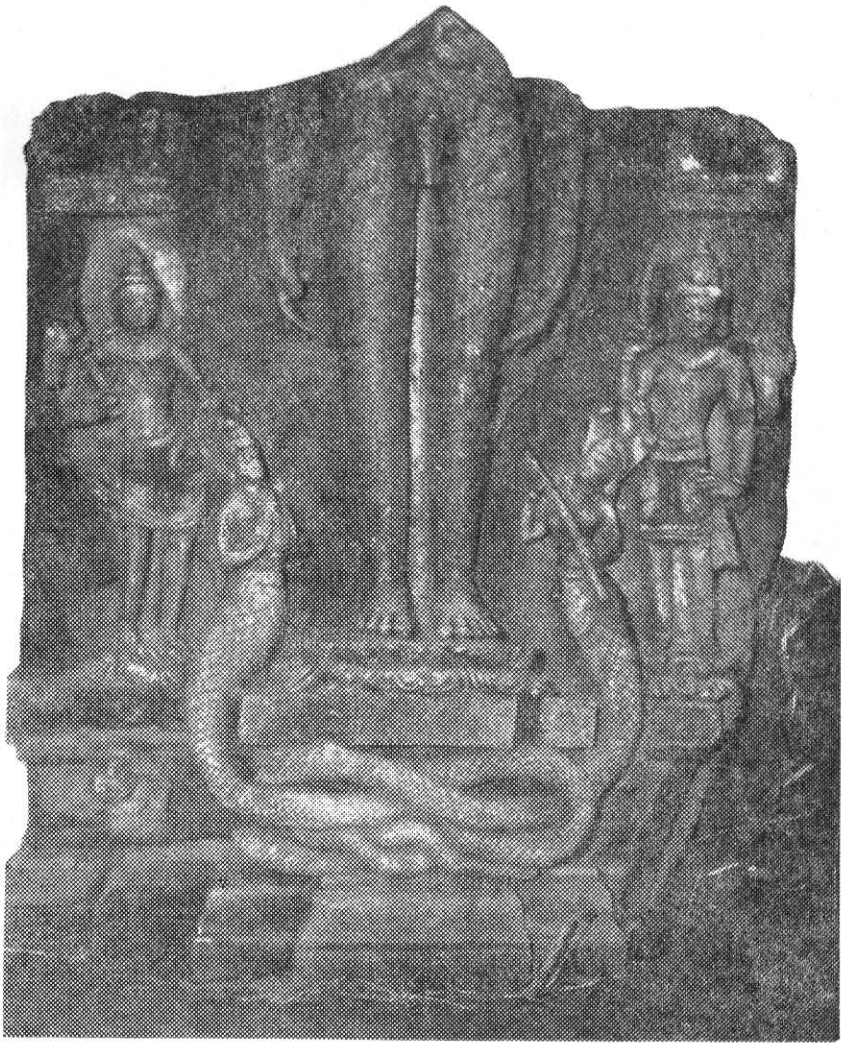


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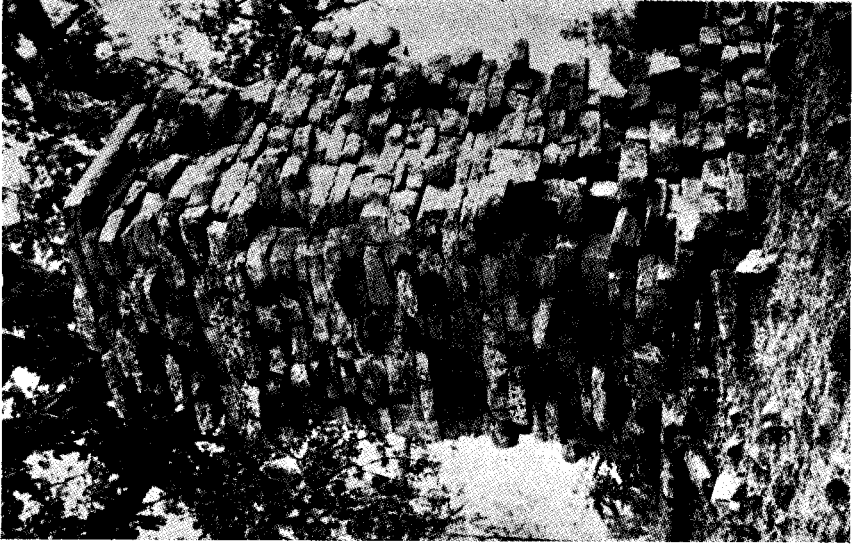
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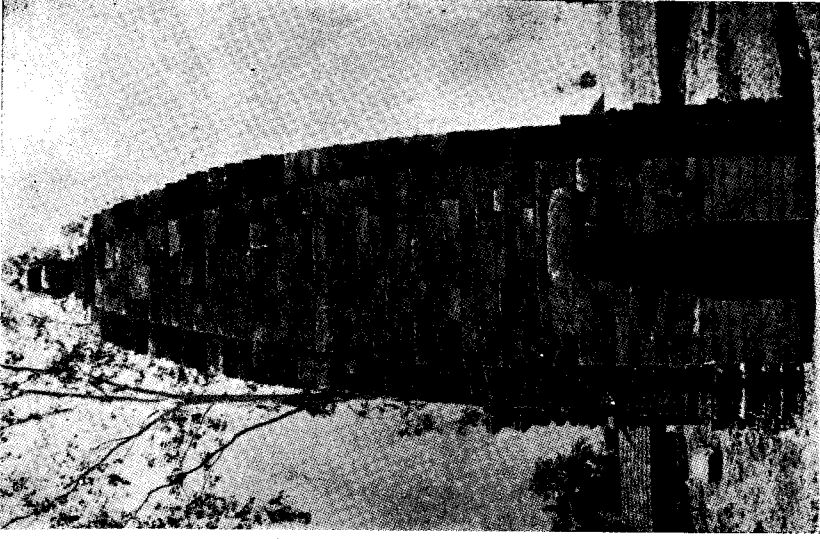
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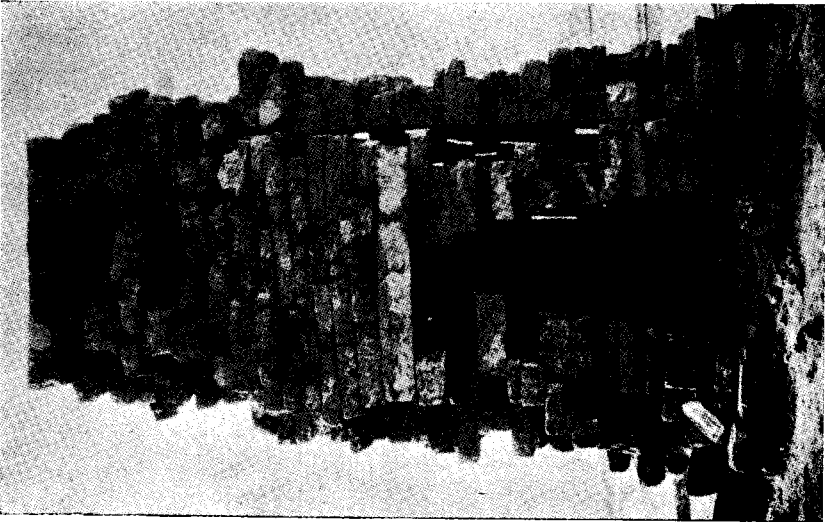
*Plate 3  
Temple No. 2 before Conservation*



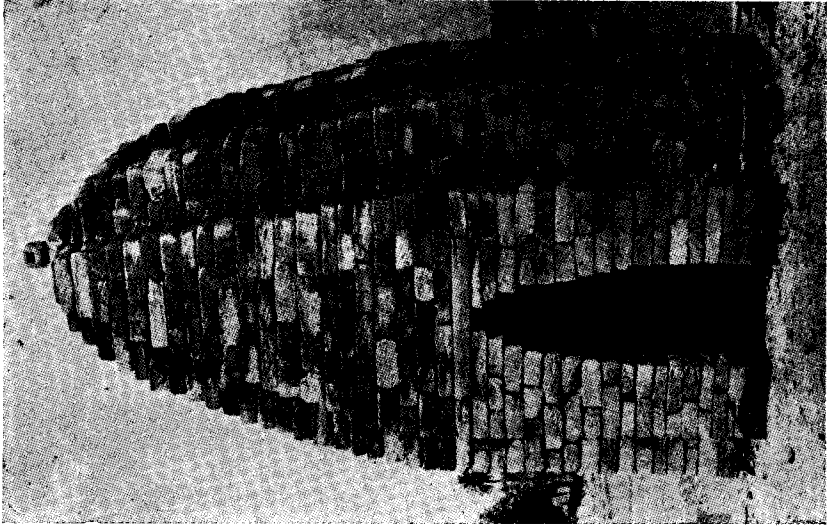
*Plate 2  
Temple No. 1 before Conservation*



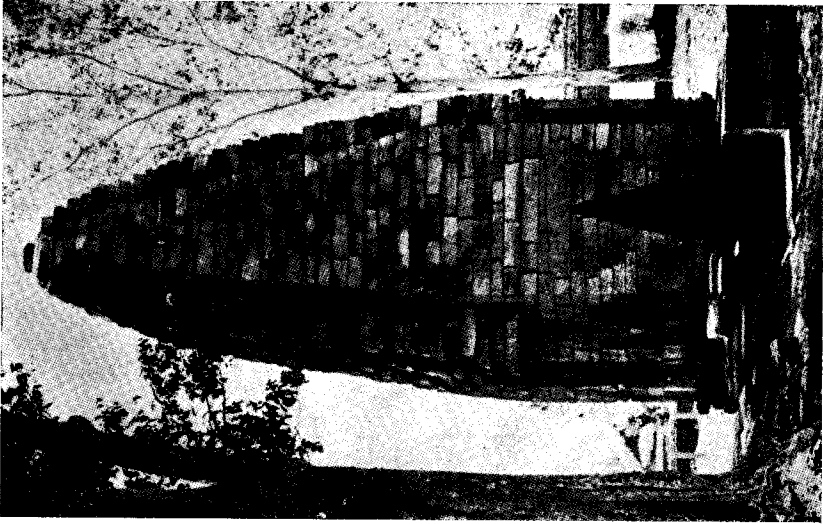
*Plate 5*  
*Temple No. 1 after Conservation*



*Plate 4*  
*Temple No. 3 before Conservation*



*Plate 7*  
*Temple No. 3 after Conservation*



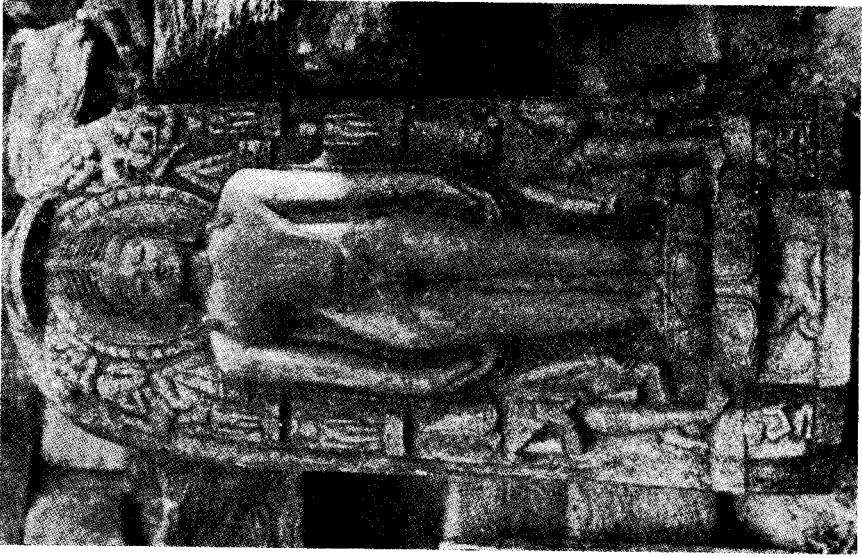
*Plate 6*  
*Temple No. 2 after Conservation*



*Plate 9  
Colossal Image of a Jina (No. 2) Early 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 8  
Ambika (No. 1) Circa 9th Century A.D.*

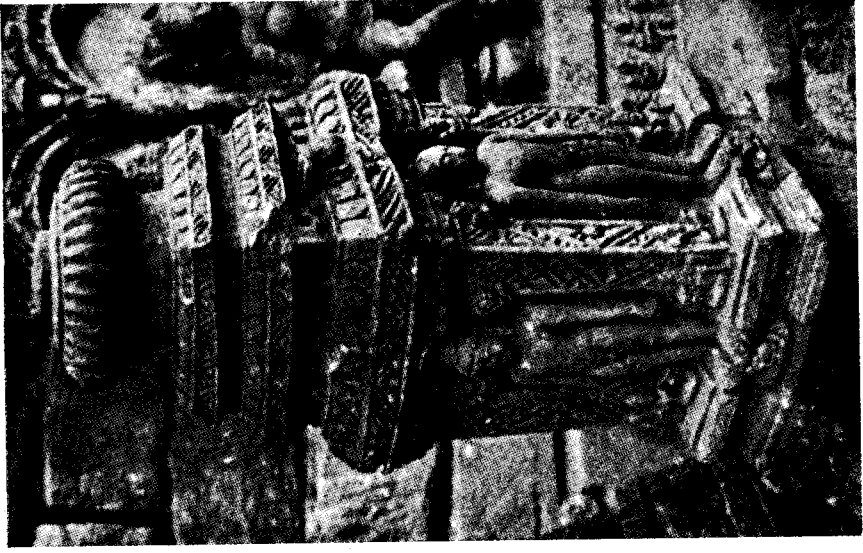


*Plate 11*  
*Rsabhanatha (No. 5) Circa 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 10*  
*Jain Tutelary Couple (No. 3)*  
*Circa 8th/9th Century A.D.*

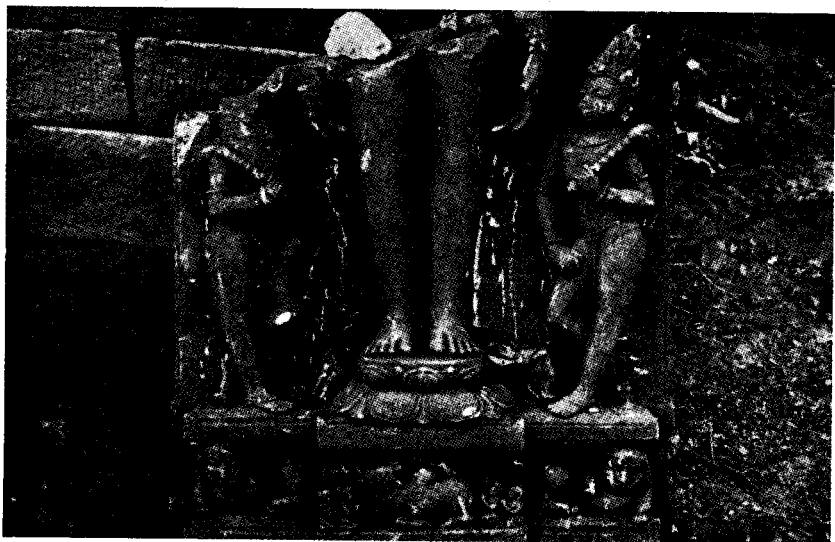




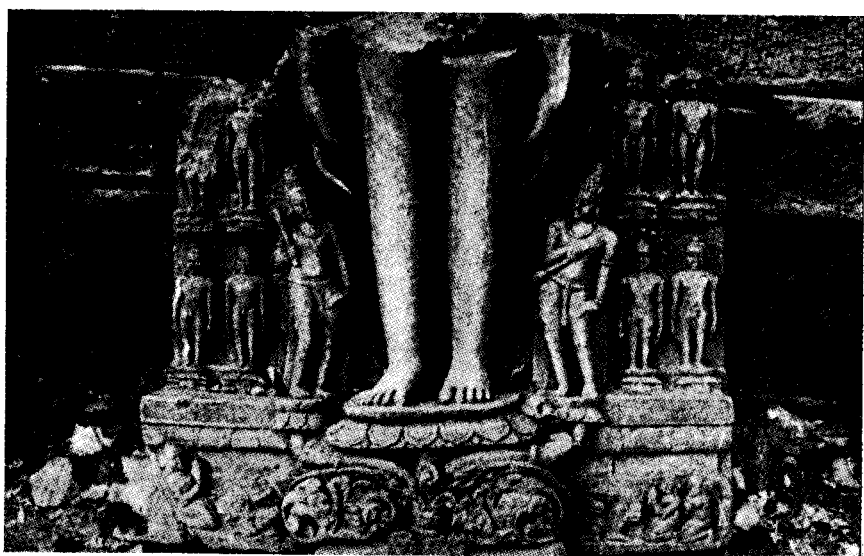
*Plate 13*  
*Miniature Caturmukha Shrine (No. 9)*  
*Circa 9th Century A.D.*



