta Brāhmi character of circa 4th-5th century A.D. onwards.

4) **PURĪ KUSHĀN COINS**

A single hoard of so called Puri Kushān copper coin ascribable to Kanishka Huvishka period, have been yielded by the courtesy of Sj. Karunākar Singh, a dedicated philanthropist of Lalitgiri village. Here it is noteworthy to state that, no such puri-Kushan coins (circuit 2nd-3rd century A.D.) are reported to have been recovered either from Udayagiri or Ratnagiri, two equally splendid Buddhist establishments of Post Gupta period, other than Lalitgiri.

5) **LENTICULAR SOCKET**

A lenticular socket of an earlier stupa, recovered from the close vicinity of Pārābhādi, Hātikhāl, Bandareswar area, measures an extant height and thickness of about 1'8".
by 8'5" respectively. The fragmentary socket, in close affinity to the prototypes at Landa hill (Lalitgiri) Duburi hill, Dhamasalá, (Jajpur district), Aragarah (Puri district), Sānchi (Madhya Pradesh), Bharhut (M.P.) and Bodhgaya (Bihār) archaeologically attests to the very existence of a grand corporeal (Sāririka) stupa at the spot ascribable between the early centuries of pre and post Christian era.

(6) Apart from the above noted antiquities, an intensive exploration in and around the environ of Lalitgiri has enabled me to bring to light not only the huge bulk of loose Buddhist sculptures lying scattered all over Lalitgiri village covering an approximate area of 4 Kilometres from Champaṭipur Haribhagatpur to Ragati hill, Bandareswar, but also the half a hundred of impressive and ancient brick mounds, when excavated, will no doubt yield the myriad hoards of brick and stone built structural stupas, substantial remains of the huge brick built mōnāstīres, (Vihārās) and the Buddhist temples as well.

Particularly noteworthy among the hoards of antiquities are the magnificent sculptures of Buddha, Dhyāni Buddha in different Mūdrās, Bodhisattvas, Padmapāni, Avalokiteśvara, Heruka, Mahākāla, Manjusri, Jambhala, Yasudhārā, Tārā, Vajra Tārā, Prajnāpāramitā, Chundā, Vajravārāhi etc.
The remarkable art and architectural motifs and pieces, explored so far, comprise the Gupta pillar fragments, Chaitya motifs, full vase medalions, monolithic votive stupas, harmikas, Chhatrayastis, Chhatra, Chhatrāvalis, intricate arabesques, luxuriant creepers, delicate floral designs, flambouyant folicages and other decorative motifs respectively.

**BRĀHMĪNICĀL IMAGES AT LALITGIRI :-**

An arduous and exhaustive field study in around Lalitgiri and its locality yielded a sizable bulk of Brāhmīnicāl sculptures and temple ruins. Particularly remarkable among these are enlisted below :-

(1) **STANDING IMAGE OF NĀGADEVATĀ :-**

Approached by a crude, archaic, plain and primitive anatomical traits and staunted modelling, the two armed, and round faced dwarfish image of Nāgarāja (devatā) Baladeo or Balarāma with five out stretched serpent hoods on the crest of the head, stands flexed on a lotus pedestal (100) worn and articulated by all sorts of traditional garments and ornaments, the syncretic image with human body and five hooded snake canopy above the head, carries a club or danda in two hands in horizontal manner, performing the role of door keeper (Dvārapāla).
The unique image of Nāgadevata, (2'7" in height) which happens to be a rare specimen in the Buddhist art of Lalitgiri, may be assignable in between A.D. 1st-2nd century and 4th-5th century, on the stylistic ground.

**TWO ARMED HORSE HEADED AND ANTHROMORPHIC KINNARA:-**

Earlier installed in one of the seven rock cut caves at the pedestal ledge of Pārābhādi hill, and now lodged in Lalitgiri sculptureshed, an exceedingly rare and dwarfish image of crude and archaically modelled kinnara with a human body and horse head stands erect in somewhat Samapāda posture. The pot bellied and two armed Chimmeric hybrid, which is actively engaged in beating the drum in two hands in an intense mood of devotion, iconographically corresponds with Kinnara, a typical art motif of Maurya Sunga period. (101) The potbellied and staunted image of Kinnara, of about 1'2" in height, serves as the only surviving remnant of Mauryan art at Lalitgiri, even unsurpassed in workmanship and unparalleled in any other part of Orissa, India and world as well.

