CHAPTER - III
BUDDHIST MONUMENTS AND SCULPTURES

History records that the early men developed their aesthetic sense by producing rock paintings. The pre-historic cave paintings are the traces left by them which have not yet faded away with the ravages of nature. When men became more civilised they learnt to chisel stone which led to the growth of architecture and sculpture. Gradually different schools of art with local style developed. Art has many dimensions. It not only codifies the finer points of human civilisation and its spiritual aspects but also provides a recognised measuring-rod of the socio-cultural life of the people of an area through centuries of their existence. In this scenario, the people of South Kośāla have been found to have a lot of artistic achievements which have been portrayed in their lively and vivid lifestyle along with a rich cultural background dating from pre-historic times till the medieval period. The archaeological excavations in this area have brought to light many Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite monuments and also a large number of Buddhist art relating to different periods.

Buddhist remains of pre-Āśokan period are not available as they were probably built upon perishable materials like bamboos and wood. However, Emperor Āśoka, following the foreign art tradition started to carve out stone. So from his time onwards a number of sculptures made and engraved on stones are available in India as well as in Orissa. Though Buddhism had its influence in Orissa including South Kośala
during the pre-Asokan period, it took its concrete shape after the Kaliṅga War. But at that time Buddhism was in the form of Hīnayāna and the Hīnayānist did not believe in image worship, for which Buddhist images in anthropomorphic form are not available belonging to that period. With the rapid spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India from 1st Century A.D. the ideology of image worship came into forefront and in Gandhāra and Mathurā regions the artist revolutionised the Buddhist art traditions in modelling the figures of Buddha and Bodhisattva for popular worship. And the art of image making began to spread over the whole of India including South Kośala. However in this region, Buddha images carved in relief containing some episodes, like that of Bharhut sculptures, are very rare. Many of the images which have come to lime-light are figures in round, even though C.L. Fabri opines that “carving in round was undoubtedly an alien element to Indian art”. Further he says that “for the brief period during Aśoka’s reign, and for a short time after that the sculptor adopts this alien notion of carving images in round, ......”

According to C.L. Fabri Orissa retains in her treasure specimens of art belonging to the different periods of artistic conception viz., Archaic (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D), Classical (4th and 5th centuries A.D.) Mannerism (6th and 7th centuries A.D), Baroque (8th to 13th centuries A.D.), and Rococo (14th century onwards). Regarding the features of the statues of the Archaic period C.L. Fabri describes that “they are
massive, the figures stand frontally, motionless, rigid, like soldiers standing to attention: the arms are almost invariably pinned as it were, to the flanks of the body, and when the hands make the slightest, rather clumsy movement, the statues must be reckoned to be a little later in date." The archaic statues of South Kosala also contain the same characteristic. But these are neither like those of the Vedic deities nor of Buddhist faith. They are the popular village gods, spirits, wood-nymphs (Vrishakās), nāgas, nāgakanyās (serpent maidens), yakshas and yakshis. They were worshipped by the pre-Aryan inhabitants. During that period when Buddhism and Jainism were gaining popularity the Brāhmaṇas recognised these deep-rooted elements of faith as they felt that their power was slipping out of their hands. Buddhism also granted the non-Aryan people complete freedom of worship to any kind of gods providing them ethical rules to be followed. Even today the true faith of South Kosala is best expressed in the worship of wood-nymphs, dryads, spirits, nāga-nāginis and other village deities under the trees in the jungle.

The Buddhist art belonging to Classical, Mannerist and Baroque periods according to C.L. Fabri are "lively, militant, intensely felt art, growing out of its own root from the time of Asoka to the flowering in the Gupta times (320-500 A.D), and it was widely alive when its practitioners turned away from the severer classic forms to mannerism in the 6\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} centuries or changed gradually into the sensuous,
The Gupta art is 'Classical' because of its intrinsic quality of high order, which was shared throughout the country but was never paralleled earlier or later. During the Gupta age iconographic features of various deities were established. The striking features of the Gupta art is noticed in the life-size images of the Buddha, Viṣṇu, Śiva and other major deities. In the Gupta sculpture human figures are not merely a manifestation but rather the representation of nature with all its grandeur. Both the Buddhist and the Brahmanical images of this period combined in them an intense religious feeling with a radiant spiritual expression. The ideal of Gupta culture was harmony and synthesis. On the one hand, it invokes beauty with all its perfection of physical form and ornamental and decorative makeup, and on the other art pays full homage to the ideal of spiritual realisation as seen in the figures of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Buddha, Bodhisattva etc. Serenity, repose, calmness, joy, unruffled fixity of mind, control over the object of senses, perfect knowledge, compassion, discrimination and wisdom—these are some of the great principles of life and character which the divine images make manifest. Thus the Gupta sculpture exhibits the features like physical beauty, gracious dignity, elegance, tranquillity and spirituality. The Gupta artist brought some innovation with reference to the Buddha images. Those are the schematic hair (curling hair) in
contrast to the shaven head of the Kushāna art, transparent drapery (plain or with fold), ornamentation of halo and large variety of mudrā (hand poses and attitudes).\textsuperscript{12}

The art activities in South Kośāla clearly manifest two diametrically different but major styles.\textsuperscript{13} In chronological sequence, the initial stage during the reign of the Śaravapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvamśīs follow the Gupta classicism with elegant simplicity, sofistication in rational proportion of charming ovoidal faces, slender waistline and naturalistically flexed poses.\textsuperscript{14} The other style contemporary with the Kalachūri phase portrays a mannerism which may be termed as 'Provincial' with “limbs progressively lengthened, faces swelled and broad plump chest suddenly constricted downwards into an almost tringular waist containing a central lump at the coeliac region, below which are attached a pair of feet like stiff appendages.”\textsuperscript{15}

These two phases of art classicism and mannerism have found a lively expression throughout the length and breadth of this region between 4\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D.

The Śaravapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvamśīs ruled South Kośāla in the post-Gupta period. The monuments of this region received the munificent grant of the members of the royal family and nobility like Bharatabala, Īṣānadeva, Tivaradeva, Queen Vāsata and Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna. Nothing is known from the inscriptions regarding the art-activities of the early Pāṇḍuvamśī rulers. But the Bamhani Plates\textsuperscript{16} of Pāṇḍava king
Bharatabala refers to Devavārikas (the state officials) as the ‘superintendent of temples and holy places’ who might have supervised the art-activities of the time of Bharatabala. Next to him, Īśānesvara built the Īśānesvara Śiva temple of Kharod. The temple built in the Chanda region of Maharastra by Suryaghosa was renovated by a brother of Nannadeva I. The first phase of Rājivalochana temple of Rajim (the garbhagriha and the flat roofed mandapa with two rows of six pillars in the centre) was built by Tivaradeva. Next to it the Laksmana temple at Sirpur was built by Queen Vāsaiā in the early 7th Century A.D. Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna enlarged the Rājivalochana temple and added the gate in the Western side of the compound of the temple complex. He also extended royal help to the monuments of Malhar, Sirpur and Kharod, constructed before him. A Brāhmaṇa named Durgarakshita of his kingdom erected a Śiva temple at Senakapat and donated eight halas of land for the maintenance of the temple.

The Jetāni and Devrāni temples of Tālā (5th-8th centuries A.D) also belong to the Śaravapuriya and Pāṇḍuvāmsi period. The Buddhist Vihāras and the stone and bronze images which have brought to light through excavations at Sirpur were the works of the Pāṇḍuvāmsis.