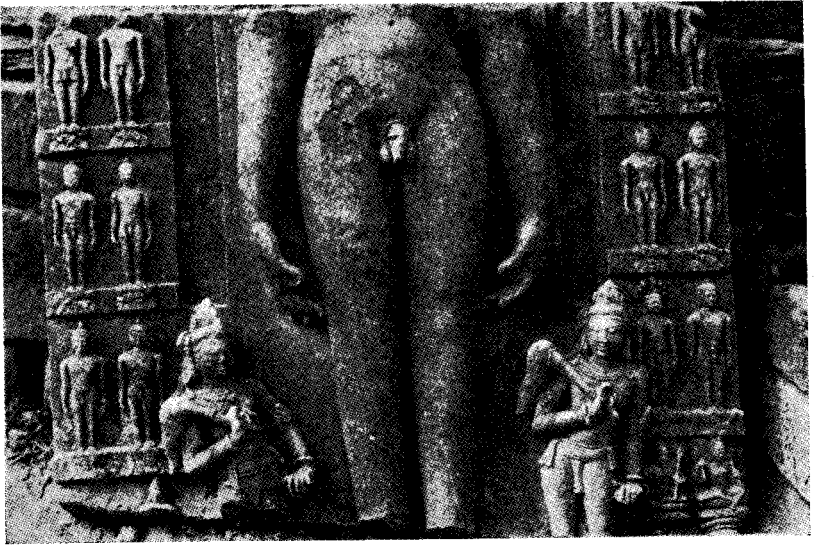
*Plate 12*  
*Jain Tutelary Couple (No. 8)*  
*Circa 8th/9th Century A.D.*



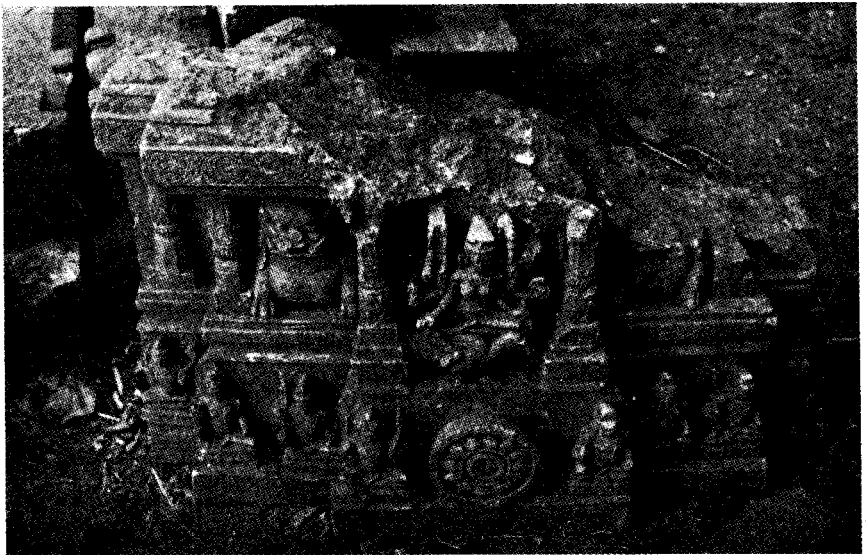
*Plate 14*  
*Rsabhanatha, Fragmentary Lower Part (No. 17)*  
*Circa 10th/11th Century A.D.*



*Plate 15*  
*Lower Portion of a Tirthankara Image (No. 19)*  
*Circa 11th/12th Century A.D.*



*Plate 16*  
*Middle Portion of a Jina Image (No. 20)*  
*Circa 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 17*  
*Pedestal of a Jina Image (No. 22)*  
*Circa 9th/10th Century A.D.*



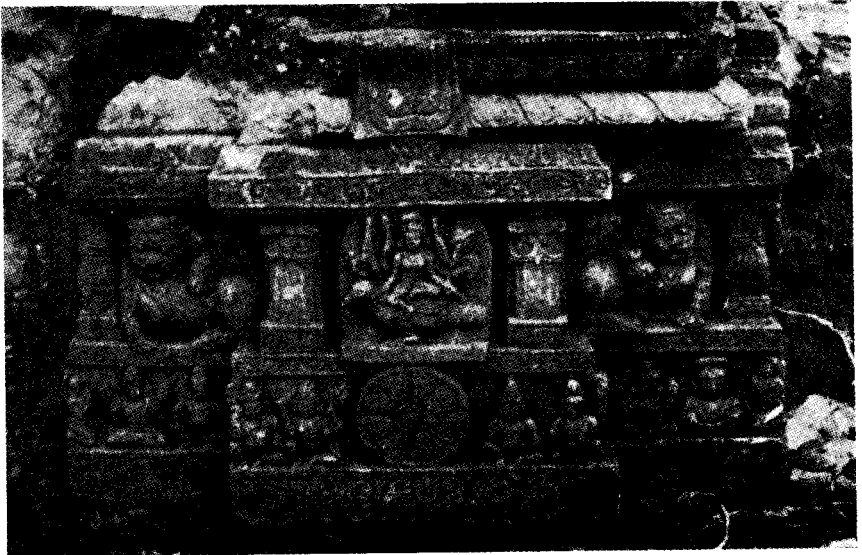
*Plate 19*  
*Candraprabha. Fragmentary Lower Part (No. 23)*  
*Circa 11th Century A.D.*



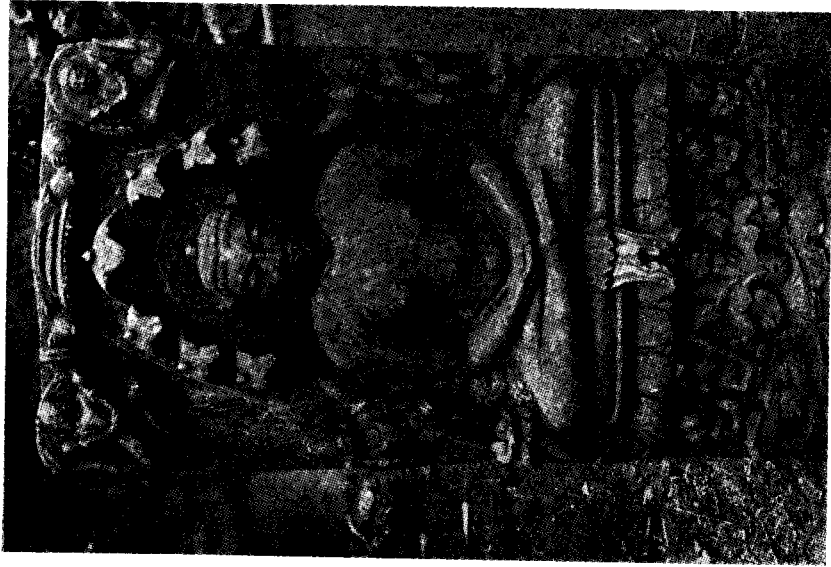
*Plate 18*  
*Prajnapati (?). Detail from a Pedestal*  
*of a Jina Image (No. 22)*



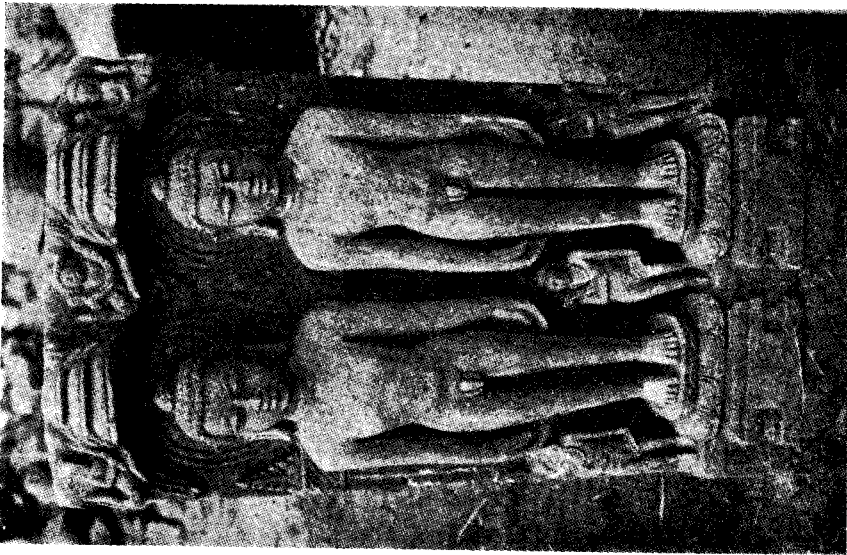
*Plate 20*  
*Suvidhinatha. Fragmentary Lower Part (No. 24)*  
*Circa 11th Century A.D.*



*Plate 21*  
*Pedestal of a Seated Jina Image (No. 26)*  
*Circa 9th|10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 23*  
*Seated Parsvanatha (No. 30)*  
*Circa 7th|8th Century A.D.*



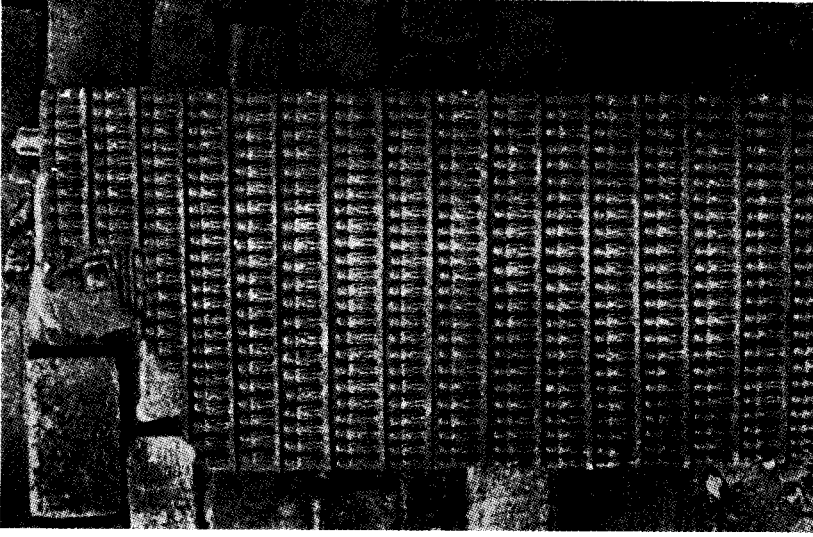
*Plate 22*  
*Dvi-Tirthika Image (No. 29)*  
*Circa 8th|9th Century A.D.*



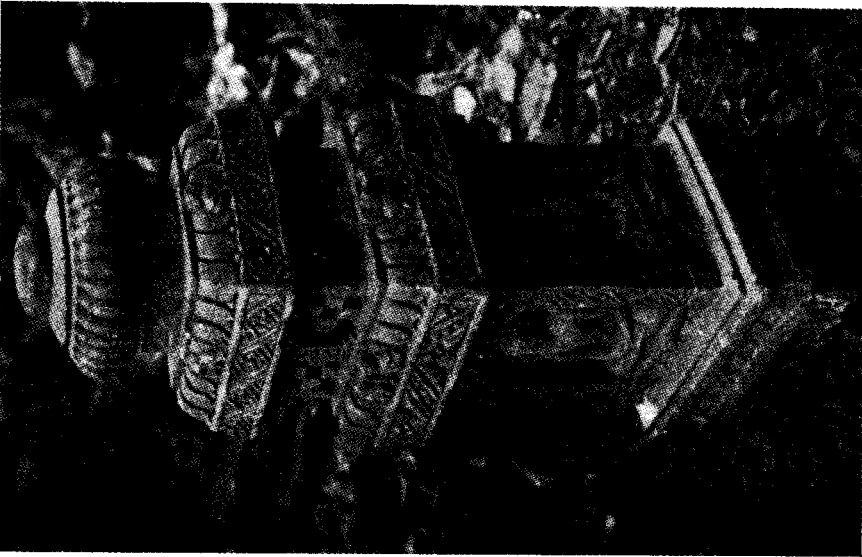
*Plate 25*  
*Miniature Caturmukha Shrine (No. 33)*  
*Circa 9th Century A.D.*



*Plate 24*  
*Pancatirhika of Mahavira (No. 32)*  
*Circa 8th/9th Century A.D.*



*Plate 27*  
*Stele with Seated Rsabhanatha (No. 34)*  
*Circa 9th-10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 26*  
*Miniature Caturmukha Shrine (No. 33)*  
*from different angle*



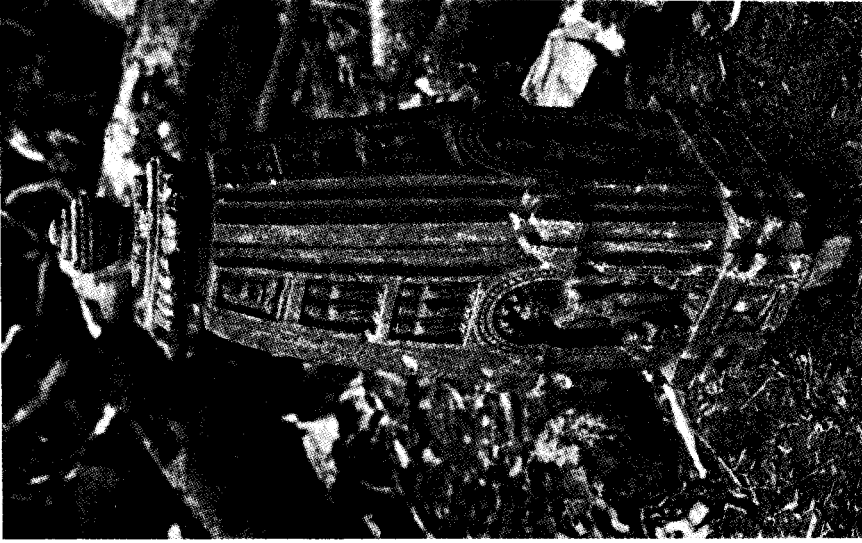


Plate 29  
*Miniature Caturmukha Shrine (No. 36)  
from different angle*



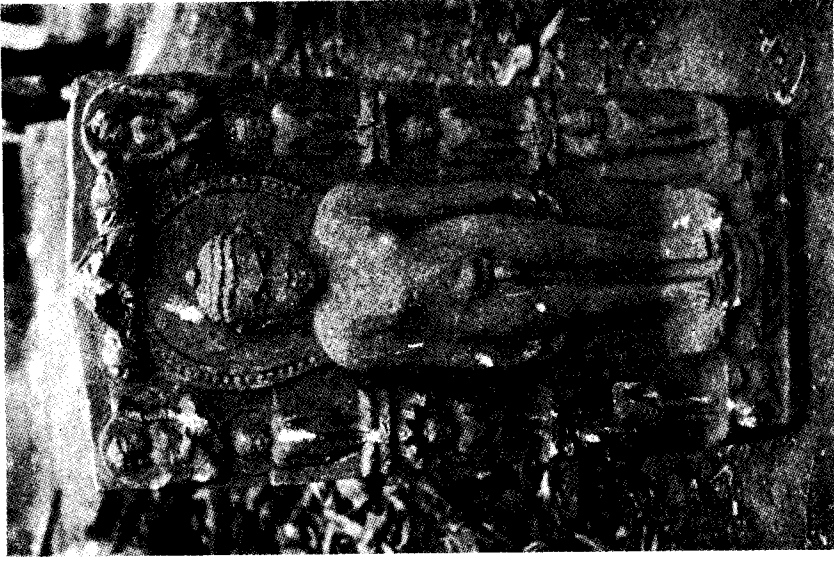
Plate 28  
*Miniature Caturmukha Shrine (No. 36)  
Circa 10th/11th Century A.D.*