**IMAGE OF TWO ARMED SIVA RELIEVED ON A MONOLITHIC PILLAR i:-**

An imposing monolithic khondolite pillar post vertically erected on the excavated monastery No. 2 at Lalitgiri, bears the relief of a thrice bent standing image
of two armed and three eyed Brāhmīnicāl divinity, Siva, which displays Varadā pose and a trident (Trisula) on right and left hands. Siva bearing a single hooded Nāga on the right shoulder against the right chest is worn and articulated in conventional garments and ornaments of an ascetic. It measures 2'6" high. The presence of a Brāhmīnicāl Siva image in the heart of a typical Buddhist sanctuary which is rather intriguing indicates the triumph of medieval Brāhmīnicāl Saivism over the Buddhism at Lalitgiri in particular.

Further, the Brāhmīnicāl sculptures namely Chāmundā, Ketukā, Kārtikeya, Ganesa, Mahisamardini Durgā, Vishnu, yielded around Lalitgiri are particularly noteworthy. Besides, the remains of the medieval Brāhmīnicāl temples in shape of bādas, pidhas, bekis, amalakas, Malasas, Sivalingas, Khurā etc have been found from exploration around Lalitgiri and its environs.

ROCK CUT CAVES AT LALITGIRI

An intensive exploration in around Lalitgiri and its environ, has enabled us to bring to light a galaxy of rock cut caves hewn on the ledge of the Landā, Pārābhāḍi, and Gāngi hills.
SEVEN ROCK CUT CAVES AT PĀRĀBHĀDI HILL

Painstakingly hewn on the lower natural ledge of Pārābhādi hill, as many as seven number of semicircular caves of Dhauli and Kāimā prototypes are facing west in a row. Those caves vary from 3'1" to 3'4" by 6'3" by 12'6" in height, diameter and circumference. Noteworthy fact is that, one of such hemispherical caves had earlier enshrined an image of Kinnara, now preserved in Lalitgiri sculptureshed.

TWO QUADRANGULAR CAVES ON THE PEAK OF OLĀSUNI HILL

Two quadrangular caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri prototypes which are found hewn on the peak of Olāsuni hill are approached by narrow and congested doors. The cave No. 1 measures 5'6" by 11'5" by 9' as the available height length and breadth respectively. The cave No. 2 like the preceding one however measures 6' by 8' by 9' in height, length and breadth as well.

MINIATURE CAVE AT GĀNGI HILL

Painstakingly hewn on the top ledge of the Gāngi hill a trapezeum shaped cave cum metro tunnel, popularly known as "Aswasthāmā Vila" or Gāngi Vila or Gāngi Gumpha", measures 3' by 8' by 6' in extant height, length and breadth respectively.
Broadly speaking, those newly explored rock cut caves at Lalitgiri, are most likely to have served as the abode for the wandering Buddhist recluses long before the emergence, growth and development of the ful fledged sumptuous and structural monastic establishments.

A SQUARE SIZE STONE SLAB RELIEVED WITH A PAIR OF OF FOOT PRINTS AT OLÅSUNI HILL :-

A pair of sacred foot prints relieved on a square shaped monolithic stone slab (1' by 1') archaeologically bear the vestiges of the strong Hinayānic influence at Lalitgiri. (102) The said foot prints, installed in a pārśwa deula on the peak of Olåsuni hill, is theriomorphically being worshipped as the sacred foot prints of Mahāpurusa Arakshita Dās.
HATIKHAL