It seems that during the reign of the Śaravapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvāmsis five main centres of art developed viz., Malhar, Tālā, Kharod, Sirpur and Rajim.
At Malhar we get an evidence of continuous development of art-activities right from the beginning of second century B.C. to thirteenth century A.D. A number of wonderful sculptures carved in between fifth and seventh centuries A.D are found at this place of which the most significant are Śiva, Kartikeya, Gaṇesha, Kuvera, Skandamātā and depiction of the story of Kacchapa Jataka on a pillar. Following the Gupta art tradition the artisans carved the images of Buddha, Bodhisattva, Tārā, Mañjuśrī, Hevajra etc. during the period 7th-10th centuries A.D. A number of Śiva temples were erected at Malhar during the Kalachuri period (10th-13th Centuries A.D.). Among them the most important were the Kedaresvar temple (1167 A.D.) built by a Brahmana named Somaraja and the Dhurjati Śiva temple constructed by Brahmadeva, one feudatory chief of the Kalachūri ruler Prthvideva II. During that period the images of Śiva, Gaṇesha, Viṣṇu, Lakṣhmī, Durgā etc. were made in medieval art style.

Tālā, another centre of art of South Kośala was situated on the confluence of the rivers Maniari and Śivanāth in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh. J.D. Beglar has referred to this place in his report in 1878 A.D. Later on in 1980 Donald Stadtner published his paper on the temples of Tālā.

At Tālā two monuments, locally known as Jeṭhāni and Devrāṇi temples, have been discovered. The former is
almost dilapidated where as the latter is still better preserved.\textsuperscript{34} The plinth, walls, door-jambs and front pillars of Devrāṇi temple are still intact.\textsuperscript{35} The door-frame of this temple is highly decorated which is composed of six sākhās with floral designs.\textsuperscript{36} Some other important depictions in the doorway are river Goddesses, amorous figures of Kirtimukhas, Kubera, Gaja-Lakṣmi, Umāmaheśvara, Śiva-Pārvatī playing dice etc.\textsuperscript{37} This temple is considered as an outstanding example of Indian art from the artistic point of view.\textsuperscript{38} The classical tradition and folk flavour, both are significant features in the art of Tālā.\textsuperscript{39} The art heritage of Tālā is assigned to 5\textsuperscript{th}-8\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D.\textsuperscript{40} when South Kośala was ruled by the Śaravapuriyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṃśis.

Kharod consists of three temples viz., Indaldev, Lakṣmaṇeśvar and Śabarī temples.\textsuperscript{41} The life-size images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā are carved on the door-frame of Indaldev temple.\textsuperscript{42} The door-frame of Lakṣmaṇeśvar temple also comprises Gaṅgā-Yamunā panel in the upper half whereas dvārapālas are stationed on the lower half.\textsuperscript{43}

Sirpur contains some masterpiece examples of art, which include a divine figure seated on coil of a five-hooded snake of Lakṣmaṇa temple,\textsuperscript{44} Garuḍa-vāhana Viṣṇu of Gandheśvara temple,\textsuperscript{45} images of Buddha with attendants in the Buddhist Vihāras (Swastika Vihāra and Ānandaprabhu Vihāra)\textsuperscript{46} and large number of bronze images of which the best
specimen is of Tara. The most outstanding feature of Lakṣmaṇa temple is the massive door-frame in stone which adorns the entrance to the sanctum. It is profusely decorated with sculptured panels and foliage designs. M.G. Dikshit has written that “Sirpur was thus the centre from which the forms of the Post-Gupta School of sculpture seem to have been diffused throughout the Mahakoshala”.

In the development of art-activities in South Kosala the art of Indaldev temple of Kharod has been considered earlier than Sirpur “with a comparatively plainer doorway, less ornate plant style and overall simplicity.” In between Kharod and Sirpur may be placed the Rajivalochana temple of Rajim i.e. the Tivaradeva phase of construction as seen in the doorway of the sanctum. It is ascribed to Tivaradeva because firstly, Garuḍa, the insignia of Tivaradeva is found on the lintel of the doorway of the sanctum. Secondly, the sculpture nāgasākhā has been introduced in the temple doorway which is absent in the Sirpur temple built in the succeeding period of Tivaradeva. This nāgasākhā again re-appears on the western gate which was the work of Bālārjuna. This gate also exhibits the classical art in the image of Viṣṇu-Anantaśāyin on the lintel and mithuna and dvārapāla reliefs on Sirpur model but is more advanced in plasticity. According to R. N. Mishra “it indicates the rotation of style from Rajim back to Rajim through Sirpur and through the reigns of Tivaradeva to Mahāśīvagupta.”

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Rajim consists of two temples viz., Rajivalochana temple and Rāmachandra temple. The former belongs to the Pañchāyatana class of temple in which main temple is surrounded by four subsidiary shrines (deulikas) at the four corners of the prākāra (compound). The aesthetic evolution of art at this temple was marked in four stages related to the Saravapuriyas, the Pāṇduvaṁśis, the Nalas and the Kalachūris. In the first phase the garbhagriha and the flat roofed maṇḍapa with two rows of six pillars in the centre were built. The central pillars which are coeval with the original building of the maṇḍapa consists of square stone columns. The base of these columns are plain but rest portions are profusely decorated with rich ornament and scroll-work. In the second phase the side walls of the maṇḍapa, pilasters (in place of old square columns) with life-size sculptures, door-frames of the deulikas were introduced and the door-frame of the main shrine repaired. The doorway consists of three broad mouldings with rich scroll-work and the lintel contains the image of Garuḍa-Vāhana Viṣṇu and images of ganas. In this phase the prākāra with massive door-frame was constructed. In the third phase the wall was built at the edge of the platform and a circumambulatory passage (pradakśiṇa patha) was formed. In the fourth stage, on the square pyramid of the original śikhara (on each face) the chaitya-windows in five tiers were constructed which were not coeval with the date of the original building of the temple. M.G.Dikshit suggests that these chaitya-
windows and miniature shrines on the maṇḍapa belong to the Kalachūrī period.\textsuperscript{63}

The first and second phases of art of this temple belong to the Šaravapurīya and Pāṇḍuvāmśī period respectively. The life-size sculptures on the pilasters of the maṇḍapa bear a close resemblance with the sculptures of Sirpur.\textsuperscript{64} R. N. Mishra opines that “the decorative pattern as well as the form of sculptures and reliefs at Rajim materialised and matured between Tivaradeva and Mahāśīvagupta.”\textsuperscript{65} The pillars, pilasters and reliefs at Rajim indicate variations of style which could be accommodated within the wide chronological parameters of Bālārjuna’s reign.\textsuperscript{66} R. N. Mishra has written that “the superbly contemplated and exquisitely relieved figure-work on the Western Gate seems matured compared to the hesitant dispersal of decorative details as found on the Indaldeo temple (Kharod) and Lakshmana temple (Sirpur).”\textsuperscript{67} Thus the culmination of classical art tradition is found in the Western Gate of Rājivalochana temple at Rajim.

The art of South Kośala discussed above belonged to the post-Gupta period which followed the Gupta idioms and pattern and marked the gradual development of the same. But it is not a copy of the Gupta art. “Significant feature of this art is regional or native experiments. The experiments are based on innovative ideas hence it looks like a divergent variation of...
Gupta-tradition. Thus the art of Daksīṇa Kośala can be estimated as the second classical phase of Indian art.”

Some time in 9th century A.D. the ‘classical’ tradition seems to have faded out in the Upper Mahānadi valley and the artistic tradition of South Kośala with its classical idiom transplanted itself in Utkala and eventually played a decisive role in the making of the art of Bhubaneswar and Mukhalingam. The Somavamśī rulers transplanted this art in Orissa. King Janamejaya and his successors carried it through Baud and Ganjam.