*Plate 31*  
*Rasabhanatha (No. 38)*  
*Circa 7th|8th Century A.D.*



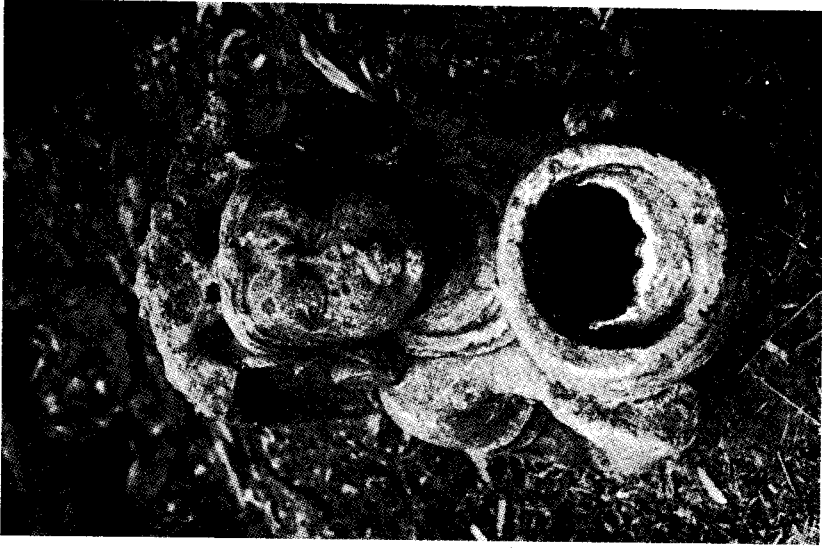
*Plate 30*  
*Rasabhanatha (No. 37)*  
*Circa 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 33*  
*Chandraprabha (No. 40)*  
*Circa 7th|8th Century A.D.*



*Plate 32*  
*Ambika (No. 39)*  
*Circa 7th|8th Century A.D.*



*Plate 35*  
*Gargoyle (No. 43)*  
*Circa 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 34*  
*Parsvanatha (No. 41)*  
*Circa 9th Century A.D.*



*Plate 36*  
*Lower Part of an Parsvanatha Image (No. 44)*  
*Circa 9th Century A.D.*



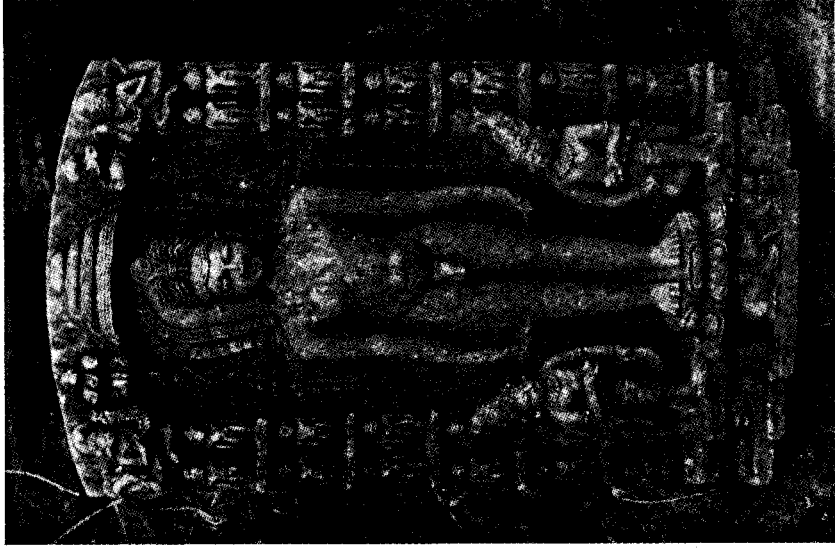
*Plate 37*  
*Naga Couple. Detail from the above Image*



*Plate 39*  
*Rsabhanatha with 24 Jinas (No. 46)*  
*Circa 10/11th Century A.D.*



*Plate 38*  
*Santinatha (No. 45)*  
*Circa 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 41*  
*Rsabhanatha with 24 Jinas (No. 48)*  
*Circa 10th/11th Century A.D.*



*Plate 40*  
*Rsabhanatha with 8 Jyotiska-devas (No. 47)*  
*Circa 10th Century A.D.*



*Plate 1 Panoramic View of the Reconstructed Temples and Mound at Pakbirra*



Of all ancient Jain sites in West Bengal, Pakbirra, in the Purulia District, seems to have been the most prolific in shrines and images. Pakbirra (lat. 23°10' N. ; long. 86°41' E) is a fair sized village<sup>1</sup> situated about 56 kilometres south-east of Purulia town under the Pancha Police Station and in close proximity to the Western border of the Bankura District. The village can be approached among other alternative routes<sup>2</sup> along Purulia-Huda metal road to Bankura *mod* and there from towards Pancha again by motorable road. A sinuous *kutch*a path which divaricates from the metal road only 1.5 kilometre west of Pancha town leads to the village Pakbirra and its site.

The earliest description of the site is provided by Lieut. R. C. Bevan, who in a letter dated 11th March, 1865, addressed to the Asiatic Society of Bengal,<sup>3</sup> passingly reported the antiquarian remains of Pakbirra. Lieut. Bevan found the remains of several temples, three of which were then standing, *albiet* in a very dilapidated condition. Two of these were constructed of stone, and one of brick, all three of about 25 feet in height. From the fallen heaps of stones on all sides, some of which bore "the trace of the carver", he presumed that "formerly, some eight or ten buildings in all must have been erected on the spot". In a small shed close to the temples he noticed a colossal naked male figure, of which he gave a fairly detailed description, and four other "separate figures of apparantly the same person, only much smaller". He also found "the model of a small temple" having a standing figure in each side, and "a few other fragments of stone figures scattered about, chiefly of small size".

J. D. Beglar, Assistant, Archaeological Survey, visited Pakbirra in 1873 and he has left us a graphic account of the site. His report<sup>4</sup> is quoted here *in extenso* in view of the fact that, apart from being one of the earliest, the description is the fullest of all existing ones :

"Twenty miles north-east of Bara Bazar, and a mile east of Poncha is the small village of Pakbirra ; here are numerous temples and sculp-

<sup>1</sup> The village Pakbirra (J. L. No. 605, New-62) covers an area of 745.80 acres and has a population of 1,142 according to 1961 and 1971 census. Cf., *Census of India, West Bengal, Administrative Atlas*, Series 22, Part IX-A, Delhi, 1972, p. 35 under Purulia District ; *Census 1961 : West Bengal ; District Census Handbook, Purulia*, Calcutta, n. d., pp. 386-387. The village is comprised of the following six *padas*—Raidih, Purandih, Thakurthan, Mudipada, Goradih, and Mahatopada.

<sup>2</sup> For alternative routes see Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, "Pakbirra—A Lost Jaina Centre of Purulia", *Jain Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Calcutta, July, 1977, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, No. IV, Calcutta, April 1965, pp. 66-69.

<sup>4</sup> J. D. Beglar, *Report of a Tour through Bengal Provinces in 1872-73*, Archaeological Survey of India, Vol VIII, Varanasi, 1966 (reprint), pp. 193-195.

tures, principally Jain ; the principal ones are collected within a long shed, which occupies the site of a large temple, of which the foundations still exist ; the principal object of attention here is a colossal naked figure, with the lotus as symbol on the pedestal ; the figure is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high ; near it, and along the walls, are ranged numerous others, two small ones with the bull symbol, one smaller with the lotus, a votive chaitya sculptured on four sides, the symbols of the figures on the four sides being a lion, an antelope, a bull, and what appears to be a lamb ; over each principal human figure on the chaitya is represented a duck or a goose, holding a garland ; there is, beside this, a second votive chaitya, and there may be others within that I could not see ; the temple, which enshrined the colossal figure, must have faced west ; it was very large, containing the full complement of preliminary chambers and hall in front of the sanctum.

The colossal figure has a natural crack or flaw diagonally across the thighs and feet, said to have been inflicted by the swords of Muhammadan conquerors of the country when it was first taken. Close to it, I excavated a mound of ruins ; the yield consisted of five Buddhist sculptures of a late age ; the most remarkable of these is a male and a female figure seated under a tree which may be meant for a date-palm ; it has been photographed ; the temple where these statues were, was of brick ; it faced north ; it had a mandapa in front, and must, therefore, have been of a larger size than any that are now standing there.

A large brick temple, the only one now standing, of brick ; faces east, and has its doorway of the usual overlapping type, and without the stone sill cutting up its height into a doorway proper and an illuminating window ; the temple, externally and internally, is remarkably plain, the only ornamental projections, &c., being at the corners ; the bricks are all set in mud ; the interior was once plastered, but it is now bare ; probably the exterior was also plastered ; there is no interior roof to the cell, the pyramidal hollow of the tower being open to the sanctum ; there is no object of worship inside.

To the north of this stands a line of four stone temples, three still standing, one broken ; these are of the usual single-cell pattern, and the doorway is not cut up into two portions ; these then, as well as the brick one just noticed, were single-cell temples, but at some subsequent period mandapas were added to them ; they have, however, all got broken, leaving the facades of the temples complete, so that not only is it evident that they were simply added on afterwards, but it is further evident that they were not even bonded into the walls of the original temples ; the junctions, where any exist, are quite plain ; all these temples face north.

North of this is another, but irregular, line of temples, five in number ; of these, two are of stone and three of brick, the latter all ruined ; of the stone ones, one is standing.

North of this is another line of four temples, three of stone and one of brick, all in ruins.

Due east of the brick temple, which has been noticed as still standing, are two mounds, evidently the remains of two other brick temples. To the south of this line of temples is another line of three stone temples, all in ruins.

The ornamentation of the stone temples is confined to plain mouldings in the lower part ; the facade is quite plain, but entire, showing that they were originally intended for single-cell temples without mandapas in front. A photograph, showing the facade, has been taken ; it is probable the temples all stood on a large stone-paved platform, as on excavating near the foot of one I came upon a stone pavement ; the whole group occupies the surface of a piece of rising ground 300 to 350 feet square.

There are some tanks close to the temples ; one, a large one, had stone ghats and revetments once, now in ruins ; there are in the vicinity some few mounds of no special interest.

The material of all the stone temples noticed is a moderately fine sandstone, carefully cut and set without cement ; the workmanship is plain, but good ; the pillars, that were afterwards added to support the roofs of the mahamandapa, are plain, with square ends and octagonal shafts."

Beglar's report is not without blemishes usually met in pioneering essays. He seems to have totally confused Buddhist with Jain sculptures, in so far as no Buddhist sculptures could be found at Pakbirra. The 'votive chaitya' he mentions in his report is clearly a miniature Jain *caturmukha* shrine (*pratimāsarvatobhadrikā*) and the image containing male and female figures under a tree are none other than those of Jain tutelary couple (*Ādimithuna Mūrti*). Aside these mistakes, Beglar's report is of immense value in reconstructing the history of the site.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent summary of Beglar's Report on Pakbirra, see D. R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, Patna, 1963, pp. 347-349. A tentative sketch after Beglar's description showing the position and ground plan of the lost temples at Pakbirra is provided by Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

In the *List of Ancient Monuments in Bengal*,<sup>6</sup> a brief notice of the sculptures, and the three extant temples—two of stone and one of brick—of Pakbirra find place. The description therein is largely based on Beglar's account, but the list has interestingly provided a date of 7th century A.D. to the principal stone temple and 9th century A.D. to the brick temple. Besides, the following additional remarks regarding the principal stone temple is significant :

“It is a Jain structure of unusually large dimensions. The workmanship is necessarily coarse as the material used is a coarse-grained grey sandstone. The ornamentation is plain, consisting merely of a few straight mouldings. The temple contains a figure of the Jain hierarch Aranatha surrounded by six other naked figures.”

Chronologically next is the report of T. Bloch,<sup>7</sup> Archaeological Surveyor, Bengal Circle, who visited Pakbirra in the early part of 1903. Unfortunately his report is extremely brief. In it Bloch only informs :

“At Pakbirra fragments of four stone and one brick temple still exist, but in utter ruins ; especially the brick temple has suffered very badly during the last 30 years, and only a small tottering fragment of its spire is still standing. A number of Jain images is now collected under a modern shed close to the temples. They are mostly figures of Adinatha, Parsvanatha, and Mahavira.”

To Bloch, however, goes the credit of identifying the sculptures at Pakbirra correctly.

Coupland's *District Gazetteer of Manbhum*<sup>8</sup> includes a notice of the ruins at Pakbirra. But the account is based entirely on the descriptions

<sup>6</sup> Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, *List of Ancient Monuments in Bengal, Revised and Corrected upto 31st August, 1895*, Calcutta, 1896, pp. 562-63. In an earlier edition of the same work we find some proposals for the conservation of the temples and sculptures at Pakbirra and proposed estimate of expenditures to be incurred, based on the recommendation made by Mr. J. D. Beglar. See Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, *Revised List of Ancient Monuments in Bengal, 1866*, Calcutta, 1887, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bloch, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey, Bengal Circle, for the Year ending with April, 1903*, Calcutta, 1903, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> F. H. Coupland, *Bengal District Gazetteer, Manbhum*, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 277-78.

of Bevan and Beglar and adds nothing new to what was before.<sup>9</sup>

The site now<sup>10</sup> presents three standing *tri-ratha* single-celled temples, and numerous sculptures of Jain pantheon. The temples, until very recently, were in utter ruins.<sup>11</sup> They were repaired and reconstructed by the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal, during the seasons of the years 1976-79.<sup>12</sup> The photographic representations of the dilapidated temples are available (Plate Nos. 2,3,4). The reconstructed temples (Plate Nos. 5,6,7) stand on a sprawling mound encompassing an area of approximately 1.2 acres and covered with temple ruins, assorted architectural fragments, and scattered sculptural remains. Two of the temples (Temple No. 1 and 2) faces north, and the one on the edge of the eminence (Temple No. 3) faces east. At a rough estimate the temples stand at a height of about 24 feet. The *śikhara* of these temples has a sudden inward slope at the top with flattish *āmalakaśilā* capping the temple. They show *tri-ratha āsana* with prominent central *pagas*. The crowning element is the *kalāśa* with *pallavas*. The inner divisions of the central and side *pagas* have been damaged to the extent that *bhūmi-āmalakas* have all been displaced and fell down with the dismantling of stones. The *bāda* portion still shows parts of mouldings, offsets, and pilasters, which can give an idea about the type and mode of the structures.

In all forty-eight sculptures,<sup>13</sup> some fragmentary but majority intact, are preserved at the site. The material of these sculptures is, without exception, greenish chlorite stone (chlorite biotite schist), locally quarried and used as medium throughout Manbhum region. The sculptures are collected or lies clustered in the following places :

- <sup>9</sup> A few recent studies have briefly dealt with aspects of temple architecture or sculptures of Pakbirra. See, among others, Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.* ; P. Banerjee in *Jaina Art and Architecture* (edited by A. Ghosh), Vol. I, New Delhi, 1974, p. 158 ; David Mc Cutchion, "Notes on the Temples of Purulia District", in *Census 1961 : West Bengal Census Handbook, Purulia*, Calcutta, n. d., pp. 38-39.
- <sup>10</sup> The authors conducted their exploration of Pakbirra during the month of December, 1983.
- <sup>11</sup> For a description of the dilapidated temples see, Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28, 32, fig. 1 ; David Mc Cutchion, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.
- <sup>12</sup> The authors are indebted to Sri N. C. Bhattacharyya, Conservation Assistant, and Sri A. K. Karmakar, Archaeological Chemist, of the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal, for this piece of information.
- <sup>13</sup> This excludes some architectural fragments with carving, and a heap of fragmentary miniature sculptures. See also note 15 *supra*.

(a) Sixteen sculptures in a permanent shed<sup>14</sup> with cemented roofing due east to Temple No. 1. They comprise of eight Jina images, one of them fragmentary ; five images of Jain tutelary couple, three of them fragmentary ; one image of Yaksi Ambika ; and two *caturmukha* images.

(b) Five sculptures, all fragmentary, lying beside the entrance of the permanent shed described above. Four of these are parts of Tirthankara images, and one a temple fragment with a seated Jina figure.