The Hatikhal (The elephant pit or the pit caused by the fall of the elephant) sited somewhere at the pedestal of the Parabhadi hill, yielded a rich crop of Buddhist monuments. Particularly arresting among those are the substantial remains of the huge brick built monastic complexes, the structural stupas, a good number of stupendous and thrice bent standing colossal of the Bodhisattva (already shifted and at present lodged in the Lalitgiri sculptureshed) and a galaxy of seven rock cut hemispherical caves of Dhauli prototypes. Hatikhal, which appears to be the earliest Buddhist spot of Lalitgiri is reminiscent and contemporaneous with that of same Hastigarta, (Elephant pit) of Kapilavastu, (103) intimately associated with the miraculous episode (legend) of Buddha's life (6th century B.C.) that the elephant (thrown by Goutam Buddha) falling on the ground caused an enormous pit or ditch i.e. Hastigarta or Hatikhal. (104)
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7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Debala Mitra, Buddhist monuments,
27. G.C. Chauley, vide article, Buddhism in Orissa with special reference to Lalitgiri and Udayagiri, PP-6-7.
28. "Sukti bhatina, sad bhaginikam sa putadalanam iyam salilam nidhane Buddhosa Bhagavate sākiyanam"
Debalā Mitra, Buddhist monuments, page-80.

29. I b i d, page-97.

30. I b i d.

31. Sāmuel Beal, Buddhist Records of the western world, PP-204-05.


33. Lāmā Tāranāth, History of Buddhism in India, Page-241.


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38. I b i d, page-30., Debalā Mitra, Buddhist monuments, I b i d.


41. H. Sarkār, I b i d, page,-30.

42. Debalā Mitra, Buddhist Monuments, PP-46, 97-98, 98, 111, 132-33, 139, 144.


44. I b i d, PP-204-10, 221-22, 99-102, 181-87, 153-54, 204-10.


49. Sāmuel Beal, Buddhist Records of the Western World, Page-204, & PP-204-05.


51. Debalā Mitra, Buddhist monuments Page-228.


56. R.P.Chandā, Exploration in Orissa, Page-9, Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India (M.A.S.I.) No.44.

58. Ibid.
60. N. Dutt, Mahāyāna Buddhism, PP-144, 174.
63. Alice Getty, Gods of Northern Buddhism, Page-32.
64. B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, PP-4-5.
66. J. Ph. Vogel, Indian serpent lore, page-188, PL-XVII.
68. Albert Gurunwedel, Buddhist Art in India, Page-61.
71. 2500 years of Buddhism, Edited by P. V. Vāpat, Page-266.
72. R. P. Chandā, Exploration in Orissa, Page-14, M.A.S.I. No. 44.
73. Ibid.

78. "Bodhisattwa Maitreya (the future Buddha) can be distinguished from Padmapāni especially by a miniature effigy of a Chaitya or Stupa which former bears on the crown", He generally carries Chowrie in the right hand and the Nāgakesara flower in the left". B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, PP-13-14, & Page-14.

79. "From the information about his form, as gleaned from Sādhanā, it appears that in one of his hands (Sthirachakra) he carries the sword (Khadga or Prajñā Khadga or Anuttara Prajñā Khadga) which spreading its rays, destroys the darkness of ignorance while the other is engaged in bestowing the boon of all kinds", or in other words, displays Varada Mudra. B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-20.

80. "Ordinarily Manjusri carries the sword and the book in his right and left hands. In representations we find these two symbols placed on lotuses". B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-17.

81. Ibid.

82. Vajrapāni Bodhisattwa happens to be an emanation of his spiritual sire the Dhyāni Buddha Aksobhya. He carries the stem of a full blown lotus surmounted on the crest by a
thunder bolt (Vajra). His right hand displays the Varadā Mudrā" B. Bhattacharyya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-9.

83. Padmapani Avalokiteswara (Lokeswara) displays the Varadā pose and the stem of a full blown lotus (utpala) in the right and left hands respectively", Ibid, Page-188 & PP-8-9.

84. "Padmapani Bodhisattwa, an emanation of the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha, with his consort Pāndara, usually displays the Varadā Mudrā and along stemmed utpala in right and left hands respectively", B. Bhattacharyya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, PP-32-33.

85. In the Nāmasangiti, (compiled before the 10th century A.D.) Manjusri, the presiding Buddhist god of transcendent wisdom (Anuttara prajñā or Bodhi) is referred to as Ādi Buddha, B. Bhattacharyya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-15, The & PP-15-17, Alice Getty, Gods of Northern Buddhism, Page-31 PP-5-7, R.L. Mitra, Sanskrit Buddhist Literature, PP249-58, Swayambhu Purāna, I bid.