From 8th to 9th century A.D. the flavour of Gupta art depleted and sculptures evolve a ‘medieval’ idiom. In the beginning of this phase “art became more prescriptive based. Simplicity turned into complexity, flow into stiffness and depth in the shallowness. Sculptors seem to be more adherent with rigid norms of carving. Imagination and experimentation went into margin.” The early stages of this evolution may be traced through the ‘image in round’ of the corner deulikas of the Rājivalochana temple of Rajim. The features of these images are “the bold plasticity and typical pattern of wearing antariya where cloth covers the left thigh longer than the right thigh, in round plump face, in simple but energetic portrayal of beaded ornaments and a happy balance of sturdy and some what plump figures.” The images which contain these features are Viṣṇu, Vāmana, Nyśimha and Trivikrama of the deulikas of
Rajim temple\textsuperscript{75} and Garuḍāsana Viṣṇu, standing Viṣṇu and Maṇjuśrī of Sirpur.\textsuperscript{76} These sculptures represent a type in which the later Pāṇḍava phase of art takes a definite turn towards change. The female figures of Rāmachandra temple of Rajim also indicate this change.\textsuperscript{77} This happens due to lack of any strong dynastic power and the art suffered stagnation. This is clearly visible in the Rāmachandra temple of Rajim. This temple originally belonged to the Pāṇḍuvaṃśi period, was renovated and reconstructed in twelfth century A.D. by Jagapāla\textsuperscript{78} a Kalachūri officer of Ratnapura and was further renovated in eighteenth century A.D.\textsuperscript{79} This chronological levels of construction and renovation led to the differences and degradation in style which is clearly seen in the figures of mithunas on the pillars of the maṇḍapa\textsuperscript{80} and the life-size figures of śālabhāṇjikā in alto-relievo\textsuperscript{81} in the row of pillars on the right side of the Rāmachandra temple. “Of these, the one having a longish bowl in the hands indicates a new stylistic idiom. Though in the suppleness of form it may be related to the anterior art-tradition, the tilts and curves on the axis of body in this figure articulate a new diction tending towards lateralism.”\textsuperscript{82} In the another figure of Śālabhāṇjikā we perceive further deterioration in its flably torso and face, in the schematically arranged layers of uttariya to the right between the breast and the waist, in the prominent coeliac region and in the angular and sharply cut facial features.\textsuperscript{83} Further decadence is marked in some other pillar-figures of Rajim. One female figure in the compound of the Rājivalochana temple has “ample
curves but emphatic solidity heightened by flat and disproportionate treatment of torso and arms and static hands."\textsuperscript{84} Similar situation also occurred at the other centres of art of South Kośala like Malhar (Dīṅgrī Dāī temple), Ratanpur (Kunti Deul) and Sheorinarayan temple.\textsuperscript{85} The pattern of transformation is almost identical there too.

But the art activities of South Kośala took a new turn with the effort of the craftsmen who attempted to stagger the overwhelming stiffness by introducing sharp flexions and elongation of limbs in sculptural compositions.\textsuperscript{86} These attempts are visible from Pali, Janjgir (Śiva temple), and Malhar (Deur temple) where the images are marked with complete devoid of solidity, voluminosity and distortion of limbs.\textsuperscript{87}

But towards the later part of the reign of the Kalachūris again the distortion in the sculptures started which appeared at Deurbija, Gandai (District Rajnandgaon) and Deo Balod (District Durg).\textsuperscript{88} In these places aesthetically, "the sculptures devoid of earlier grace and bold conception. Reduced in size they are flat and unimaginative compositions and follow merely the stereotypes".\textsuperscript{89} The temple of Deo Balod represents the final stage of art-activities of the Kalachūris of South Kośala where the figure work on the temple (except the doorway) is unimpressive.\textsuperscript{90}
ARTISANS AND CRAFTSMEN IN SOUTH KOŚALA

We get the detailed information from the inscriptions regarding the institution of artisans and craftsmen, their hierarchical status, proficiency in canon and several other factors. It appears that the institution of craftsmen plays an important role whenever any type of building activity starts. Any work in stone, from the stage of its planning to the end of construction and the job of engraving letters on the copper-plates or stone fell within the ambit of the artisans. The inscriptions record the construction of fifty-three monuments in South Kośala and information is available concerning twenty-one craftsmen of various categories viz., Sūtradhāra, Śilpī and Rūpakāra. The Sūtradhāras occupy the highest position in hierarchy of craftsmen and they guided the work. They were assisted by Śilpīs, Rūpakāras and Vijñānakās. Where Sūtradhāras were not available, work was entrusted to Śilpīs and Rūpakāras. The artisans and craftsmen were also employed by the state. Sometimes, state appointed its own ‘Superintendents of Work’ and in such cases Sūtradhāras must have worked under them.

The Kalachuri inscriptions also contain information about various categories of donors of monuments like rulers, members of the royal family, ministers, officers, feudatories of the rulers and pontiffs. The craftsmen carried out their work assigned to them by the private individuals, being unmindful of
the social status of those persons. They also worked under the pontiffs regardless of their own personal religious faith. So that, stylistic similarities in sculptures of different religious sects are visible in the territory of South Kosala.

The names of the craftsmen of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi period are available in the inscriptions. They are Sotranāga and his son Bodhanāga, Ārya Goṇa, Prabhākara, Vasuguṇa, Rishigaṇa and Dronāditya. Of these the first two worked for Tivaradeva, designated as akshasālin. Next three worked during the reign of Mahāśivagupta. Dronāditya, an eminent artisan, whose name is engraved on some bronze images obtained from Sirpur. The images of Maṇusri and Tārā are the master pieces of his art which prove his superb artistic genius. M.G.Dikshit has remarked that “his work ranks among the finest things produced by the Pāṇḍava artists”.

The names of the artisans of the Kalachūri period are also known from the epigraphical sources. They were Saṅgama, Mādhava, Mahīdhara, Hāsala, Ratnapāla, Devagaṇa, Jātu and Chhitaku. Among them Mādhava has been described as an excellent sūtradhāra “expert in the science of Viśvakarmā”. Mahīdhara has been narrated as “sūtradhāra śiromaṇi”. Hāsala has been eulogized as “sakala śilpa nidhi” (repository of all mechanical art), Ratnapāla “as crest jewel of artisans” and Devagaṇa as “rūpakāra śiromaṇi”. Sūtradhāra Chhitaku, the son of sūtradhāra Manmatha had a
great reputation in regard to his skill in art and proficiency in Śilpaśāstra. He could work both in stone and wood and also in gold.

The artisans and craftsmen of South Kośala displayed their close acquaintance with religious modes and sāstric injunctions and exhibited their skill by introducing marginal features relating to local traditions.

ARCHITECTURE

After the formation of the Buddhist Church or Saṅgha, its members were at first no fixed inhabitant. They were the wandering monks (parivrājakas) staying here and there i.e. under the trees, in the open air or in the caves of the mountains. In course of time the merchants and the royal votaries became the followers of Buddha and their wealth made it possible for the construction of the gigantic stūpas, chaityas and vihāras.

The highest objects of worship for the Buddhists are the Triratna i.e. Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. But there are also other objects of worship equal to Triratna and they are the relics of the holy persons like the Buddha, the Pratyeka-Buddhas, the Arhats and the Chakravartins over which the stūpas were erected. The stūpas were divided into four categories viz., (i) Śārīrika (ii) Pāribhogika (iii) Uddeśika and
The first category contained the mortal relics of not only of Buddha, but also of his chief disciples as well as of Buddhist teachers and saints. After the death of Buddha, Eight Great Stūpas were constructed over the corporeal relics (remains of a corpse after cremation) of Buddha at Rājagriha, Vaiśāli, Kapilavāstu, Allakappa, Rāmagrāma, Veṭhadīpa, Pāvā and Kuśinagara. The second category of stūpas Pāribhogika were built over the objects used by Buddha like robe, begging bowl, sticks etc. which were worshipped equally with the corporeal relics. The third category Uddeśika were commemorative of the incidents of Buddha’s life, including those of his previous births. Both Fa-hien and Hiuen-Tsang saw a large number of such stūpas in India and one among them was the eye-gift stūpa at Pushkalavati. The fourth one Votive stūpas, portable in size, were mostly erected by the Buddhist pilgrims for attaining religious merit when they visited the sacred sites. A large number of such stūpas have been discovered and most of them are made of monolithic stone. These stūpas contain the figures of Buddha and Buddhist deities in their niches. Some votive stūpas are made of bricks and also metal. They also contained the images of Buddha, Buddhist deities and dhāraṇī mantras.