(c) Six sculptures resting in open air beside the wall of a *kutcha* structure with thatched roof belonging to the local school due east to the permanent shed. They are all fragmentary and represent images of Tirthankara.

(d) Sixteen sculptures<sup>15</sup> preserved within the *kutcha* school room described above. Nine of these represent Tirthankara images of which one is fragmentary ; two represent *caturmukha* or Jain *pratimāsarvato-bhadrikā* images of which one is inscribed ; besides there are one image each of *dvi-tīrthika*, Yaksi Ambika ; a pillar fragment with Jina image, a Gargoyle, and a stele containing figures of 361 Tirthankaras.

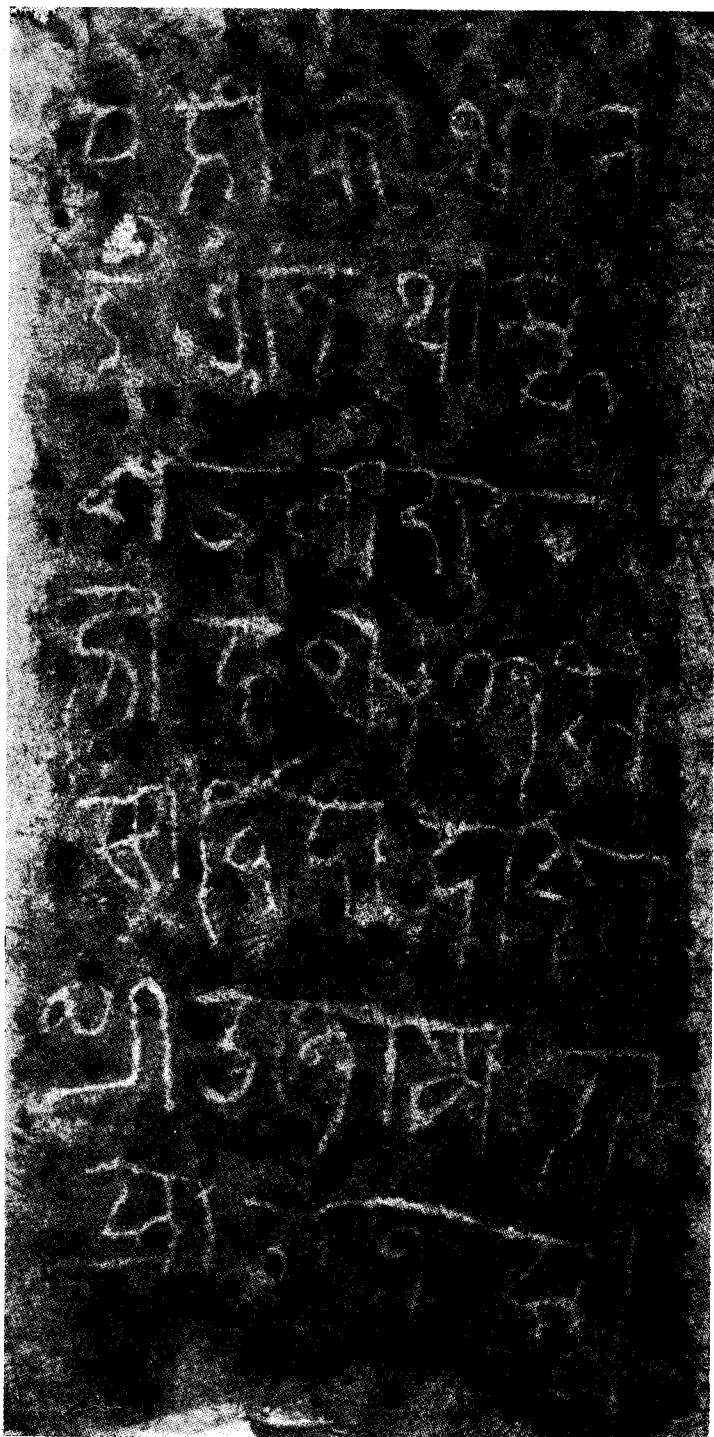
(e) Five sculptures collected in an open-roof walled enclosure of roughly assembled stone blocks to the south-east of the school room, locally known as *thākurthān*. They all represent Tirthankara images, one of them being fragmentary.

It is now difficult to assess the relation between the temples and sculptures at Pakbirra. Because the sculptures are collected apart and not a single sculpture has been reported to stand in the temples.<sup>16</sup> The three temples that are now standing are devoid of any image. Whether the standing temples and those that were found to be in ruins were contemporary or not is a matter of conjecture. They may have been built in different periods and images and sculptures were installed and set as often as the temples were built. David Mc Cutchion commented that in Pakbirra "there seems little doubt that these (the sculptures) were the images originally enshrined in the temples, or placed in the interior niches

<sup>14</sup> This is probably the same shed that Beglar and others mentioned in their accounts, with later reconstruction made by the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal.

<sup>15</sup> Aside a heap of fragmentary miniature sculptures representing mainly the accessory figures in the *parikara* of Jina images.

<sup>16</sup> Barring a solitary reference in the *List of Ancient Monuments in, Bengal, op. cit.* p. 562-63, quoted in the text *infra*.



*Stone-slab containing Inscription*

and some of the fragments may indicate exterior decoration.”<sup>17</sup> As no significant inscription has been found affixed to the temple, the chronology of the temples cannot be satisfactorily established. Only one inscription in a slab of stone, now lying apart, has been found with a text of some length. Its alignment or relationship with the temples could not be known now even from the text inscribed on it. Besides, the information it renders is not also helpful for the chronology of the temples. Neither does it give any date or regnal year. It simply records the erection of pillar on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Jina by one *Sruta Sivadripāda* at *Badrikāthāna* near the tank of *Bāulījam* village. But the inscription, for the more correct rendering and palaeographic dating, is still at the disposal of the experts. The tentative palaeographic dating, so far, gives a date of around 14th century A.D.<sup>18</sup>

As regards the temples, particularly those that are standing now, a few scholars<sup>19</sup> have already taken note of their architectural features. They have also assessed the probable dating of the surviving temples in relation to other temple complexes at Telkupi, Barakar, and other stone temples of the mediaeval period in the West Bengal. They have further traced a relationship of the style with that of Khiching in Mayurbhanj, Orissa. Dr. Debala Mitra in her monograph of the temples at Telkupi,<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> David Mc Cutchion, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> The stone slab containing the inscription was found at the *kutchā* school room mentioned as grouping (d) in the text *infra*. The tentative reading of the inscription is as follows :

*pa (ba) drikā thāna*  
*jayati thimbe*  
*bāulī jān*  
*hrīda śruta (śreṇī) śi*  
*vādripāda jina*  
*śrī janmotsa*  
*va natasya*

The authors are indebted to Sri Bhanwarlal Nahata and to Sri Ganesh Lalwani for reading of this inscription. Sri Nahata suggests that the inscription is around 400/500 years old.

For an inscription found at the pedestal of a Jina image from Pakbirra now preserved at the State Archaeological Museum, West Bengal, Calcutta, See Sudhin De, “Two Unique Inscribed Jaina Sculptures”, *Jain Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1, Calcutta, July, 1970, pp. 24-26.

<sup>19</sup> See, among others, David Mc Cutchion, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39 (for the temples of Pakbirra), pp. 33-43 (for a study of the temples of Purulia District) ; Debala Mitra, “Telkupi—a Submerged Temple Site in West Bengal”, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 76, Delhi, 1969, p. 56, pl. XXVIII B (for the temples of Pakbirra), pp. 51-59 (for a general observation on the architecture of the region *vis-a-vis* the temples of Telkupi).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-59.



district Purulia, broadly divided this large temple complex into two stylistic groups. She found an early group of temples which flourished during the 9th and 10th centuries and a later phase of temples which appeared not earlier than 12th century A.D. being the development of same architectural tradition. This parallel architectural tradition has also been traced by Dr. Mitra in several other centres in the district of Purulia. She witnessed the same architectural movement in Banda and Budhpur. In this context she affixed a later phase for the standing Pakbirra temples which may thus be placed around 12th century A.D.<sup>21</sup> The corbelled door openings of the Pakbirra temples have also been adopted in the brick temples of Sat Deuliya (Burdwan district), Deulghat (Purulia district), dated post-10th century A.D.<sup>22</sup> It may be presumed that the architectural tradition of the Pakbirra complex was also spread over several centuries which had developed along with the other centres of the same region. And as a centre of Jainism, the Jain art and culture also flourished there during all this period. Besides this corbelled door openings, which is not found in the Telkupi temples, the presence of miniature *pidhā* deuls representing the Jain *caturmukha* shrine are also found in the Pakbirra temple site (Plate Nos. 13, 25, 26). This may suggest existence of *pidhā deul* at this site and, therefore, related to the architectural tradition of Orissa.

Jainism had spread from Bihar to Kalinga through Manbhum and Singhbhum<sup>23</sup> and it is not surprising that we find relics of Jainism in these areas. There was also active trade and commerce and pilgrims passage between Kalinga and Magadha including this region.<sup>24</sup> The early reference to the zone of influence of Jainism that may help in drawing the cultural outline of the area is that of Kharavela's Hathigumpha inscription<sup>25</sup> where there is a reference of Gorathagiri (Barabar hills in Gaya), Rajagrha, and the Gangetic plains of Pataliputra. This indicates that the routes from Kalinga to Magadha passed through this region.<sup>26</sup> Barring vague and stray references and isolated surmises there are little to put

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>22</sup> Cf., A. Ghosh (edited), *Jaina Art and Architecture*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1974, pl. 82 B.

<sup>23</sup> P. C. Roy Choudhury, "Jainism in Manbhum", *Jain Journal*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, April, 1984, p. 152 ; *Idem.*, "Jainism in Bihar", *Jain Journal*, Vol. III, No. 4, Calcutta, April, 1969, pp. 152, 155-156.

<sup>24</sup> Beglar, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-51.

<sup>25</sup> D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1965., pp. 213.

<sup>26</sup> B. M. Barua, "Kharavela as King and Builder", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. XV, Calcutta, 1947, pp. 46-51.

together as the early history of the region.<sup>27</sup> An inscription of the year 62 (A.D. 140) found on the pedestal of a Jain image from Mathura mentions a Jain monk with the epithet *Rāraka*, which has been interpreted as a native of *Rāra*, equated with Radha (western Bengal).<sup>28</sup> Sometime before the rise of Sasanka, the Mana dynasty established a kingdom in the hilly region between Midnapore and Gaya districts.<sup>29</sup> The seal of Sasanka engraved on the hill of Rhotasgarh,<sup>30</sup> the Midnapore Copper Plates<sup>31</sup> of the same king, suggest the control of Sasanka over this area. Ganjam Plates of Madhavaraja II dated 619-20 A.D. mention him as *mahārājādhirāja* or the suzerain lord of Ganjam.<sup>32</sup> Thus Sasanka has extended his rule from Rhotasgarh to Ganjam which indicates that this part of the country was also been included within his kingdom during 7th century A.D. Subsequently, it seems, that this territory was subjugated by Harsavardhana in the same century.<sup>33</sup> The Bhaumakaras and the Bhanjas of Orissa might have ruled over a very extensive area in Kalinga and the border tracts of Bengal and Bihar.<sup>34</sup> Later, Mahipala I of the Pala dynasty established later Pala empire in which this area was also included. It is ratified by the mention of the various feudataries who helped Ramapala against the Kaivarta rebellion in Bengal. This is mentioned in the *Rāmacarita* of Sandhyakaranandin where we find a list of loyal princes of the forest countries of Pala kingdom. Amongst them were Laksmi Sura of Aparamandara of the forest tracts and Rudrasikhara, the ruler of Taila Kampa (Telkupi, Purulia district).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay has made an excellent attempt to reconstruct the political history of Manbhum from ancient times. See his *Glimpses of the History of Manbhum*, Calcutta, 1983, pp. 25-37. The authors here have limited their study to the more important references connected with the early history of the region.

<sup>28</sup> A. Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> R. C. Majumder (edited), *The Classical Age*, Bombay, 1954, p. 78 and 93.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>31</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (Letters)*, No. XI, Calcutta 1945, pp. 1-9; Dinesh Chandra Sircar, *Silalekha Tamrasanadi Prasanga* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1982, pp. 49-64.

<sup>32</sup> Ganjam Copper Plate (619-20 A.D.) of Maharaja Mahasamanta Sri Madhavaraja (II), the king of Sailodbhava Dynasty ruling over Kongoda who invokes the name of Sasanka as the suzerain.

K. C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa (Hindu period)*, Cuttack, 1981, p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> R. C. Majumder, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>34</sup> Panigrahi, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>35</sup> *Ramacaritam of Sandhyakaranandi*, edited by MM. Haraprasad Shastri, revised with English translation and notes by Dr. Radhagovinda Basak, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1969, p. 36, pp. 126-127.

This short historical background of the area would suggest that this area has, from the early mediaeval period, enjoyed a relatively greater freedom from any central authority. Being on the fringe of any administrative unit it had probably not to conform to the obligation of the ruling authority. Neither it had to face the political disturbances and the onslaught of the political upheaval. At the same time royal patronage and direct cultural contact has a lesser chance to mould the independent growth save and except the broader cultural influence from adjoining centres. This is also apparent in the material used and the lack of epigraphical records of this area. The stone used is the chlorite schist and there is not a single specimen of foreign origin found in this site. The zone of Jain influence correlated to this area has been variously described by the scholars. R. D. Banerjee states "the temples of these styles begin really from Barakar and Dhanbad and end in the jungle tracts of the Rewa state and the Orissa feudatory states."<sup>36</sup> In connection with Jain sculptures of this area R. D. Banerjee again specifies the position of Jain zone of influence in Bengal. The Jain zone of influence appears to have extended from the south bank of the Ganges and the western bank of the Bhagirathi right upto the northern frontier of the jungle country. He had also mentioned the stylistic affinity of the sculptures of the jungle tract with the Orissan type. According to him they belong to the same denomination.<sup>37</sup> As regards the name 'Manbhum' applied to this area we may allude to the reference to Jain *Harivaṃśa* of Jinasena II.<sup>38</sup> In chapter II of the work, the whole country has been divided into seven different parts as Central, Northern, Eastern, Southern, Western and Vindhyan regions. The eastern region is formed of twelve peoples such as *Khadga*, *Aṅgāraka*, *Paundra*, *Malla*, *Pravaka*, *Mastaka*, *Pradyotiṣa* (*Prāggyotiṣa*), *Vaṅga*, *Magadha*, *Mānovartika*, *Malada*, *Bhārgava*.<sup>39</sup> This *Mānovartika* is perhaps, the Sanskritised form of Manbhum.<sup>40</sup> If this be so, then as a Jain centre, Manbhum is referred in the late eighth century A.D., the date of *Harivaṃśa* being 738 A.D. And it is atleast from the eighth century onwards that the Jain religion and cultural activities in Manbhum has taken a firm root.

<sup>36</sup> R. D. Banerjee, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. XLVIII, Delhi, 1933, p. 144.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>38</sup> Asim Kumar Chatterjee, "The Jain Harivaṃśa", *Religion and Culture of the Jains* (edited by D. C. Sircar), Calcutta, 1973, pp. 100-117.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>40</sup> It has also been suggested that modern Manbhum in Santhal Parganas was named after the *Manas* of Orissa. Cf., R. C. Majumder and Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta (edited), *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. III, pt. I, Calcutta, 1981, pp. 216-17; R. C. Majumder (edited), *The Classical Age*, Bombay, 1954, p. 94, note 1.

From the above, it may be reasonably argued that there had been different phases of temple architectural activities at Pakbirra in different centuries, when, along with it emerged the sculptural art in the similar subsequent phases. The isolated pieces noted and referred to by the scholars and stylistically placed in different periods,<sup>41</sup> would not explain the stylistic affinities or trends, if any, and their cultural horizon or context. It is necessary to see through the entire collection of sculptures yielded from the site and trace their styles and types. But before we go into that it will be essential to enumerate the sculptures themselves and their iconographic features.