87. Hārīti variously known as Yakshini Abhīrātī, the consort of Panchikā, a stealer of the children and ogress, a rapacious one, the mother of five hundred sons, a cannibal demon, who devoured on the flesh and blood of the children of Rājagriha, became miraculously converted in to an ever propitiated, placid and compassionate goddess of prosperity, the protectress of children and the bestower of riches by the grace of the Blessed one i.e., Buddha.

The benign Buddhist goddess which carries a smolten pearl (Bijapuraka or Māṭulunga) on right hand and embraces on her left against the left hip the youngest ever beloved son, Priyankara, is generally installed in front of the door or in the porch leading to the refectory. Hārīti, the tutelary deity against small pox usually nourishes on meal partaken by the monks settled in the monāstery (Vihāra). Ālice Getty, Gods of Northern Buddhism, Page-84, & PP-84-87.

"The worshipper should conceive himself (Vasudhārā) who originates from the yellow germ syllable, Vam; she is two armed, one faced, has yellow complexion is in the fulness of youth and is decked in all ornaments and garments, carries in her left hand the ears of corn with the vessel showering gems, while the right exhibits the Varada Mudra. She is surrounded by her various companions, rests on the moon over the double lotus, and bears the image of Ratnasambhava on the crown". B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, PP-117-118.

"Aparājitā is yellow in complexion, two armed one faced, is decked in various gems, and tramples upon Ganesa. Her right hand is raised in displaying the attitude of dealing a slap, while the left carries the Tarjani pāsa against the breast, her face appears aweful, terrible and ferrocious. She is the destroyer of all Mārās and her parasol is raised over her head by the host of wicked
and ferocious gods, Brahmā and others", B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-153.

90. "In Sādhanamālā a very large number of goddesses has been designated as Tārās, some with the crest of the Dhyāni Buddhas and others without. The ordinary Tārās showing the Varadā Mudrā in the right hand and carrying the utpala or the lotus in the left, while the extra ordinary Forms of Tārā will embrace all goddesses designated as Tārās in the Sādhanamālā. Tārās are invoked by the only mystic syllable (Vijamana)

"Om Tāre Tuttāre Ture Svāhā/". There are seven different Variations of Tārā carrying the utpala in the left hand and exhibiting the Varadā Mudrā in the right. Out of these seven, two only bear the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown, and the others do not bear any image of a Dhyāni Buddha. B. Bhattachārya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-135.

But in some cases, we do have met with the Tārās of extraordinary group bearing on the crests their spiritual sires the Dhyāni Buddha Akshobhya, Amitābh, Amoghasiddhi including the set of five celestial Dhyāni Buddhas (Pancha Dhyāni Buddhas) as well.

91. Ibid, Page-125.
93. "The yellow variety of Prajñāpāramitā (the mother of all the Tathāgatas, of Buddhas) with the crest of Aksobhya is identical in form with the Sita prajñāpāramitā, except with regard to the colour and the Mudrā. Pīta prajñā pāramitā is yellow in complexion, bears the crest of Aksobhya on her crown of chignon, wears celestial ornaments and garments, and displays the Vyākhyāna pose in her two hands. On a lotus in her left rests the scripture, prajñāpāramitā". The celebrated image of Prajñāpāramitā (plate-XXVII, C) of Jāvā belongs to this variety, and tallies in all details with the description given in the Dhyānā. B. Bhattachāryya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Page-86.

94. A. K. Mishra, The Indian Black ware, Delhi, 1989 O.P.Cit,
B.B. Lāl, Ancient India, No.5, 1948, Page-68.


97. Ibid,


99. Ibid.
100. "It may be added that, as is well known modern standing figures consisting of a human figure with serpent hoods arising from the back between the shoulders are known as Baladeo (Balarama), and is described as having his head wreathed with snakes". Hopkins, Epic Mythology, Page-212.

101. "The horse headed female figure on the Asoka railing at Bodhgayā stands almost alone and is no doubt of purely of Indian origin. It agrees with the usual description of Kinnaras", Albert Gurunwedel, Buddhist Art in India, Page-52.

102. N.K. Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, Page-56.


104. Ibid.