As per tradition the oldest relics of Buddha are the hairs which he gave to the merchants of Orissa named Tapassu and Bhallika which were deposited by them in a stūpa in their native town in Orissa. One tooth relic of Buddha was also
enshrined in a stūpa at Dantapura in Orissa.\(^{124}\) The dated earliest stupas of India are the work of the Mauryan Emperor Aśoka. He distributed the contents of seven out of the eight Sarīrika stupas among the numerous stupas built by him.\(^{125}\) Out of them the earliest structures of the Sāñchi Stūpa and Dharmarajika Stūpa of Sāranāth were notable work of Aśoka.\(^{126}\) During the reign of the Sungas and Sātavāhanas a large number of magnificent stupas were constructed at Sāñchi, Barhut, Amarāvati, Sonari, Andher, Satdhara, Bhattiprolu, Jagayyapeta etc.\(^{127}\)

The word chaitya is derived from the word citā (chitā) or funeral pile i.e. the tumulus raised over the bones of a dead saint.\(^{128}\) Chaitya means a relic shrine, an altar or a temple or any place of worship. But in Buddhism the term chaitya is analogous to stūpa which means a mound containing a relic e.g., ashes, bones, hair or a tooth of Buddha.\(^{129}\) But “chaitya is a religious term, while stūpa is an architectural term for a relic mound.”\(^{130}\)

Chaitya-griha or Chaitya-hall is a sanctuary, where the object of worship is a chaitya or stūpa. The idea of construction of the Chaitya-griha arose to provide shelter to the devotees, where they might perform their worship conveniently without being disturbed by bad weather.\(^{131}\) A number of Chaitya-halls belonging to Buddhist faith are widespread
Throughout India viz., Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaja, Bedsa, Karle, Pitalkhora, Junnar, Bairat, Guntupalli, Brahmagiri etc.\(^{132}\)

During his life time Gautama Buddha accepted sixty dwelling places at Rajagriha offered by the local merchants and those were used by the Saṅgha (community as a whole).\(^{133}\) Thus began the monastic order of the monks. These dwelling houses or monastic abodes provided shelter to the monks during rainy season retreats (āvāsa), where they performed meditation and communal ceremonies peacefully. These dwelling houses were the bamboo huts or simple wooden structures. But very soon the sumptuous monasteries came into existence termed as Vihāras, Ārāmas and Saṅghāramas.\(^{134}\) Merchant Anāthapiṇḍika built one such monastery at Śrāvasti at the centre of which he constructed a Gandha Kuṭī for Buddha, around which cellular abodes were constructed for eighty great disciples of Buddha.\(^{135}\) Other monasteries that came into existence during Buddha’s life time were Pūrvārāma in the neighbourhood of Śrāvasti, Ghositārāma and Kukkuṭārāma at Kauśāmbī, Jīvakārāma and Maddakuchchhi-Migadāya at Rajagriha.\(^{136}\) Later on the monasteries were developed into highly organised educational institutions and became the academic centres of Buddhist learning. The most famous among them were Nālandā, Vikramśilā, Uddantapurī, Ratnagiri, Jaggadalā, Somapurī and others.\(^{137}\)
The earliest monasteries made of perishable materials like wood and bamboo have been destroyed. But the rock-cut cave monasteries and the vihāras made of bricks and stones are still preserved. In the earlier rock-cut monasteries the cells were arranged without order and without any scheme of co-ordination. But in second century B.C. a standard plan was followed which was marked in Caves 12, 13 and 15A of Ajanta and Cave 1 of Ellora. This plan consisted of an astylar hall flanked by small cells on three sides. The hall (square, ablong or epsidal) was meant for congregation whereas the cells were the dormitories. The cell contained a raised rock-cut bed and a rock-cut pillow. In the pre-Christian Era the architecture has gradually progressed from astylar viharas to hypostyle halls (Kondane and Pitalkhora) and the addition of pillared verandah as found in some caves of Nasik, Junnar and Cave 4 of Ellora.

The next phase of development was marked in the 5th century A.D. By that time the plan of the monastery consisted of a pillared hall with cells on three sides. The central cell on the back side opposite to the doorway was the shrine chamber, sometimes preceded by a porch or antechamber. This vihāra served the dual purpose of monastic dwelling and sanctuary.

In the later period the storeyed monasteries came into vogue. Cave 6 of Ajanta is double-storeyed and Caves 11
149 These monasteries are quadrilateral on plan with living-rooms and pillared verandahs flanking the central courtyards. The central cell opposite to the doorway is the shrine chamber which contains a stūpa or an image of the Buddha. The monasteries also contain the staircases to reach the upper storeys. Attached to each monastery besides the assembly hall were a kitchen, a refectory, store room, washing place etc. These adjuncts were sometimes outside the main-complex, but they were connected with it by a door. To drain out water from the courtyard a covered drain was provided under the verandah and one of the cells. These monasteries with open courtyard provided ample light and air to the residents. The vihāras of Orissa and South Kośala were mostly built according to this plan. No difference is noticed in the course of development of the plan of the rock-cut monasteries and the structural vihāras. The latter can be regarded as mere translations of the former.

In South Kośala a number of Buddhist monasteries have been discovered through excavations. One among them is the Muchalinda Buddha Vihāra of Gaṇiāpāli situated in the district of Bargarh in Orissa. The structure of this Buddhist monastery has come to lime-light with the excavation conducted there by the Sambalpur University in May-June, 1978, under the guidance of Dr. N. K. Sahu.
This monastery was made of burnt bricks. The size of the bricks used there varied from 14”x8”x2.5” (36x20x7Cm) to 9”x8”x3” (23x20x8 Cm). The bricks of the Kushana period varied from 14 to 14.5” by 9 to 9.5” by 2.5” to 3”. The early size of bricks of Gaṇiāpāli are almost equal to that of the bricks size of the Kushāṇa period. Charles Fabri158 opines that the monastery of Gaṇiāpāli probably continued from the early centuries of the Christian Era to about 4th–5th centuries A.D.

As the structure of this monastery was made of finely burnt bricks the people of that locality took full advantage of the readily available burnt bricks and used them on the construction of their new houses. They also considered the bricks of this site to be auspicious and Dr. N. K. Sahu159 has written that “an unholy tradition developed when it was believed that any new house to be constructed in the locality and in the nearby villages, must contain in its foundation at least one brick of the monastery. The mad rush for brick hunting destroyed the plinth and the foundation of the old structure at several places......”. In the northern side of the Chaitya hall, at a depth of two feet a part of the floor paved by bricks has been traced (Fig.6).160 At a depth of three feet a massive but truncated wall (Fig. 7) running east to west has been traced.161 It was two feet ten inches in breadth, which might be one of the foundation walls of the monastery.162
On the southern side of the Chaitya hall at a depth of one foot traces of the structural walls (Fig. 8) of the monastery have been found. Further a massive wall (probably of the Chaitya hall) consisting of eight layers of bricks placed on boulders has been discovered. Another heavy wall (Fig. 9) (two feet ten inches in breadth) consisting of eight layers of bricks placed on strong earth mixed with small chips of stone and sandy clay running from north to south has been found. This wall was probably one of the foundation walls of the monastery as found in the northern side of the Chaitya hall. A number of walls measuring one foot in breadth run from the main wall in different directions. These side walls formed small cells which were probably meant for the Bhikshus or mendicants. Such cells or Bhikshu chambers are also found at Nalanda and in Dharma Chakra Jina Vihāra of Sāranāth.