The fortyeight sculptures found at Pakbirra, as has been stated earlier, are collected in five different groupings. The iconographic features of these sculptures together with their dimensions, probable dating, material, are given below adhering to different collections :

(a) *Permanent Sculpture Shed*

1. Ambika

The bejewelled goddess stands in graceful *ābhāṅga* pose holding a frolicking little child (her younger son Prabhankara) with her left hand. Her right arm, once possibly holding the branch of a mangoe tree (*āmra-lumbī*), is broken at elbow. A male attendant (or her elder son Subhankara) stands to her right holding a *puṁthi* in his left arm-pit. The goddess wears a diaphanous *śārī* fastened by an ornamented girdle and profuse jewellery. The latter comprising of *urujālaka*, armllets, *keyūra*, multi-stranded necklaces, *kuṇḍalas*, and a three-crested crown. Her hair rolls over the left shoulder and is done in a two-fold bun within fillet nets. Above the goddess is a sprawling mangoe tree ladden with fruits, on the stem of which sits a Jina in *dhyānāsana* under a parasol. A gaping lion with its head turned towards the goddess occupies the centre of a *pañca-ratha* pedestal below, which also bear three tiny figures of devotees, two of them in *añjali-mudrā* and one seated. Vidyadharas holding garlands can be seen on the top corners of the stele.

87cms × 43cms  
Circa 9th century A.D.  
Plate No. 8

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Nihar Ranjan Ray, *Bangalir Itihas*, Calcutta, 1087 B. S., pp. 1057-58, figs 34, 42 ; P. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

## 2. Colossal Image of a Jina

This is the most noteworthy image at Pakbirra and attracted the admiring attention of all the previous authors writing on the site.<sup>42</sup> The image is made of blackish stone<sup>43</sup> and stands at a massive height of 235 cms. The Jina stands in *kāyotsarga* on a small lotus flanked by *caurī*-bearing attendants. He has elongated ear-lobes and his hair is arranged in schematic curls with a prominent *uṣṇīṣa*. The central projection of the *pañca-ratha* pedestal below bears a lotus. The surface of the image is highly polished and contains a crack running diagonally across from the left waist to the right knee. P. C. Dasgupta<sup>44</sup> identified this image with that of Tirthankara Padmaprabha presumably on the basis of the stylized lotus carved on the pedestal, a view which is shared by the present authors. S. C. Mukhopadhyay,<sup>45</sup> however, objects to this identification and points to an unidentifiable design in the lower pedestal as 'emblem', which the present authors failed to notice. He further informs that on the right hand corner of the lower pedestal there was an inscription, two last letters of which are still discernable.<sup>46</sup>

The grace and dignity of the image, its massiveness coupled with transcendental expression, places the image unquestionably an echelon above the rest of the images found at Pakbirra.

235cms × 65cms  
Early 10th Century A.D.  
Plate No. 9

## 3. Jain Tutelary Couple (*Ādimithuna Mūrti*)

The male figure, to the right, sits in *ardha-paryāṅkāsana*, with the right hand held in *abhaya-mudrā*, the left resting on the right knee. He wears a *dhotī* reaching well below the knee, and elaborate jewellery com-

<sup>42</sup> Cf., Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 67 ; Beglar, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194, Coupland, *op. cit.*, p. 277 ; S. C. Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> The stone is the usual chlorite schist but the surface of the image, especially the front portion, has an appearance of blackness. This is evidently due to smearing of *ghee* and other greasy substance over a long period of time. Cf., here, Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>44</sup> P. C. Dasgupta, "Pakbirra's Shrines of the Emancipated", *Jain Journal*, Vol. V., No. 3, Calcutta, January, 1971, p. 123.

<sup>45</sup> Subhas Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.*, 1977, p. 30.

<sup>46</sup> Mc Cutchion and Beglar who had noticed the lotus on the pedestal of the image did not mention anything about either the unidentifiable design on the lower pedestal or the inscription. Cf., Mc Cutchion, *op. cit.*, p. 38 ; Beglar, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

prising of—bracelets, armllets, beaded necklace, large circular *kuṇḍalas*, and an elegant *ratna-mukuṭa*. The female figure is similarly attired and bejewelled save an elegant coiffure with fillets replacing the *ratna-mukuṭa*. She holds a child in her left lap while her right hand is in *varada-mudrā*. Shading both these figures is a stylized tree, on the branches of which sits a Jina in *dhyaṇa* on a lotus seat and under a tri-linear parasol. A crescent moon is delineated on the branching knot of the tree. Vidyadharas can be seen on the top-corners of the back-slab, while below the throne bearing the main figures, within a register, are seven Jyotiska-devas seated in different postures.

63cms × 39.5cms  
 Circa 8th/9th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 10

#### 4. Mahavira

*Pañca-tīrthika*. The *mūla-nāyaka* in *kāyotsarga* posture, stands on a lotus placed on a *pañca-ratha* pedestal, the central projection of which bears a figure of lion placed between *ratna-pātras* heaped with offerings. On the remaining facets of the pedestal are figures of devotees in *namaskāra*, and crouching lions. The Jina is flanked by *caurī*-bearing attendants. He is sky-clad, has elongated ear-lobes, and his hair is arranged in schematic curls with an *uṣṇīṣa*. The edge of the back-slab is relieved with miniature figures of four Jinas in *kāyotsarga*, two in either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*, their respective *lāñchana* is carved on the small pedestal placed below them, but due to abrasion none of these are recognizable. Vidyadharas hovering in the conventional representation of clouds occupies the top of the *parikara*, and also a drum and a pair of cymbals struck by disembodied hands.

62 cms × 35.5 cms  
 Circa 10th century A.D.

#### 5. Rsabhanatha

*Pañca-tīrthika*. The central projection of the *pañca-ratha* pedestal has a bull, the *lāñchana*, while the inner facets are embellished with tiny figures of devotees in *namaskāra-mudrā* one on the dexter side and two on the sinister side, respectively. The *mūla-nāyaka* stands in *kāyotsarga* on a double-petalled lotus and under a proportionately small three-tiered parasol. He wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* with curls falling down the sides of the head and over the shoulders. An elliptical *śiraścakra* with leafed edge adorns

the head of the Saviour. On either side of the *śiraścakra* on the stele are figures of Vidyadharas holding long garlands, which is surmounted by representation of heavenly hands beating on *tammaṭa* and *jayaghaṭa*. The rest of the arrangement is similar to that in No. 4.

82 cms × 36.5 cms  
Circa 10th century A.D.  
Plate No. 11

#### 6. Miniature *Caturmukha* Shrine

The four facets of the miniature shrine bears representations of the Tirthankaras Parsvanatha, Santinatha, Rsabhanatha and Mahavira, in *kāyotsarga*.

Height 77 cms  
Circa 9th century A.D.

#### 7. Rsabhanatha (*Caubisī*)

*Pañca-ratha* pedestal with a bull, the *lāñchana*, in the central projection, two pair of devotees in *añjali-mudrā*, crouching lions, and offering in *ratna-pātras* on the other facets. The Jina stands in *kāyotsarga* wearing a tall *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and attended by the usual *cāmaradhara*s. Oval *śiraścakra*, conical stele. Upper part of the *parikara* bears representations of Vidyadharas and a pair of disembodied hands playing on drums and cymbals. The back-slab is relieved with miniature figures of twenty four Tirthankaras in *kāyotsarga*, arranged in six vertical rows—consisting of three Jinas each on the upper three rows and one each on the remaining three—on either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*.

87 cms × 46 cms

#### 8. Jain Tutelary Couple

The couple sits in *ardha-paryāñkāsa* on a flat throne (fashioned like a bench or stool) each supporting with their left hand a child. Right arm of both are broken at elbow. The male figure is attired in a short *dhotī* and wears profuse jewellery comprising of armlets, *keyūra*, multi-stranded necklace, ear-ornaments, anklets, *ratnopavīta*, and a jewelled crested ribbon on his forehead. The female is attired in a diaphanous lower garment coming down to ankles, and is bejewelled in the same fashion as the male, except that a short three-crested crown adorns her

head. Her hair is arranged in an elegant bun resting on her shoulder. Shading both these figures is a sprouting palm tree, from the branching knot of which descends a miniature figure. Above the branches of the tree is a seated Jina in *dhyāna*. Vidyadharas can be seen on the top of almost square back-slab, and also a drum and a pair of cymbals struck by disembodied hands. Under the stool a water-pot with a knobbed lid and a goblet are carved out. The central projection of the *tri-ratha* pedestal below bears five interesting figures—a lion rider followed by an animal headed creature ; a Nagi and a crowned and bearded male, both seated on lotus and facing each other ; and a female ; the last four all holding a child—possibly making up an episode.<sup>47</sup> The outer-facets of the pedestal are embellished with figures of a male and a female devotee in *añjali-mudrā*.

63 cms × 43 cms

Circa 8th/9th century A.D.

Plate No. 12

#### 9. Miniature *Caturmukha* Shrine

Miniature representation of a *piḍhā deul*. The shrine has two mouldings in the *pābhāga* region, above which on all the four facets stand a Tirthankara in *kāyotsarga* under niches formed by stout pilasters relieved with criss-cross floral designs supporting the lowermost *piḍhā*. The Jinas stand under a *chatra* and attended by seated *cāmaradhara* on either side. Tiny figures of Vidyadharas holding garlands project from the top of the pilasters flanking the Jinas. From their *lāñchanas* placed between the mouldings at the *pābhāga* three of the Tirthankaras can be identified as Candraprabha, Santinatha and Rsabhanatha, while the *cinha* of the fourth is abraded beyond recognition. The *ganḍi* of the shrine has three *piḍhās* with intervening recesses, the lowermost recess is perforated and shaped like windows. The *piḍhās* are embellished with horizontal bands of criss-cross floral festoons and petals. At the top of the lowest *piḍhā* on all four facets there is a figure of a swan pecking at a garland with its beak. As crowning element the shrine has a thick and broad *beki* surmounted by a large *āmalaka*.

57.5 cms × 23 cms

Circa 9th Century A.D.

Plate No. 13

<sup>47</sup> For a tentative identification of the episode see *Supra*.



10. Rsabhanatha (*Caubisī*)

The Jina, in *kāyotsarga*, stands on a lotus placed on a *pañca-ratha* pedestal which has a bull in the centre flanked by devotees in *añjali-mudrā*. On the interior-facets of the pedestal, on either side, is a figure of crouching lion ; while the exterior ones has further figures of devotees in *añjali*. The Saviour is nude, the hair dressed in a tall *jaṭājūṭa* with curls falling down the sides of head and over the shoulders. On either side are male *caurī*-bearers wearing short loin cloth and elegant jewellery. In the edge of the back-slab are miniature figures of twenty-four Tirthankaras arranged in four vertical rows of three each on either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*. Like the central figure they also stand in *kāyotsarga* with their *lāñchanas* depicted on a small pedestal (raised band) placed below them. The back of the throne consists of jewelled posts in relief supporting a cross-bar on which are triangular foliated plaques. The small ovoidal *śiraścakra* is adorned with rose-petals at the edges. Figures of Vidyadharas, a trilinear *chatra*, and a drum and a pair of cymbals struck by disembodied hands, completes the *parikara*.

99 cms × 48.5 cms  
Circa 10th Century A.D.

## 11. Jaina Tutelary Couple

Close on iconographic details to No. 3. Head of either figure totally broken away, the entire sculpture being badly mutilated. The couple sits on separate lotus throne. The pedestal reveals six male figures seated in different *āsanas*.

63.5 cms × 40.5 cms  
Circa 10th Century A.D.

## 12. Mahavira

*Tri-ratha* pedestal having a figure of lion in each of its three facets. The back-slab is broken away diagonally just above the shoulder of the Jina on his right side. On the edges of the extant part are figures of seven Jyotiska-devas.

75 cms × 36 cms  
Circa 11th Century A.D.

13. Padmaprabha (*Caubisī*)

*Eka-ratha* pedestal with a lotus, the *lāñchana*, placed between two crouching lions. The edge of the back-slab is relieved with miniature figures of twenty four Tirthankaras arranged in four vertical rows of three each on either side on the *mūla-nāyaka*. The upper-most row on the dexter side together with a portion of the stele broken away. The miniature Jina figures are badly effaced and mutilated and their cognizances are difficult to recognise.

66 cms × 38.5 cms  
Circa 11th Century A.D.

## 14. Parsvanatha—Fragmentary.

## 15. Pedestal of an Image of Jain Tutelary Couple

The figures of the couple seated on the throne are almost totally broken away. The pedestal reveals eight human figures on a boat in different postures. Above them are pendant chains and bells, while below enclosed within horizontal bands is the stylized representation of the waves of the surging sea. The figures from right to left are : (1) Seated female in *namaskāra*, (2) Clapping male, (3) Male with a Ms. (4) Male in *abhaya*, (5) Male in *vyākhyāna*, (6) Standing male with a staff, (7) Male with a Ms., (8) Male with a Ms.

Irregular  
Circa 10th Century A.D.

(b) *Outside the Permanent Sculpture Shed* (from left to right)

## 16. Fragment—Upper part of an Image of Jain Tutelary Couple

## 17. Rsabhanatha. Fragmentary, Lower Part

The image is much damaged, the portion above the thighs of the Jina being broken away. On the extant part there are two youthful looking *caurī*-bearers, the head of the one on right is missing. They are gracefully positioned and attired in loin cloth with incised lines, and wear elaborate jewellery consisting of anklets, ornamented girdle, armllets, bracelets, necklace, *kunḍalas*, and a conical ornamented crown. The central projection of the pedestal below has a bull, the *lāñchana*, placed between two pairs of kneeling devotees in *añjali-mudrā*. On the other facets are figures

of crouching lion. Although much damaged this is an excellent piece of sculpture.

62 cms × 41 cms  
 Circa 10th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 14

18. Rsabhanatha. Fragmentary, Lower Part

The image is much damaged and badly effaced.

52 cms × 52 cms  
 Circa 11th Century A.D.

19. Lower Portion of an Image of Rsabhanatha

Portion above the thighs of the Jina is missing. On the extant part are two *cāmaradharas* flanking the Jina figure. On the edge of the slab are miniature representations of eight Jinas in *kāyotsarga*, four on either side. A stylized lotus creeper with scrolled leaves and buds occupies the centre of the pedestal below, under which there is a much mutilated figure of a bull, the identifying *ciṅha* of the Jina. On its right there are the figures of a crouching lion and two kneeling devotees in *añjali-mudrā*, while on left a lion and a solitary devotee.

52 cms × 56 cms  
 Circa 11th/12th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 15

20. Middle Portion of a Jina Image

On the extant part are two graceful figures of *cāmaradharas* attired and bejewelled in the usual fashion. The edge of the back-slab is relieved with twelve-figures of miniature Jinas in *kāyotsarga* arranged in three vertical rows of two each on either side. Below the rows of Jina figures, on the sinister side, are two figures of Jyotiska-devas in a row, and the head of a further one below them. On the dexter side similarly there is a figure of Jyotiska-deva, the head of which only remain intact.

54 cms × 69 cms  
 Circa 10th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 16

## 21. Temple Fragment having a Seated Jina Figure

139 cms × 23 cms

## (c) Outside Kutcha School Building

## 22. Pedestal of a Jina Image

The main image is completely broken away. On the lower register of the *pañca-ratha* pedestal within a band and distributed on all the facets are eight Jyotiska-devas. On the central projection, placed between figures of Budha and Vrhaspati is a circular disc embellished with lotus petals. The upper register of the pedestal has pilastered compartments on all its facets. An exquisite figure of an eight-armed goddess riding a peacock occupies the central one. On the interior facets there are figures of gogle-eyed leoglyphs, that on the left being badly damaged, while the exterior facets are left blank.

The pedestal is of considerable iconographic interest. The circular disc designed with lotus petals placed at the centre of the lower register can be construed to represent either a stylized *padma* or a *dharmacakra*. In the former case, the *padma* can be taken as the *lāñchana* and the image identified as that of Padmaprabha. However, the figures of the eight-armed goddess poses problems. Her peacock mount and attributes in hands (four right hands : *varada*, *vajra*, *śakti*, *śūla*, four left hands : bull, disc, cock (?), and staff) do not correspond with the description of the Yaksi of Padmaprabha. On the other hand the goddess betrays strong resemblance to Prajnapti, the Yaksi of Sambhavanatha.<sup>48</sup>

49cms × 72cms

Circa 9th/10th Century A.D.

Plate Nos. 17 and 18

## 23. Lower Portion of an Image of Candraprabha

Only the feet of the Jina survive. Behind the lotus seat on the centre of the pedestal is a crescent, the *lāñchana* of Chandraprabha. On either side are two kneeling devotees, one holding a garland and the other in

<sup>48</sup> Yaksi Prajnapti is a diety of wisdom and as a protectress from misery, fear and disease, she has the counterpoint in Kaumari the *Sakti* of Skandakumara.

See, U. P. Shah, "Iconography of Sixteen Jaina Mahavidyas", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. XV, Calcutta, 1947, p. 127.

*namaskāra-mudrā*. The sculpture is placed on a square architectural fragment having the figure of a crouching lion at each corner.

38 cms × 38.5 cms  
 Circa 11th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 19

#### 24. Lower Portion of an Image of Suvidhinatha

In identical state of preservation as No. 23. The central projection of the pedestal has the figure of a *makara*, the *lāñchana* of Suvidhinatha. The fragment is placed on a similar architectural number as No. 23.

34 cms × 38 cms  
 Circa 11th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 20

#### 25. Lower Portion of an Image of Rsabhanatha

59 cms × 70 cms  
 Circa 11th Century A.D.

#### 26. Lower Portion of a Seated Jina Image

Of the Jina image only his feet in *dhyānāsana* on a lotus seat survive. The *tri-ratha* pedestal below is similar in many respect to No. 22. On its upper register enclosed within horizontal bands of floral scrolls and in compartments formed by stout decorated pilasters there are figures of two goggle-eyed leoglyphs flanking an eight-armed goddess seated in *ardha-paryāñkāsana* on a peacock.<sup>49</sup> On the lower register enclosed within similar bands are figures of eight Jyotiska-devas distributed on all the facets. Like in No. 22, a circular disc embellished with lotus petals occupies the centre of the projected portion placed between figures of Jyotiska-devas. On the extreme end of the lower register on either side is a figure of a kneeling female devotee. See also No. 22.

67 cms × 82 cms  
 Circa 9th/10th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 21

<sup>49</sup> The Yaksi is identical to the goddess in No. 22, and may be identified as Prajnapti. The *ayudhas* held by her correspond exactly with those of the Yaksi in No. 22.

## 27. Lower Portion of a Rsabhanatha Image

64 cms × 64 cms

Circa 11th/12th Century A.D.

(d) *Inside the Kutcha School Building*

28. One Jina Image (Stele and portion below the ankle of the image broken away)

29. *Dvi-tīrthika (Dvi-tīrthī)* Image

The Jinas are shown as sky-clad and standing in *kāyotsarga* posture each on a lotus seat placed above a small pedestal which bears no identifying *ciṅha*. They have a elongated ear-lobes and their hair is arranged in small curls with a protuberance above. On their either side stands a male *cāmaradhara* bedecked in usual jewellery. The Jinas are provided with a plain ovoidal *śiraścaakra* above which is carved a *chatratrayī* on which there are traces of the foliage of a tree. The familiar figures of *mālā-dharas* are around near the *chatras*, and also heavenly hands beating on drums and cymbals. The throne back reveals the usual design of cross-bar and triangular foliated plaques.

54 cms × 29.5 cms

Circa 8th/9th Century A.D.

Plate No. 22

## 30. Seated Parsvanatha

The nude Tirthankara sits in *padmāsana* with his hands in *dhyāna-mudrā* under the shelter of a seven-hooded Naga. On either side are male *caurī*-bearers wearing loin cloth and simple jewellery including armlets, wristlets and *ekāvalī*. The back of the throne is plain barring a few lightly incised flowers and floral designs placed at random. Above is a tri-linear parasol, on its either side a pair of disembodied hands playing on the heavenly instruments. On both sides is a flying Vidyadhara carved against a cloud form. The Jina has elongated ear-lobes and his hair is arranged in schematic curls with a *uṣṇiṣa*.

A full blown lotus with flower occupies the centre of the pedestal below, which also reveals sensitively modelled figures of a Naga couple and kneeling devotees in *añjali-mudrā* in its upper portion. On the lower

portion enclosed within small sunken panels are two figures of crouching lion.

69 cms × 37 cms

Circa 7th/8th Century A.D.

Plate No. 23

31. Fragment of a Pillar with a Figure of a Jina

32. Mahavira (*Pañca-tīrthika*)

The nude Jina stands in *kāyotsarga* posture, with two ungainly looking male *caurī*-bearers on either side. Above the plain *śiraścakra*, edged with beads, is a trilinear *chatra* much effaced, and on its either side is a flying Vidyadhara carved on cloud forms. The throne back consists of plain posts in low relief supporting a cross-bar on which are triangular plaques. The back-slab is relieved with four miniature Jina figures in *kāyotsarga*, two on either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*, with their respective *lāñchāna* carved on a small lotus seat placed below them. Candraprabha on the upper right and Parsvanatha on the bottom left can be easily identified from their cognizances, while the *lāñchānas* of the other two are effaced beyond recognition. The *pañca-ratha* pedestal below reveals a lion on its central projection placed between what appears a *ratna-pātra* heaped with offerings and a male figure beating on drum. Figures of crouching lions can be seen on the other facets.

57.5 cms × 31.5 cms

Circa 8th/9th Century A.D.

Plate No. 24

33. Miniature *Caturmukha* Shrine

Miniature representation of a *piḍhā deul* bears close resemblance to No. 9. However, in this representation there are only two *piḍhās* separated by comparatively large recess with perforated window designs. Under the niches flanked by shapely pilasters relieved with criss-cross mouldings, on all the four facets, is a figure of Tirthankara seated in *dhyāna* on a *padmāsana*. From their *lāñchānas* carved at their seats they can be identified as Santinatha, Padmaprabha, Candraprabha, and Mahavira(?). The *piḍhās* are embellished with horizontal bands adorned with rhizomes and drooping petals/leaves. The lower *piḍhā* has on it in all the four facets figures of a swan couple holding a long garland with their beaks. The

crowning element of the shrine is a thick and broad *beki* surmounted by a large *āmalaka*.

Height 51 cms

Circa 9th Century A.D.

Plate Nos. 25 and 26

34. Stele Carved with a Seated Rsabhanatha and Sixteen Rows of Jinas in *Kāyotsarga*.

This unique rectangular stele of chlorite schist is broken at the top right hand corner. On a reconstruction it was found to contain 360 miniature figures of Jinas in *kāyotsarga* disposed in sixteen terraces, besides a seated figure of Rsabhanatha. The figure of Rsabhanatha is placed on the top of the stele along the breadth of the first and second ledges. He is depicted as being seated in *padmāsana* and attended by *cāmaradharas*. Below his lotus seat is shown his *lāñchana*, the bull, placed between two crouching lions. Vidyadhara figure carved in conventional cloud forms can be seen above his head. Each of the sixteen terraces is bordered by a band in relief. The number of Tirthankaras in each register as well as their dimension varies. On the lowest register at each corner is a figure of a kneeling devotee in *āñjali-mudrā*.

The sixteen ledges visualized the following numbers of Tirthankaras from the upper-most plane downwards :<sup>50</sup>

Nos. of Ledges	Nos. of Tirthankaras
1	20 (10)
2	20 (10)
3	23 (17)
4	24
5	21
6	21
7	24
8	24
9	24
10	23
11	23
12	23
13	23
14	23
15	23
16	21

<sup>50</sup> The figures in the bracket indicates the number of Jina figures now existing.



The *patta* bears some resemblance to a stele in black stone collected from Sat Deuliya in the Burdwan district which contains 148 miniature Tirthankaras besides a seated Rsabhanatha. The sculpture was identified by Sri P. C. Dasgupta as an early representation of the Astapada *tīrtha*.<sup>51</sup>

124.5cms × 59cms  
 Circa 9th/10th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 27

### 35. Santinatha

*Pañcatīrthika*. The *mūla-nāyaka* Santinatha stands in *kāyotsarga* pose on a *padmāsana*, flanked by *dvi-bhaṅga cāmaradharas* wearing conical crown, one on each side. *Ratna-pātras* heaped with offerings are placed between the figures of Saviour and the *cāmaradharas*. The edge of the back-slab is relieved with miniature Jina figures in *kāyotsarga* two on each side. Flying *Vidyadharas* with long garlands, and drum and cymbals are placed at the top corners of the stele. Deer, his cognizance, is placed on pedestal below his feet.

66 cms × 34 cms

### 36. Miniature *Cāturmukha* Shrine

On its four facets are figures of Tirthankaras Santinatha, Parsvanatha, Candraprabha and Rsabhanatha. Bears one line inscription. This votive Jain *cāturmukha* is represented in the form of a miniature *rekha* temple of the *tri-ratha* type executed in a simple form. The central *pagas* have each, one row of shallow niches arranged in vertical order, holding Jina figures in diminishing number from the top. The *pādapītha* consists of three lower mouldings projected out at the sides which again is beset with three upper mouldings in the centre producing a shallow niche showing the *lāñchana* of the Tirthankara. Above the *pādapītha*, deep niches have been carved on the extended plane of the central projection, each containing a standing Tirthankara with the attendant figures. The upper facets of the niches are projected out in the shape of an arch, flung out on two sides which rest on thin pilasters. The upper facets of the niches have, probably, been derived from the *caitya* motif. In line with the two end edges of this so called arch, there is a capping corner element projected out on the segments of the

<sup>51</sup> P. C. Dasgupta, "A Rare Jaina Icon from Sat Deuliya", *Jain Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 3, Calcutta, January, 1973, pp. 130-32.

*kanika paga*. The tower rises in a slow curve. The flat *amalaka* is capped by a stunted pot.

Height 44cms

Circa 10th/11th Century A.D.

Plate Nos. 28 and 29

### 37. Rsabhanatha

Of the usual *pañca-tīrthika* class. The Jina wears a tall *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and is provided with an ovoidal *śiraścakra* embellished with rows of beads and leaves at the edges. On his either side are two miniature figures of Jinas in *kāyotsarga*. The *pañca-ratha* pedestal below reveals a bull, the *lāñchana*, flanked by two crouching lions. On the extreme right end of the pedestal is a figure of a kneeling devotee in *añjali-mudrā*. Fly-whisk bearing attendants, Vidyadharas, *chatra-trayī*, heavenly hands beating on musical instruments are all present in the *parikara*.

99 cms × 50 cms

Circa 10th Century A.D.

Plate No. 30

### 38. Rsabhanatha

The sculpture is simple and bare. The Jina stands in *kāyotsarga* under a multi-tiered parasol on either side of which are a pair of disembodied hands playing on heavenly instruments. The Saviour is sky-clad, his hair arranged in a *jaṭājūṭa* with *keṣa-vallarī* falling down the sides of head and over the shoulders. He is provided with a simple oval *śiraścakra* with plain border. The back-slab reveals male *caurī*-bearers flanking the Jina at the lower corners, and twin Vidyadharas at the upper—all four carved on a raised background. Lightly incised floral motifs including bell-shaped *Campa* and rosettees are the only embellishments of the otherwise bare stele. On the centre of the pedestal below there is a bull, the *lāñchana* of the Jina, placed between two crouching lions.

60.3 cms × 25 cms

Circa 7th/8th Century A.D.

Plate No. 31

### 39. Ambika

The Yaksi stands in a subdued *dvi-bhaṅga* pose holding a branch of a mangoe-tree (*āmra-lumbī*) in her right hand. Her left arm dangles at

her side loosely tugging at the end of her long scarf. Little Prabhankara, her younger son stands at her left clinging to her scarf, while her elder son Subhankara stands at her right. The goddess is attired in a transparent lower garment with horizontal incised lines, and a long scarf covering her breasts and falling over her shoulders at her sides. She wears profuse jewellery including multi-stranded armlets, *keyūra*, *mekhālā*, *ratnopavīta*, large circular *ratna-kuṇḍalas*, and a *ratna-mukūṭa*. Her hair is arranged in two small circular locks at the corners of her head and a bun resting on her shoulder. Over the head of the Yakṣi is a mangoe-tree ladden with fruits, above which in the upper-most register of the stele there are five miniature figures of Tirthankaras each seated in *dhyānāsana* on a lotus seat and under a trilinear *chatra*. From their cognizances carved in the centre of the *padmāsana* (except that of Parsvanatha), four of them from left to right can be identified as Rsabhanatha, Parsvanatha, Padmaprabha, and Mallinatha (?), while the *lāñchana* of the fifth one is damaged beyond recognition. Lightly incised flowers, possibly roses, are placed in between the Jina figures.

The back of the throne is plain barring two similar flowers flanking the Yakṣi. On the edge of the back-slab are decorations in the form of floral scrolls enclosed within a band. The projected part of the pedestal below reveals a lion, the *vāhana* of the Yakṣi. On the recessed part are two incised floral rhizomes one on either side, used as decorative appendage.

52.5 cms × 26.5 cms  
Circa 7th/8th Century A.D.  
Plate No. 32

#### 40. Candraprabha

Of the usual *pañca-tīrthika* variety. On the dexter side of the *mūla-nāyaka* are the miniature figures of Tirthankaras Rsabhanatha (?) and Parsvanatha, while on the sinister side are figures of Mallinatha (?) and Mahavira. All the Jinās stands in *kāyotsarga*. The *chatra* above the *mūla-nāyaka* is badly damaged. Pedestal below reveals a crescent, the *lāñchana*, placed between two crouching lions.

51 cms × 28 cms  
Circa 7th/8th Century A.D.  
Plate No. 33

41. *Pañca-tīrthika* of Parsvanatha

Parsvanatha, the *mūla-nāyaka*, stands in *kāyotsarga* on a double-petalled lotus under the usual canopy of a seven-hooded serpent. He is accompanied on either side by gracefully adorned stout-looking *caurī*-bearers. A Naga couple with their tails entwined, the male with arms folded in *namaskāra* and the female playing on a musical instrument, is shown besides the attendants of the Jina. On the edge of the back-slab are carved four images of Tirthankaras in *kāyotsarga* with their respective *lāñchanas* depicted on a slightly raised pedestal below them. The upper part of the stele contains the usual Vidyadhara couple, the *prātihāryas* of heavenly hands playing on musical instruments, and a projected tiered *chakra* surmounting the snake-hood. A lightly incised flower and a twig of a tree can be seen just beside the snake-hood. The simple *tri-ratha* pedestal reveals crouching lions and figures of *upāsakas*.

64.5 cms × 33 cms

Circa 9th Century A.D.

Plate No. 34

## 42. Rsabhanatha

50 cms × 28 cms

## 43. Gargoyle

The Gargoyle is conceived in the form of a Nagi holding a pot with both her hands over her breast. The figure, though defaced and badly mutilated, reveals exquisite workmanship. The Nagi wears a jewelled fillet over her forehead, a pair of large circular *kuṇḍalas* on long earlobes, a *hāra* and an armlet. The serpent-hood at the back of her head is almost broken in half.

Circa 10th Century A.D.

Plate No. 35

(e) *In the Open-roof Walled-enclosure at Thākurthān*

## 44. Lower Part of Parsvanatha

Only the lower portion of the image remains extant. It reveals the Jina standing in stiff *kāyotsarga* posture on a lotus seat placed on a

*sapta-ratha* pedestal. He is attended by two male *caurī*-bearers wearing succinct lower garments and ornaments comprising of necklaces, *keyūra*, *kuṇḍala*, bangle and a conical crown. A Naga couple with their tails inter-coiled springs gracefully and rhythmically from the central projection of the pedestal just below the feet of the Jina. The Naga holds a water-vessel while the Nagi plays on a musical instrument. The pedestal is further embellished with a pair of crouching lions placed on either side of the entwined Naga coil, while a tiny little figure of a devotee in *namaskāra* occupies one of the facets of the lower-most ledge. Two mutilated figures of planets on the edge of the back-slab suggests the *parikara* once contained the full appendage of Jyotiska-devas.

The *caurī*-bearers and the Naga couple betray the height of perfection an artist could achieve in Tirthankara figures.