From its strong and heavy foundation walls (Fig. 7 and 9) Dr. N. K. Sahu presumes that the monastery of Gaṇiāpāli was a multi-storeyed building. The excavations reveal that the monastery had structural buildings on northern and southern sides of the main Chaitya hall. The northern area showed evidence of some dormitory like buildings and the southern sector gave clear evidences of the number of chambers clustered together. Whatever evidences are gleaned in the first phase of the digging suggests that the northern sector had the establishments for teaching at the ground floor and probably the residential accommodations for the learners in the upper floors.
This presumption has to be obtained in the second phase of the excavation. As to the residential chambers of the Āchāryas and the Bhikshus in the southern sector there are plenty of evidences rescued by the digging, the second phase of excavation will no doubt bring to light large number of such chambers throwing further light on the mode of living of the Bhikshus as well as the architectural significance of the establishment. This sort of building structure is common in the monasteries of early medieval and medieval period. This monastery of Gaṇiāpāli according to Dr. N. K. Sahu is the earliest of its kind in Orissa. Even the structural magnitude is rare during the 4th–5th century A.D.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang did not refer to the Muchalinda Buddha Vihāra of Gaṇiāpāli though he had given the vivid description of the Buddhist Vihāra of Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li, situated at a distance of 45 kilometres to the north of Gaṇiāpāli. Probably this monastery had already met its doom at the time of the visit of Hiuen-Tsang in 7th century A.D.

The remains of another Buddhist Vihāra of early medieval period has been discovered at Nāgrāj on the left bank of the river Aṅg, 15 kilometres away from Gaṇiāpāli. Some wall structures of burnt bricks are visible there on the surface of a mound. Few pieces of broken pillars which might have supported a structure there, are found on the mound. The pillars are plain and devoid of any sculptures. The
excavation of the site may reveal here the existence of a centre of popular Buddhism.

Hiuen-Tsang had mentioned in his account that the Sātavāhana ruler Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi had constructed a five storeyed Vihāra¹⁷⁶ at Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li i.e. the Gandhamārdan hill in South Kośala. Though many caves are found on the top of this hill, supposed to be the dwelling places of the Buddhist monks, the runis of the said monastery have not yet been traced out. But the close observation of the temple area of Narsinghnāth on the foot of the hill supported by the fact that the artistic design of the four pillars supported the maṇḍapa of the present temple were the Buddhist structures,¹⁷⁷ which suggests that the Buddhist Vihāra as described by Hiuen-Tsang was most probably situated at the same place where now stands the present Mārjārakesārī temple of Narsinghnāth built by King Vaijaladeva, the Chauhān ruler of Patnagarh.

Prior to the construction of the Mārjārakesārī temple of Narsinghnāth in 1413 A.D.¹⁷⁸ an ancient Vaiṣṇava temple existed there which found corroborated by the fact that a number of antiquities belonging to Vaiṣṇavite faith have been discovered from this place¹⁷⁹ and very likely it was built by the Somavamśī Queen Vāsaṭā, the mother of Bālārjuna.¹⁸⁰ She rescued the structures of neglected and decayed Buddhist site and built there the temple of Puruṣottama Nṛsimha, her presiding deity.¹⁸¹
Queen Vāṣaṭā was a great patron of Nṛśimha cult of Vaiṣṇavism and was known to have constructed a number of Viṣṇu temple in South Kośala, and the temple of Narsinghnāth can be ascribed to her as the first builder without any doubt. An image of Viṣṇu having the head of a lion and body of a man with conch shell, disc, gadā and padma in his four hands was most probably installed by her in this temple in 8th century A.D. After the dissolution of this temple, king Vaijaladeva constructed or rennovated the present temple in 15th century A.D.

As mentioned above the pillars of the maṇḍapa of the present temple (Fig. 10) were the old Buddhist structures re-used in this temple are made of brownish-red sand stone and are highly ornamented. C.L. Fabri has written that “no one anywhere in India, carved doorjambs or pillars like those in the 15th century. Style and craftsmanship, shape and decoration belong to a much earlier period”.

This type of arrangement, a maṇḍapa with flat roof supported by internal pillars is common at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh and parasurāmeśvara temple (650 A.D.) at Bhubaneswar. The pillars of Narsinghnāth temple also bear close similarity in shape and style of ornament with the Baitāl Deul of Bhubaneswar which is slightly earlier than the temple of Parasurāmeśvara. Therefore these pillars may be ascribed to the Mannerist period to which Baitāl and Parasurāmeśvara
temples belong i.e. about 600 to 650 A.D. C.L. Fabri has opined that “pillared constructions were a common feature of Buddhist buildings: they occur in practically every monastery—including Ratnagiri ....” The same feature might have been adopted by the artisans of South Kośala while constructing the Buddhist Vihāra of Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li. He further writes that the “Buddhists must have had pillared maṇḍapas before the Hindu architects went to work”.

Another monument, i.e. the Shivji-Mandir of Mahādevpāli in Sambalpur district was visited by C.L. Fabri who described that the vimāna of the temple including the maṇḍapa (Fig.11) had no roof. The maṇḍapa was the newer than the rest portion of the temple. The vimāna and the maṇḍapa were constructed on a high base which was an old foundation. The vimāna of the temple was made of large sized bricks measuring 10"×8"×2" (25×20×5 CM) and one course of stone masonry was alternating with two courses of bricks. The unusual high base and the large sized bricks of this temple led to C.L. Fabri to think that under the floor of the vimāna and maṇḍapa lie the ruins of an earlier Buddhist shrine. The bricks used there were the ancient materials.

Recently, over these old structures of vimāna and maṇḍapa, śikharas have been added and the outer walls are plastered with cement (Fig.12). At present a Śiva liṅga is worshipped along with some Pārśvadevataṣ.
The Kosalesvara temple of Baidyanath is situated near Sonepur town. The temple consists of a Vimāna and Jagamohana which is square in plan. The Vimāna is ruined. The original sanctum, where the liṅga had previously installed is not available today. But its foundation is still visible. The Mukhaśālā or Jagamohana of the temple (Fig. 13) is of unusual style. The building is very massive and heavy stones have been used in the construction of this structure. The stones are set one after another without mortar. These are connected with small iron beams. In some places of the maṇḍapa bricks have also been used. The bricks being very large and hard suggest a very early date. The upper part of the inside walls of the Jagamohana contain sculptures carved out of bricks. The ceiling was supported by four sculptured pillars inside. The peculiar feature of this Jagamohana is the porch like projections on two sides, which are the pillared stone verandahs raised like the pedestal covered with flat roof. The outside of the verandah is attached by a railing below, the upright bars of which contain sculptures. C.L. Fabri opined that this temple was the remains of a Buddhist structure, converted into a Hindu temple in the subsequent period. The verandahs are of later addition by the Hindus. He further described that the temple contains a number of features of the Buddhist shrine such as large-sized bricks, beautifully polished and finely set in mortar, four internal pillars which supported the ceiling and isolated niches, exactly as on Buddhist shrine,
to hold the individual icons. From these features it may be presumed that this temple was the remains of an old Buddhist structure.

Sirpur, a great centre of culture in South Kosāla has been referred to by J.D. Beglar in his report in 1873-74 A.D. Here the excavations had brought to light two Buddhist monasteries, both of which are dedicated to Lord Buddha. These two viharas are located about a kilometre to the south of the Laksmana Temple. These are largely brick built and like the residential houses, have the open courtyards surrounded by the pillared verandahs or cloisters which lead into the cells for the monks.