66 cms × 67.5 cms  
 Circa 9th Century A.D.  
 Plate Nos. 36 and 37

#### 45. Santinatha

The Jina in *kāyotsarga* and *samapādashānaka* stands on a lotus placed on a *sapta-ratha* pedestal, the central projection of which bears the *lāñchana*, an antelope. Two lions crouching in opposite direction occupies the facets adjacent to the middle, while the remaining projections of the pedestal are left blank. The Jina has elongated ear-lobes, pronounced protruding eye-balls, and his hair is arranged in schematic curls with a prominent *uṣṇīṣa*. On either side stands squat and stout male *caurī*-bearers with fattened legs and flat feet-palm. They wear deeply incised loin cloth and elaborate jewellery including wristlets, armlets, necklace, *kamara-bandha* and *ratna-mukuṭa*. Beside the feet of the *caurī*-bearers, on either side, are carved two tiny figures of *upāsakas*, one female and the other male both in *namaskāra*, the former seated cross-legged while the latter in *padmāsana*. On the edge of the back-slab are eight planets (Jyotiska-devas) arranged in a vertical row of four on either side of the Jina. These on the dexter side appear to be Surya, Mangala, Brhaspati, and Sani; while those on sinister side are Soma, Budha, Sukra, and Rahu. The back of the throne consists of jewelled posts supporting a cross-bar on which are triangular foliated plaques. The *siraścakra* has intricate patterns of beads and flame tongued border devices, and flowering twigs on either side. Vidyadharas holding long garlands can

be seen beside the trilinear *chatra* on the top of the stele, and also a drum and a pair of cymbals struck by disembodied hands.

71 cms × 36.8 cms  
 Circa 10th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 38

#### 46. Rsabhanatha with Twenty-four Jinas

The image is carved out on a rectangular stele with *pañca-ratha* pedestal having a bull, the *lāñchana* of the *mūla-nāyaka*, placed between two crouching lions and flanked by a male and a female devotee kneeling in *namaskāra*. The principal Jina wears an inelegant *jaṭājūṭa* with *keṣavallarī* falling down the sides of head over shoulders. On either side stand sensitively modelled *cāmaradhara*s with their left hand in *kaṭyāvā-lambita* posture and the right holding a fly-whisk. On the edge of the back-slab, on a projected frame, are miniature figures of twenty-four Tirthankaras arranged in six vertical rows of two each on either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*. Like the principal image they also stand in *kāyotsarga* posture with their respective *lāñchanas* carved below each on a small lotus throne. The recessed portion of the back-slab reveals a cross-bar on which are triangular plaques embellished with *kumbhas* placed one above the other from which *pallavas* emerge in a triangular shape. The large roundish *śiraścakra* is gracefully adorned with beads and flame-tongued border devices. Above is a trilinear *chatra*, slightly damaged, which is flanked by Vidyadhara's hovering in the conventional representation of clouds.

119 cms × 61 cms  
 Circa 10th/11th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 39

#### 47. Rsabhanatha with Eight Jyotiska-devas

The figure of the Jina is carved out on a rectangular stele with projected side frames. The central *ratha* of the pedestal bears the *lāñchana* of the Jina placed between two crouching lions. A kneeling *upāsikā* in *añjali* occupies one of the facets of the *tri-ratha* pedestal, while the remaining is left blank. *Ratna-pātras* heaped with offerings are placed on either side of the feet of Jina. The face of the Tirthankara is slightly mutilated ;

he wears a *jaṭājūta* with locks of hair falling over his shoulder. The projected frames at the edge of the back-slab are relieved with figures of eight Jyotiska-devas (their arrangement identical to that in No. 45) and two attending *caurī*-bearers. The recessed portion of the stele reveals triangular plaques on cross-bar and a large roundish aureole adorned with beads and flame-tongued border devices. The tiered *chatra* above the head of the Saviour is damaged.

66 cms × 36 cms  
 Circa 10th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 40

#### 48. Rsabhanatha with Twenty-four Jinas

The almost rectangular stele of the image is rounded off at the top. The nimbused Jina stands on a lotus placed on a *pañca-ratha* pedestal having a bull flanked by a kneeling donor couple and a *ratna-pātra* heaped with offerings in its central projection. Stylized representations of crouching lions occupies the adjacent facets while the exterior ones are left blank. The Jina is devoid of any worldly attire, has elongated ear-lobes, and wears a shapely *jaṭājūta* with *keśa-vallarī* falling by the sides of his head over the shoulders. He is attended by two stiff and robust looking *caurī*-bearers, profusely bejewelled, with their left hands in *kaṭyāvalambita* posture and the right hands holding *cāmaras*. The back of the throne consists of posts decorated with mouldings and criss-cross scratched pilasters, supporting a horizontal cross-bar with lightly incised square rhizomes at its ends, above which there are triangular foliated plaques. The ovoidal *prabhā* is embellished with beads and flame-tongued border devices and has a flowering twig on its either side. On the projected part of the back-slab there are miniature representations of twenty-four Tirthankaras arranged in six vertical rows of two each on either side of the *mūla-nāyaka*. Their *lāñchanas* are indicated on a small pedestal placed below them. Above, also on a projected portion, can be seen a *chatra-trayī* with drooping leaves over it, disembodied hands playing on musical instruments, and a Vidyadhara couple holding long garlands and hovering in the clouds.

83 cms × 49 cms  
 Circa 10th/11th Century A.D.  
 Plate No. 41

The stylistic traits<sup>52</sup> that reflected through these sculptures, if analysed, would reveal one early phase and a later phase, intervened by a transitional middle phase. The early phase of the artistic activity at Pakbirra, is manifested in a group consisting four sculptures, viz., the image of Yaksi Ambika (No. 39, Pl. 32). The Tirthankara Rsabhanatha (No. 38, Pl. 31), seated Parsvanatha (No. 30, Pl. 23), and Tirthankara Candraprabha (No. 40, Pl. 33). The plastic quality of these four images appear to have a close affinity with that of the Paharpur stone sculptures ;<sup>53</sup> while the first three images show a close relationship with the stucco figures of the Maniyar Math, Rajgir<sup>54</sup> datable to the C. 6th Cen-

<sup>52</sup> Pakbirra, situated in the close range of the imposing cultural centres of Bihar and Orissa, it is presumed, saw varied stylistic traits both in forms and growth stages, radiated from these centres. In an area which is politically not enduring and stable, particularly in the post-Gupta period, Pakbirra may have been subjected to various influences within a short span of time.

In spite of the political vicissitudes, Jainism had maintained its strange hold in this area for centuries together as evident in numerous stone sculptures and temple ruins. These Jain sculptures bear the testimony of the artistic activities of different periods in this part of western Bengal. With the abundance of Jain sculptures and temple ruins, some still *in situ*, and the rarity of Buddhist images, a kind of exclusiveness for Jain activity becomes apparent. Of the sites, so far known to us in the Bankura-Purulia area Pakbirra stands in the foremost position in respect of the treasure of sculptures. The temple site at Pakbirra presents, upto now, about fifty stone sculptures, which show various stylistic traits and workmanship belonging to different periods and regions. The various elements and stylistic traits appeared in the series of sculptures are not always extraneous and alien to their plastic content. They, as a whole, contributed to the growth of a style. Some characteristics were carried on, some were left behind. However, for want of systematic excavation record of the site a clear and satisfactory estimation is not possible at this stage. It is probable that a few more interesting sculptures are still lying buried in the ruins.

With all the variation in forms and other traits, there appears a decisive trend in plastic content that binds together through the process of evolution, and ultimately grew up with the Pala school of art. It would be evident therewith, that, in the midst of different cultural waves, the art of Pakbirra did not evolve in a linear path. The search for a unity in plastic content continued bringing together various elements, idioms, forms and ornamental motifs. This search and experimentation as evident in Pakbirra is, perhaps, inevitable for the transition from one phase to the other. With the chlorite schist as the only stone medium quarried locally, they also speak of local execution and as such express a desire for unity of different traits, though, in a broad spectrum and presented itself as an expression of the indigenous trend of the neo-classical art of this region.

<sup>53</sup> For Paharpur stone sculptures see among others, S. K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1962, pls. III, IV, VII, IX; R. C. Majumder (edited), *The History of Bengal*, Vol. I (Hindu Period), Dacca, 1963, figs. 138, 139, 141, 143, etc.

<sup>54</sup> Cf., Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India, 300-800 A.D.*, Delhi, 1980, pls. 18, 19, 20.



tury A.D. and the Nalanda Mahavihara, Great Stupa, Site No. 3,<sup>55</sup> datable to early 7th Century A.D. allowing a certain local or evolved variation in forms and traits. Most of the images in this group are either heavy in bodily forms or bear a downward stance while the modelling is tender and delicate. In respect of sensuous modelling and the spreading of limbs in some images they share affinity with the Rajgir-Nalanda stucco figures. On the other hand stocky, squatish stature in some of the figures (No. 38, Pl. 31) though of much slender variation, show a relationship with the older Mathura tradition in evolution outside the spell of the 5th Century A.D. Sarnath style. They have parallel equivalents in some other sites of Sahabad District in Bihar such as the Mundeswari Hill, Deo-Barunark and Deo Markandeya datable to 7th-8th Century A.D. The closely affixed limbs, the slender and tapering legs with flattened and broad palm of the feet, big and round head as evidenced in these sculptures are the features that could be seen in the early images of Bihar as residue of the early tradition of the Gupta-Mathura style. It is a style that developed in its own way sharply through the Mathura-Gupta and the Sarnath tradition of the 5th Century A.D.

Thus, in respect of formal traits as reflected in this group, they share affinity with other centres, spread over a wide area. As suggested by J. D. Beglar,<sup>56</sup> this part of western Bengal had a long established connection with various parts of Bihar and Orrisa and the region stretching, perhaps, further north and western India.

All the images are carved on the oblong and rectangular stele. The images are, obviously, not free standing and have stele backs of much height. The first three images (Nos. 39, 38, 30, Pl. 32, 31, 23) show incised floral motifs on the stele face. The flower motifs seem to be bell shaped Campa and rosette in shallow relief. The image of Candraprabha (No. 40, Pl. 33) show horizontal tiers of shelves on its stele face. The sculpture representing Yaksi Ambika in this group has, in addition, floral scrolls carved on the borders of stele. These scrolls also remind the pattern, though more intricate, in the basement walls of the Paharpur Stupa.<sup>57</sup> Below, on the flanks of the *pādapītha* of the same image two stylised floral rhizomes are incised. This floral decorative motif in square or in parabolic space was a recurrent design in the 6th-7th Century A.D., in sculptures and architectural embellishment in eastern India including Orissa. It is also represented in the Paharpur basement wall, main

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pls. 68, 69, 70, 71.

<sup>56</sup> *Beglar, op. cit.*, pp. 48-51.

<sup>57</sup> *Cf.*, S. K. Saraswati, *op. cit.*, pl. VIII, fig 22.

temple,<sup>58</sup> on the stone temple plinth at the Nalanda Vihara, Site No. 2,<sup>59</sup> and in the early Orissan temples (e.g., Vaital, Sisiresvara, Muktesvara etc.).<sup>60</sup> In respect of stylistic traits the sculptures of Pakbirra belonging to this group, thus, establish in some respects, relationship with that of the Paharpur sculptures as in some other respect with the Rajgir-Nalanda group of stucco figures of the early period. Particular reference may be made of the four-handed figure of standing Balarama under the canopy of seven-hooded serpent with two attendants, found at Paharpur, first group, as reproduced and classified by Sri S. K. Saraswati.<sup>61</sup> In both the examples, Paharpur and Pakbirra, images of the first phase, eye-lids are sharply cut below the eye-brows, eye-lids slightly protruding, the upper lips also slightly projected, and the lower lips are thick. With their long and broad nose, the figures appear to look downward and their bodily stance are conspicuously earth bound. In the image of standing Ambika, this downwardness, is accentuated by the thick scarf hanging from the shoulder. The dilating shape of the breast and bulging hip, the soft and fleshy abdomen in a smooth concave curve and the gliding body contour of the Ambika image standing on the comparatively slender legs, all these features remind the sensuous and delicate figure of Nagi of the Maniyar Math, Rajgir, datable to C. 6th Century A.D.<sup>62</sup> But the figure of Ambika is more heavy and fleshy than the Maniyar Math image suggesting a closer affinity with the Paharpur figures. The Pakbirra image of the seated Parsvanatha (No. 30, Pl. 23) is more clear in execution and has a flowering body. The spread out and refinement clearly indicate the influence of Sarnath style as evident in the Rajgir and Nalanda stuccos. There is a semblance of massiveness in the figure, showing the different planes of body mingling in smooth curves. It is not a tension but an ecstasy that reverberates through the fully grown bodily formation. The half closed eyes with protruding eye-balls show the sensitive feeling for the world outside coming up to the conscious level from the trance of meditation. The serpent coil, shown at the throne back, is more compact in arrangement than that of the Balarama figure of Paharpur. This compactness and execution are not to be perceived in all images.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. IX, fig. 23 ; pl. XII, fig. 29 ; R. C. Majumder, *op. cit.*, 1963, pl. LVI, fig. 139.

<sup>59</sup> *Cf.*, Asher, *op. cit.*, pl. 75.

<sup>60</sup> *Cf.*, Kim Christen, *et al.*, *Designs from Orissan Temples*, Calcutta, 1950, pls. 2, 3, 10, 13, 25 ; Kanwar Lal, *Temples and Sculptures of Bhubaneswar*, Delhi, 1970, pls. 34, 35, 36.

<sup>61</sup> S. K. Saraswati, *op. cit.*, pl. No. III, fig. 11.

<sup>62</sup> Asher, *op. cit.*, pl. 20.

The image of Rsabhanatha (No. 38, Pl. 31) shows the broad unity with the other images of this group, but in a subdued scale, in respect of soft and delicate modelling, slenderness of legs and thinner feet. The image, as a whole, is not only a thinner and slender variety of the same sensuous style but also shows a slight change in modelling. The hip curve stretches right up to the side curves of the chest giving a new tone to the modulation of modelling and the sensuousness. The curve in the abdomen with a thin roll of flesh, the soft and delicate modelling, the slenderness in the leg demonstrate a further change in the bodily forms from heavy type to slender and light variety though the stature remains, short and under-developed.

This group also shows a flabby and distended form, a new variety of weighty physical type as evidenced in the figure of Candraprabha (No. 40, Pl. 33). The figure appears to have a flabby body with a thick unabsorbed mass of flesh on the upper part of the body to give a loose and soft texture. The heavy upper part of the body stands on the gradually tapering slender legs of erect posture. The short necked big size head accentuates the downward weight. As to that, the image is stylistically, close to the Paharpur variety of flabby and weighty forms. The sharp cutting of the eye-socket, the deep cut below the eye-brows, the stunted form, the lack of spreading in the body limbs all these features show an affinity with that of Bihar images of the post-Gupta period.<sup>63</sup>

The intervening phase is represented by a group of four sculptures viz., the *Dvi-tīrthika* image (No. 29, Pl. 22), the standing Mahavira image on a *pañca-ratha* pedestal (No. 32, Pl. 24) and the two images of Tutelary Couples (No. 8 & 3, Pl. 12 & 10) of the Jain pantheon. This phase is distinguished by the definite change in form producing a tendency towards tension and sensitivity in modelling coupled with a vacillation, as well for embracing the new aesthetic ideals for the mystic abstraction. The spiritual content is not always coordinated with the formal change. There is a perceptible lack of spontaneity and refinement in the execution. The proportion of forms has not yet been established in relation to the change. As a result this formal variation, in this changed situation may be explained, as the search for newer ideals. Though the downward stance has disappeared, the formal weight is still to be perceived. The images appear to be stunted in growth; while, deep curves forming concave planes appear and produce tension in one or two images. The spreading of limbs which was noticeable in the forms of Ambika and seated Parsvanatha in the first group, is not visible in this group of images,

<sup>63</sup> Cf., *Ibid.*, pls. 18, 47, 52, 70, 147.

On the whole, there appears a hesitation in accepting the new impulse, or a nostalgic pull from behind overriding the level of experience of the contemporary world. The narrative imagery is still retained in a subdued manner as if to provoke the subterranean memory as revealed in the image of the Tutelary Couple (No. 8, Pl. 12). On the other hand a metamorphosis is at work producing a hieratic exclusiveness which could be seen in the condensation of composition and a new pattern develops in the philosophical planes, as revealed in the image of Mahavira (No. 32, Pl. 24) or in the dual aspects of creation (Tutelary Couples). This is a set pattern finally settled during this period for Indian pantheon ; which reminds the *Yuganaddha* forms of the Buddhist and *Umāmaheśvara* (*Siva-Sakti*) forms of the Hindu icons.