The first monastery known as Ānandaprabhu Kuṭī Vihāra (Fig.14) was built during the reign of Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna. The structure of this monastery is oblong in plan and like the Ratnagiri Mahāvihāra it has two pillared porches and the front porch is decorated with the figures, most probably of the Yakshas of large dimensions. The door-frame of the gateway is flanked on either side by large and tall dvārapālas. On the right wall of the rear porch a figure of Pāñchika is found. At Ratnagiri also the images of Hāritī and Pāñchika are there on the niches of the walls of the rear porch. But here (Monastery 1 of Ratnagiri) Hāritī is placed on the right wall and Pāñchika is on the left wall. The Mukhamandapa leads through an ornate doorway (Fig.15). The
sculptural and architectural designs of this doorway are strikingly same with the Lakṣmaṇa temple of Sirpur.209

The entrance is through the Mukhamandapa facing the main shrine-chamber or the central cell at the south flank, opposite the gateway in a back wall.210 The Vihāra measures 89 x 62 feet with an annexe 65.5 x 53.5 feet.211 The paved courtyard which is opened to the sky is bordered by eighteen massive stone pillars (Fig.16) which are devoid of sculptures. A number of rooms flanked the court beyond the verandah on all sides. Those were the Bhikshu chambers used by the monks, which measured 80"x77" each.212 The monks were provided one bedded room each.

At the north-western corner of the monastery is the staircase, leading to an upper storey.213 By the side of the staircase is a secret chamber for storing the valuables belonging to this establishment.214 The provision of the staircase indicated that the monastery was a storeyed building.215 Another feature of this monastery is the drainage system. To drain out water from the courtyard covered drain was provided under the verandah and a cell in the western side.

On the eastern side of this Vihāra an annexe is connected (Fig. 17) with the main Vihāra through a door. Dr. D. Mitra216 has written that "edging the eastern wall of the monastery and connected with it by a door is an annexe
accommodating most probably the kitchen, refectory, bath, store-room and hall”. But M.G. Dikshit\textsuperscript{217} opines that the annexe is meant for further accommodation of the monks.

The central cell (Fig. 18) or the shrine chamber (15’\times2” in length), with tall figure of Gaṅgā\textsuperscript{218} flanking the entrance door at the left, contains the colossal image of Buddha in Bhūmiśparsa-Mudrā with his usual attendants Padmapañi and Vajrapañi.

The second monastery, known as ‘Swastika Vihāra’, consisted of a series of rooms arranged at the end of a swastika shaped verandah around the courtyard.\textsuperscript{219} This monastery is square in plan having a small porch. The main image is enshrined in the shrine-chamber, situated at the farthest end beyond the courtyard facing the porch. The other rooms were used as cells for the accommodation of the monks. Here also the provison is there for a secret chamber, a staircase and an annexe. The staircase is in the north-east corner of the monastery. This annexe is connected with the main establishment through a doorway in the eastern end of its northern verandah. Like the first monastery the basement below the brick walls, door-frames, pillars and pavement of the courtyard are made of stone.

The architectural features of these two monasteries such as the plans, provision in them for secret chambers and staircases led to upper storey have their close resemblance with
the Nālandā Mahāvihāra. The art of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī period seems to have been influenced by the Magadhan art.220

Among the recently discovered Buddhist sites at Sirpur221 of South Kośala mention may be made of three early sites excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 2002-03 and 2003-04 seasons. While the first site (Fig. 19) is the earliest, it has not yielded any remarkable images. It is planned and executed in post-Gupta style. The second site (Figs. 20 A and B) which is a bit later than the above mentioned site is smaller in dimension but prominent in the style of construction that has affinity with the third site (Fig. 21). The third site is by far the largest Buddhist site discovered at Sirpur having bigger area, supporting pillars in rows (Figs. 22 A and B) and various images of Buddhist pantheon (Figs. 23 A and B). Buddha is presented here as the central figure (Fig. 23 A). He is in Vajraparyaṅka āsana or Adamantine sitting pose with crossed feet and upturned soles. His right hand is in Bhūmiśparsa Mudrā and left hand is rested on the lap with palm remaining upward. Uṣṇīṣa is found on his head. His ear lobes are elongated. He has a halo like structure over his head.

At Malhar, a Buddhist temple and a chaitya have brought to light through excavation. Both these monuments belong to the Vajrayāna sect of Buddhism.222
The Buddhist temple having a brick platform at the centre has been discovered in trench No.4. An image of god Hevajra was installed on that platform. The southern side of the platform was closed with a wall but on the other three sides, there was a pradakṣiṇapatha. Small rooms were also made on three sides. Those were the residential rooms of the monks. The structure of this temple has a massive stone plinth and bricks wall and rammed floor.  

The structure in trench No. 6 indicates that it was a chaitya having its entrance towards the east. On both sides of the entrance two platforms were there, one on each side. Another exit door was there on the north side of the chaitya. Infront of that door there stood a Buddhist stūpa, which is already destroyed along with the main building. The chaitya hall has hard rammed floor (60 metre thickness). The western end of the chaitya was semi-circular in shape, at the centre of which a mud platform was existed, on which the image of Vajrapāṇi was installed (now preserved at the Museum of Malhar). On the southern side of the chaitya the traces of vihāras have been found. From this trench, two brick-pits discovered, probably used for keeping ashes.  

SCULPTURES

The architectural structures gain more splendour and artistry by the addition of sculptures to them. These also portray the process of man’s interaction with his environment.
Sculptures may be constructive, decorative and representative. Constructive sculptures consist of pillars, pilasters, ceilings, podium moulding etc. usually found in the temples. Decorative sculptures include symbolic motifs like Kirtimukhas, Vyālas, Ganas, Gajasārdulas, Nāgas and Nāgis, climbing creepers, nice lotuses, beautiful floral designs and so on. Representative sculptures are found either in naturalistic manifestation, symbolically portraying hills, rivers, forest and villages or in conventional ways through secular and religious forms. The secular sculptures include the delightful indolent maidens or Alasakanyā, Nartakīs, lovely dryads, sylvan nymphs, Mithunās or amorous couples, Śālabhaṇḍikās and so on. Religious sculptures include the cult icons, their consorts, sons and attendants, the composite forms of deities, minor gods and goddesses, Navagrahas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Dikpaḷas, Vidyādharas and traditional and legendary scenes belonging to Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śaktism, Buddhism and other minor religious cults. Basically they are depicted according to the norms of iconography as known from different Purāṇas and Śilpaśāstras. These religious sculptures are found in both figures in round and in relief which adorn the different components of the religious shrines.

Buddhist sculptures belonging to the early centuries of the Christian Era have not come to lime-light. This period is regarded as an obscure period in the history of Buddhism, primarily because idol worship was not in vogue in Ṣīnayāṇa.
Further during this period Orissa was probably ruled by the Śaka-Muruṇḍa. The King Guhaśīva of Kaliṅga was in all probability a vassal under the Muruṇḍa king of Pātaliputra.\footnote{232}
The presence of an alien dynasty did not favour the rise and growth of religious orders of the natives, for which we hardly get archaeological remains of the religious activities of this period.

Two life-size images of Buddha (Figure in Round) have been discovered at Gaṇiāpāli in Bargarh district. One among them is the Buddha in the pose of First Sermon at Sāranāth (Fig.24) and the other is the Muchalinda Buddha (Fig.25). These two images, which were in a disgraceful condition, have been mended by the local artisans. These artisans have smothered the images to a great deal with fanciful cement addition and also have wrongly restored the hands. They have also replaced the lotus seat of the Buddha in First Sermon into serpent coils in order to make it similar with that of Muchalinda Buddha.

Buddha in the pose of First Sermon at Sāranāth is the earliest one so far known in Orissa. The image is built of a chlorite stone. The base of the image is decorated with the wheel of teaching, flanked on two sides by two deer symbolising the Deer Park, in which Buddha after getting enlightenment preached his first sermon. Here the Buddha is seated in Padmāsana, with two hands resting on the lap. But the oval halo and moustache do not appear to be original and
genuine. The body, the shoulders and the arms as well as the trunk are excellently proportioned.

The Muchalinda Buddha is built of a chlorite stone. Here, the Buddha is seated in Padmāsana on the coils of a serpent and his head is canopied by the seven hoods of the serpent. The coils and hoods of the benevolent serpent king Muchalinda are genuine. The Uṣṇīśa (top knot hair) of Buddha is badly repaired and the rest of the image shows a fair proportion of its original condition.

From artistic point of view, both the images clearly display classical simplicity, the characteristic of the art of the Gupta period. Therefore Dr. S. C. Panda assigned a date in the later half of the 4th century A.D. and the first half of the 5th century A.D. is highly resonable for these images.

Apart from the life-size images of Buddha, a number of articles having antiquarian value have been discovered at Gaṇīpālī. Mention may be made of a small stone plaque of reddish chlorite depicting the images of Hāritī and Pāṇchika (Fig. 26) of a period not later than 5th century A.D. Here Pāṇchika is seated in Sukhāsana having Hāritī seated on his left thigh, the left arm is on the shoulder around the neck of Hāritī. He wears a turban (not clearly visible), necklace and kuṇḍalas. He is holding something in his right arm, which is beyond recognition. The head of Hāritī is broken.
but from her physiognomical features she appears to be a young lady with shapely legs, broad hips and prominent bosoms. Such images are widely found in the Buddhist establishments.

Sirpur, a small village on the bank of Mahānadi in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh state was a city of considerable importance from the rule of the Śaravapuriyās upto the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi period. Pāṇḍava ruler Mahāśīvagupta Bāḷārjuna had done much to develop his capital city Śrīpura during his long reign of 57 years. His reign from the middle of 8th century A.D. was a golden period in the art history of South Kośāla. Many cities on both the banks of the river Mahānadi became the centres of creative activity. The reign of Bāḷārjuna witnessed the revival of Mahāyāna Buddhism in this region. M.G. Dikshit has written that the “spread of Buddhism can be attributed to royal patronage, and nearly all the relics of Buddhism in Mahākośāla belong to Pāṇḍava regime”. Along with the two Buddhist monasteries many stone and bronze images have been discovered from Sirpur. The art of casting bronze images seems to have been practised at Sirpur like Nālandā.

Most of the stone images of Buddha of Sirpur and Rajim are in Bhūmiśparsa Mudrā or Earth-touching posture. This pose is based on the legend that Gautama, after taking milk from a village girl named Sujātā, sat in deep meditation, determined not to rise till the attainment of perfect enlightenment or bodhi. At that time Māra, the lord of the
World of Passions violently attacked him with his hosts. Gautama remained unmoved on his seat, calling up the Earth (touching the Earth) to bear witness to his right to that seat. On the reply of Earth Māra silently left that place.\textsuperscript{237} We found two such Buddha images in Earth-touching posture in the courtyard of Gandheśvara Temple of Sirpur. The first one (Fig.27) is seated in Padmāsana (crossed legs) in Vajraparyanka attitude with its right hand touching the Earth and left hand resting on the lap. It reveals a great success in plastic art with broad shoulders, long and round hands, smooth chest and top knot hair on its head. The face is radiated with spiritual ecstasy with its eyes remaining downwards. The oval halo covered the head on which an inscription is there. From epigraphical consideration the image is of 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.\textsuperscript{238} This image is made of chlorite stone.

The second image (Fig. 28) is made of sand stone of reddish-brown colour. Most of the images discovered from Sirpur were made of this type of stone which were available in large quantity on the opposite bank of the river Mahānadi at the villages called Suhabela and Pureina.\textsuperscript{239} The height of this image is 4' and 4'' and width is 3' and 4''. Here the Buddha is seated in Padmāsana with Bhūmiśparsa Mudrā. Both the legs crossed each other with the feet remaining upward. The right hand is touching the earth and the left is on the lap. The image contains a broad chest, wide shoulders, sharp nose and half closed eyes looking downwards with deep spiritual expression.
Usnīśa or top knot hair is on the head having a Prabhāmaṇḍala (halo). The icon is supported by a sculptured stone slab from the back. The date assigned to this image was 8th century A.D.²⁴⁰

Two colossal images of Buddha have been found in the shrine chambers of the Buddhist vihāras of Sirpur i.e.Ānandaprabhu Kuṭī Vihāra and Swastika Vihāra. The images are made of soft sand stone which wears easily and cannot retain the original sharpness of the carving. These two colossal images of these vihāras are noteworthy as they are built up from separate pieces of stones placed one upon another which is "an unusual feature in Indian sculpture".²⁴¹ Inspite of that these images show a remarkable sense of proportion and grace among the plastic art of Sirpur.

The image of Buddha (Fig. 29) inside the garbhagriha of the Chaitya of the main temple (Ānandaprabhu Kuṭī Vihāra) is seated on a throne on an altar, the base (Fig. 30) of which is decorated with the sculptures of three lions (the middle one flanked by two others on two sides).²⁴² On the right side of the Buddha we found the standing image of Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi²⁴³ and on the left side the image of Vajrapāṇi²⁴⁴ was there, which is not available at present. Here the Buddha is seated in Padmāsana with the Earth-touching posture. Its face is round with fleshy chin and deep spiritual expression. The body, the shoulders and the arms are
excellently proportioned. Uṣṇīṣa is on the head but without aura. The image is 6’6” (six feet six inches) in height. Among all the images of Sirpur probably this is the biggest one.245

The image of another colossal Buddha is found inside the shrine-chamber of Swastika Vihāra. Here the Buddha is seated on a lotus throne on an altar, the base of which is decorated with two lion motifs.246 Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi is standing on the right side but no attendant is there on the left side. Buddha is seated in Bhūmisparsa Mudrā who possessed almost the same iconographical features like that of the Buddha image of Ānandaprabhu Kuṭī Vihāra. But the head of this image is surrounded by an oval shaped halo.

A green chlorite schist image of Mañjuśrī247 has been discovered from Sirpur. Mañjuśrī is seated on a lotus seat in Lalitāsana or Sukhāsana with his hands in Vyākhyaṇa Mudrā. The body of this icon is bedecked with ornaments like necklaces, armlets, bracelets, karṇakuṇḍalas and yajñopabita (sacred thread). Head is covered by a halo.

We also find some images belonging to the Buddhist faith preserved in Sirpur Museum.248 Among them two are made of reddish sand stone. The first one (Fig.31) is the Buddha seated in Earth-touching posture and Vajrapayaṅka attitude. The right hand has touched the earth and the left hand rested on the lap with palm remaining upwards. The head of the image is
partly damaged. The back of the image is supported by a sculptured stone slab.

The second image (Fig. 32) is the Muchalinda Buddha seated in Dhyāna Mudrā with a canopy of seven hoods of a serpent on its head. The coil of the serpent king Muchalinda is beautifully carved on the back side of the image. Buddha is seated in Vajraparyāṅka pose. Both the hands of the image are rested on the lap with the palms remaining upwards one upon another. Usnīṣa is there on the head. The face is radiated with spiritual calmness with its eyes remaining half-closed and looking downwards. The body is excellently proportioned.

Another Buddha image (Fig. 33) is available in Sirpur Museum which is made of soft sand stone. The image is seated in Dhyāna Mudra with his usual attendants on both the sides. The images are so worn out that they do not retain the original sharpness of the carving. All the above images of the Sirpur Museum belong to the Mahāyānic period.

The recent excavations conducted at Sirpur by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have unearthed a rare 6th century Buddha statue along with many other statues. This statue made of basalt is in Padmāsana and is 1.1 metre in height and 1 metre in width.
Some images of Buddha have been preserved in Raipur Museum (Mahanta Ghāsidas Smāraka Sangrahālaya). The first one (Fig. 34) is placed in front of the Museum building on a high pedestal. Here the Buddha is seated on a lotus throne in Bhūmiśparsa Mudra, having the two feet locked, with the soles turned upwards (Padmāsana). The right palm turned inwards with the outstretched finger tips touching the ground. The left hand is on the lap with the palm remaining upwards. The image is headless. The second image (Fig. 35) is seated in Padmāsana in Vyākhyaāna Mudrā or Dharmachakra Pravartana Mudrā. The body is well proportioned. The third image is probably Mañjuśrī (Fig. 36) seated on a lotus throne. The right palm is rested on the knee and the left hand carries a lotus stalk with a bud on which the Prajñāpāramitā manuscript has been placed. The body is bedecked with ornaments like the kundalas and the necklaces. Sacred thread or Yajñopabita is there on the body.

At Rajim (on the confluence of the rivers Pairi with the Mahānādī in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh state) two images of Buddha are available. Among them one is a colossal image of Buddha (Fig. 37) found in front of the Rājivalochana Temple. The image is made of bluish chlorite stone. Here the Buddha is sitting in Vajraparyaṅkāsana on a lotus throne in Earth-touching posture. The right palm remains inwards and the fingers touch the earth. The left palm rested on the lap. The body is well proportioned with its wide shoulders and broad chest. Top knot hair is found on the head. But the
head is without aura. The face expresses spiritual calmness and serenity.

Another is the image of Muchalinda Buddha (Fig. 38) available inside the campus of Soneśvara Śiva Temple of Rajim. Here the Buddha sits on a throne of serpent coils on an altar. On the base of the altar the Wheel of Law (Dharma Chakra) is engraved which is flanked on a bull from the right side and a lion from the left. Buddha is seated with crossed legs with the heels turned upwards. The two hands of the image are placed palm upon palm on the lap. The facial appearance expressed deep concentration. In the background is seen a huge snake with a canopy of seven hoods over the head. The image of Buddha is flanked on both sides by two attendants. This image is also made of bluish chlorite stone.

Baud, in Western Orissa was a great centre of Mahāyānic and Tāntric Buddhism in the medieval period. Here we found one colossal image of Buddha (Fig. 39), seated on a lotus throne in Earth-touching posture in Vajraparyanka pose. The legs are crossed over each other with the heels facing upwards. It has a high protuberance on its head. But the plastic treatment is very crude. This image is of a later date than 8th century A.D.

Rāṇīpur–Jhariāl, which is a religious complex possessing clear cut indications of the influences of various religions of India, possesses a few antiquities of Buddhist
tradition. Mention may be made of two sculptures (Figs. 40 and 41) may be Buddha or Buddhist Siddhāchāryas (however some historians opine them as Śaivāchāryas).

BRONZE SCULPTURES

The art of metal casting began from the Indus valley civilisation. The first example is the dancing girl from Mahenjodāro of the third millenium B.C. But metal images are not available till first century A.D., when small figures appear in Taxila in the North and Amarāvati in the South. In first century A.D. a great centre of Indian art sprang up at Mathurā, which found its fulfilment in the Gupta age (4th–5th century A.D.). The Indian sculpture made of both stone and metal reached its perfect form during this period. Bronze images of the Gupta period rank with the best stone sculpture like the life-sized Buddha from Sultanganj in Bihar (5th century A.D.), now in the Birmingham Art Gallery. The bronze images of the Pāla period (9th–12th century A.D.) are significant for their elegance form and richness of spiritual expression. The two main centres of Pāla school of Bronze work were at Nālandā and Kurkihār, both in Bihar. As we have already mentioned earlier that the Gupta art tradition came to Sirpur from Bihar during the Somavamsi period, the art of metal casting of that place also influenced the metal art of Sirpur. Of course the artists of Sirpur expressed their individuality in this field.

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A large number of bronze images have been discovered from Sirpur. Some of them are now preserved in the Museums of Raipur, New Delhi, Nagpur and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai. The best pieces among them are the images of Mañjuśrī, Tārā, Vajrapāṇī, Avalokiteśvar and Padmapāṇi. The images are decorated with silver plaited eyes, copper plaited lips and appeared life-like. Ornaments used by these icons are also studded with different kinds of stones.

Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is considered as one of the greatest Bodhisattva by the Mahāyānists. They believe that his worship can confer upon them wisdom, intelligence and eloquence. So they conceived him in various forms and worshipped him. In his simplest form he carries the sword in his right hand and the Prajñāpāramitā manuscript in his left hand. One bronze image of Mañjuśrī, now preserved in Raipur Museum is seated in Lalitāsana on a lotus throne. His right leg is on the Pāda-pīṭha and left is on the lotus throne. The right hand is in Varada Mudrā and left hand carries a lotus stalk, the top portion of which has been broken so that it is devoid of Prajñāpāramitā manuscript. His ears are decorated with the kuṇḍalas and eyes are silver plaited. Necklaces are studded with green and red stones. The armlets, sacred threads and uṣṇīṣa are also adorned with stones.

Vajrapāṇī is the spiritual son of the Dhyānī Buddha Akṣobhya, the progenitor of Vajra family. Vajrapāṇi is
represented in standing or sitting posture and who usually carries a lotus on which is placed the family symbol Vajra.\textsuperscript{269} Among the bronze images of Sirpur another excellent piece of art is the image of Vajrapāṇi,\textsuperscript{270} which is seated on a lotus throne (on a plain foot-stool or Pāda-piṭha) in Lalitāsana. The foot of the right leg is on the Pāda-piṭha and left leg is on the lotus throne. The right hand is in Varada Mudrā and the left hand has carried a lotus stalk with its leaves and bud. Vajra is placed on the top of the bud. His locked hairs rested on the shoulders. The image wears a dhoti or cloth but no uttariya or upper-garment. The body is bedecked with ornaments like necklaces, armlets, bracelets, anklets and girdles. The sacred thread is on the body which is studded with stones. A round aura is on the head with its sculptured edge. On the top of the aura parasole-stick or chhatra-yasti is there and the back side has been inscribed with the Buddhist Vijamantra “Ye dharma hetu Prabha hetu.....”\textsuperscript{271} The name of the artist ‘Dronāditya’ is also engraved on the front of the foot-stool.\textsuperscript{272}

Maitreya is the future Buddha. He is supposed to be passing the life of a Bodhisattva in the Tusita heaven, preparatory to his descent to this earth in human form.\textsuperscript{273} He is the only Bodhisattva who is worshipped both by the Hinayānists and the Mahāyānists. The Sādhanāmālā gives the description of Maitreya as a principal divinity but he is represented as minor god in several other places.\textsuperscript{274} As a minor god, he generally carries the chowrie (tail of a Yak) in the right hand and the
Nāgēśvara flower in the left. One bronze image of Maitreya is found at Baud which belonged to 9th century A.D. This image is seated in Lalitāsana holding a nectar vase in the right hand and a bunch of Nāgēśvara flower in the left.

Avalokiteśvara is famous in the Mahāyāna pantheon as a Boddhisattva emanating from the Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha and his Śakti Pāndara. He is said to have ruled during the period between the disappearance of mortal Buddha Śākyamuni and the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya. He has fifteen forms as described in Sādhanāmālā. Lokesvara is one among them. One bronze image of Lokesvara is found at Baud which is seated on a lotus throne in Lalitāsana. It has four hands. In the upper right hand it carries a conch shell and in the upper left hand a lotus. The lower right hand is in Varada Mudrā and the lower left is placed on the throne. This type of Lokesvara is very rarely found.

The art activities in South Kośala received a jolt due to the withdrawal of royal patronage by the later Somavamśi rulers and the careless handling of the territorial divisions by the Kalachūris and their feudatories. A slow process of decline started and a decadent style continued till the rule of the Chauhāns in South Kośala.
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