A change in the stele format is also visible occasionally. The stele becomes more integrated and meaningful in respect of the image it holds. The simple and casually ornate with much blank space of the stele wall has given place to a regular and definite scheme of ornament and design. The simple division of the inner wall face of the stele with architectural designs and motifs and a change in the format of stele appear, correlating the stele with the images. This new phenomenon of a change either in stele format or in the decorative elements on the walls of the stele as appeared in the Mahavira image (No. 32, Pl. 24) and the *Dvi-tīrthika* image (No. 29, Pl. 22) in this group, will be more pronounced in the next phase of artistic activities of this site, indicating affiliation with the usages and practices of Bengal and Bihar.

The above mentioned *Dvi-tīrthika* image has neither had the spread of body limbs characteristic of the 9th Century A.D. onwards, nor they show the usual elongation and the sharp cut of modelling and body contour of the preceding phase. The Jina figures represented in this piece of sculpture appear to be squat with their short necks and big bulging heads and projecting thick lips giving an effect of childishness. The eye-balls pushing the eye-lids and the eye-brows schematically drawn in a continuous undulating curve. They do neither convey the inward feeling nor they express the emotion they are supposed to give vent. At the same time, the slenderness and softness in modelling that reduced weight, particularly, on the lower part of the body indicate the emergence of a new concept but of an immature and weak type. A date of the early 9th Century A.D. will not, perhaps, be liable to anachronism for the image. The figures of the *cauri*-bearers are fully grown, while the lower part of the body as a gradually slendering modulation, but resting on a flat and thick feet, which is reminiscent of the early type and on the other possibly of the Orissan modelling. The aureole, tending to parabolic

shape with concentric double chord devices on the circumference of the stele wall, the three triangular motifs (leaf branch) on the projected crossbar on the wall of the stele and the successive *ratha* projection on the pedestal, show a close relationship with the Bengal school of art. The standing Mahavira image (No. 32, Pl. 24), also show the similar motifs and designs on the stele wall. The *pañca-ratha* pedestal as well as the roundish upper curvature of the stele in the Mahavira image (No. 32, Pl. 24) speak of a closer affinity with the Bengal sculptural art of the early mediaeval period.

The image of Mahavira (No. 32, Pl. 24) has some common characteristics with other figures of the previous groups particularly, with that of the Rsabhanatha (No. 38, Pl. 31) in respect of gradually slendering and closely affixed legs and flat palm of the feet. The stature appears to be short in view of the short neck ; while the figure has assumed a straightened and frontal stance, with the flesh spread over the body. There is a deep concave curve at the sides of the chest forming a broader format of the shoulder. The hip curve stretches upward, while a roll of flesh on the navel add to the smooth and soft modelling. The upper portion of the body has a spreading effect due to this side curves of the chest but not in the actual rendering. The posture is stiff and tense as if the breadth is held on. The simple decoration of the *pañca-ratha* stele with the pilasters, crossbar and triangular motifs at the two ends, the parabolic aureole attest the general affiliation with the early Pala sculptures of Bengal and Bihar.<sup>64</sup>

**Tutelary Couple :** At least three Tutelary Couple of the Jain pantheon have so far been found from the Pakbirra temple site. In each representation, both the partners are shown seated under a tree on a high plank of the seat with one leg dangling below, while one representation (No. 3, Pl. 10) shows only one child resting on the female partner, in the other (No. 8, Pl. 12) example, each of the partner carries a child on their thighs.

Stylistically, they, indeed, share the traits of transition from the early phase to the later. But, before going into the details of their stylistic traits, the mythological association may briefly, be described. Each of the representations shows a seated Tirthankara image in meditation on the middle juncture of the outspread branches of a tree under which the couple is seated. One of these images (No. 8, Pl. 12) shows a sprouting palm tree holding a future Jina, now as a child, who is supposed to be

<sup>64</sup> Cf., R. C. Majumder, *op cit.*, 1963, pl. 10, fig. 28 ; Asher, *op cit.*, pl. 182 ; Stella Kramrisch, "Pala and Sena Sculpture", *Rupam*, Calcutta, October, 1929, figs. 15, 17.

descending from the top knot of the branch. The other which shows probably an Asoka tree (No. 3, Pl. 10) delineates a crescent moon on that branching knot in place of a child, suggesting, probably, the birth of Jina Candraprabha. In the former portrayal, there is a narrative carved in a panel on the front pedestal wall which outwardly shows a child being brought by an animal headed creature preceded by an animal rider. Thereafter two animal headed persons are shown in two opposite directions each carrying a child, while another lady holds a child. The story depicted through this panel is, probably the legend associated with the birth of Mahavira. Indra, in his heavenly abode, came to learn about conception of a Brahmin woman Devananda, who was to deliver a great man. He sent Harinaigamesa, one of his many retainues, to transfer the foetus from the Devananda's womb to that of the Trisala, a Ksatriya by caste.<sup>65</sup> If this story is narrated in the panel, then the Tirthankara represented in the scene is, no doubt, Mahavira and the couple are no other than the parents of Mahavira. In one of the representations (No. 8, Pl. 12) the central figures of the parents, are, more or less, squat and stunted in form ; but show a sensuous but sure strokes of modelling, particularly evident in the narrow waist, pleats of folding above navel region with slightly flattened abdomen of the female partner. In spite of the lack of spreading of limbs and smooth and round modelling with the loosened grip of the Sarnath School or the succeeding Rajgir-Nalanda style, the figures of the seated couple (No. 8, Pl. 12) show a tense emotion and an elegant and sensitive modelling.<sup>66</sup> The romance and joy on the birth of a child has been fully reflected in the emotion they expressed. The hair dressing, particularly, the big hair bun closeted in the net of the fillet prominently projected on the shoulder, the jewelled ribbon on the forehead, the armlets and necklaces all accentuate the feeling of joy and ecstasy and a sensuous charm. The other representation (No. 3, Pl. 10), seems to have a softer modelling with round and smooth curves of the shoulder. But the sculptural piece do not show the tense emotion or the sensitive and vivacious modelling of the previous one and appear to belong to that aesthetic norm which is revealed in the Deo-Markendeya sculptures of Bihar, of the similar type, of the 8th-9th Century A.D.<sup>67</sup> These sculptures show the sign of transformation towards hardening of concept of hieratic art. On the other, there appears also a slight tendency of body flexion and rhythmic curves in the postures of the female partner, of the former Tutelary Couple (No. 8, Pl. 12).

<sup>65</sup> Basanta Kumar Chattopadhyay (edited and translated), *Kalpasutra* (in Bengali) Calcutta, 1953, pp. 19-25 (*Jina Caritam*).

<sup>66</sup> Cf., Asher, *op cit.*, pl. 64.

<sup>67</sup> Cf., *Ibid.*, pls. 127, 130, 134.

The next longer phase of stylistic evolution, at Pakbirra, clearly ushered in a new change, distinguished by a new elegance, poise and composition. The composition sets new models, marked by tense presentation as reflected in the composition of mother and child and the attendant figures. This phase, from its early beginnings, shows a general tendency for elongation and spread out. The early vitality is still visible but in a restrained manner. The sensuousness is somewhat mellowed by the tense emotion and sensitive modelling : while the early heavier compactness, occasionally gives way to spacious composition. In place of stiff angularity which is not pronounced, there appears deep and pronounced curves in the modelling, producing a certain jolt and thrust. However, various elements and traits continue to appear in the modelling of these sculptures now definitely as outward bearings, which could not be taken as aesthetically important for Indian sculptures. Loose flesh, lankiness of legs, rigid postures, squat and dwarf formation, revealed in some images, are those elements which could only indicate some local trend and affiliation. As in the past, Rajgir and Nalanda continued to remain as living source of inspiration during this period. This is, specially, relevant for the refinement in carving and outspread formation. The influences of, or the sharing of elements and aesthetic traits with, the other time-bound centres of Bihar, excepting the region of Seraikella, Singhbhum district, Bihar, gradually diminished by this time on Pakbirra. But the heavier and massive cast of Bihar images had, by this time, undergone a change or not found at all as we proceed further east. At Pakbirra, this heaviness could not be seen in the condensed volume but appears to be dispersed in the outspread bodily formation. This could also be seen in a few monumental figures found at Pakbirra (No. 2, Pl. 9). In spite of all these traits and variations, there emerged certain basic modulation in carvings marked by deep concave curved and prolonged hip. This feature could also be seen in the Singhbhum sculptures though in heavier cast. Certain other new trends also appeared in this phase, probably from Orissa or central India, which will be described with reference to the context. The rise of the Bhanja Dynasty in Orissa of which the Mayurbhanj was a main centre saw an indigenous development of the Orissan art and architecture from the 9th-10th Century onwards.<sup>68</sup>

Pakbirra had then found its own way, rather to be called an indigenous trend to achieve the unity in plastic contents and forms in its sculptural art. All the divergences, and variations in the stylistic traits

<sup>68</sup> See, among others, Ramaprasad Chanda, *Bhanja Dynasty of Mayurbhanj and their Ancient Capital Khiching, Mayurbhanj*, 1929.

radiated from these diverse sources, had, ultimately been settled, under the new spell and impulse of neo-classical art of Bengal under the Palas. This new stylistic trend with a renewed impulse bearing a sign of new life is best illustrated in the representation of an image of Ambika with her two children (No. 1, Pl. 8) yielded from this temple site. The enchanting beauty of this figure does not ensue out of the fleshy modelling, but out of the sensitive tension. The volume of the body has been reduced to a much slenderness, excepting the motherly breast which is full and round, the figure, otherwise, appears as a wordly woman in active daily life. The renewed artistic impulse is felt through the spreading of limbs and a rhythm. The formation of the body has attained a balance and is free from the weight that bounds to the earth. On the other hand, the body as a whole appears to be elongated. The holding of the child by the fist show the opposite strain to the upward direction.

The diaphanous skirt exposes the body planes. The ends and edges of the drapery are shown in thin linings tucked up much above the anklets like that of the Buddhist images ; but it seems more fitting to rural woman in movement. The prominent side curves of the trunk and a narrow cylindrical part below the breast, help in the attenuation of a height which is more or less balanced by the full and round breast. The thin folds of flesh above the navel part, usually to be seen in the female figures of Bihar in the early 9th Century A.D.,<sup>69</sup> is not to be found here.

The setting of the thick mango-grove at the top is also fitting, beside its iconic value, presenting a rural scene with mother at work. Is there any agony glittering in her facial expression ? The strain is visible in her eye-brows and open mouth, while the eye-lid is a narrow strip pierced open in a shallow surface ; it is full of care and attention. The two-fold hair bun within fillet nets are rolling over the shoulder back. The image stands within a niche-like stele between the two staff like projections. The pattern of hair dressing has the similarity with the other female figures (Ambika, No. 39, Pl. 32; Tutelary Couple, No. 8, Pl. 12) belonging to the first and intervening phases. This is perhaps the common type of this region, more akin to the Orissan type and is rare in other region. This oblong niche like stele, the pattern of hair doing, the rolling bun and the jewelled ribbon round the head remind a stone image of an Astamahabhaya Tara of the 9th Century A.D. of Ratnagiri, Orissa, now in Patna Museum.<sup>70</sup> But its slender form and sensitive tension is

<sup>69</sup> Cf., Asher, *op cit.*, pls. 186, 207, 241.

<sup>70</sup> S. K. Saraswati, *Tantrayana Art*, An Album, Calcutta, 1977, No. 101, pp. XXVI-XXXVII.



unique and may be taken as the western Bengal version of that tradition. The image may thus be placed in the 9th Century A.D. and has much to speak about the ideals of the feminine beauty of this area.

Another series of Tirthankara images, belonging to this phase would give a more or less detailed account of the development of this neo-classical art in its multi-directional approach and trends. Even at this stage of development, from the 9th Century onwards, of the sculptural art, viz., western Bengal, was not smooth and perfunctory. At least three or four variation in modelling and norms could be seen within the broad arena of the neo-classical art.

Before going into the details of the central figures, the outer facets of the stele may also be considered. In this series of images, the simple inner division of the stele appears in greater number than the preceding phases. The projected decorative crossbar on the stele face drawn as the line of architectural demarcation between the upper and lower part, coincides with the division of the trunk of the image and the head ; the head being placed on the aureole—oval, parabollic or circular in shape. The triangular motif on the two ends of the crossbar is also obviously present in almost all the intact sculptures of this group. This is indeed a regional decorative motif, usually to be seen exclusively in Bengal and Bihar images. The variation of the said motif may also be noticeable in different pieces. In one or two representation like that of a jewelled crest of crown (Nos. 32, 48, Pls. 24, 41), in one instance, it is central *kumbhas* (water pot) one above the other from which *pallavas* emerge in a triangular shape (No. 46, Pl. 39), in an another stele, it represents a *sikhara* of miniature temple (No. 5, Pl. 11), whereas others seem to have the leafs on a stem (No. 47, Pl. 40). This motif on the crossbar is recurrent in images from almost all parts of Bengal and in various images of Rajgir-Nalanda and Gaya area from the 8th-9th Century A.D. onwards.<sup>71</sup> Probably, these decorative elements on the stele face had been used as the insignia of a particular region and as the meaningful canonical sanction for the images. These decorative elements might have some connection with the temple architecture of this area. Beside this, the shapes and designs of the aureole viz., oval, parabollic with beaded rings and flame-tounged border emanating from the crossbar/lintel also suggest affinity with this region. This formation of the aureole would also indicate a general time element which is not earlier than the 9th Century A.D. The stele format and its variation is also significant in view of its cultural orbit and the nature of contact. The vertical side projection on the oblong

<sup>71</sup> See Note 63 *infra*.

and rectangular stele in the shape of the shaft column, making a niche-like depth in which the image is emerging, is usually to be seen in Orissa and its adjacent areas as far as the central India.<sup>72</sup> Even most of the images found from Suissa<sup>73</sup> in the border of Purulia have this niche-like stele. The upper curvature of the stele top coming out of the depth while the stele format somewhat broader at the base as seen in the image of Rsabhanatha (No. 5, Pl. 11) remind particularly the Bihar images<sup>74</sup> with that type of stele formation, of that period while the shallow curvature forming almost a triangle in one or two images (Nos. 32, 37, 1, Pls. 24, 30, 8) is to be met within the U. P. and central India images (cf. Allahabad, Rewa, Satna), particularly in 10th-11th Century A.D.<sup>75</sup> However, the decorative elements on the stele face, as stated before, may be seen in all forms of stele. Along with it, this may be noted that not a single image found from this area shows the finial top at the centre of the upper curvature, popularly used in many images of Bengal of Pala period. But the fact remains that there is a conscious effort for bringing a unity in the use of stele with image. The stele is more meaningful and suggestive than the preceding stages.

However, the stylistic traits that echoed through these Jain Tirthankara images are broadly characterised by their reduced nature of the traits of the period. They show, no doubt, the spreading of bodily formation, but the vigour and tension is reduced. They frequently switch-over to a soft, fleshy and loose body type with a certain lankiness of the legs. It is to be noted here that even in the later period in Jain art, the tension has always been softened and the rhythmic stance usually to be seen in the images of other pantheons, in this period, has not had the scope to play.

This series shares, as usual, the Tirthankara images standing strictly in erect postures with *kāyotsarga mudrā*, flanked by *caurī*-bearers while some miniature Tirthankara figures as family members are represented in single or in pairs on the projected shelves or surface of the stele. Some

<sup>72</sup> R. D. Banerjee, *History of Orissa*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1931, pl. 72 (between pp. 404 and 405).

Pramod Chandra, *Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum, A Descriptive Catalogue*, American Institute of Indian Studies, Poona, n.d., pls. 397, 420, 421.

<sup>73</sup> None of the Jain Sculptures preserved at a sculpture shed constructed by the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal, at Suissa, Dt. Purulia, have been published so far. The authors wish to discuss the stylistic features of these sculptures in a forthcoming paper.

For a report on the antiquities of Suissa, see, Beglar, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>74</sup> Cf., Kramrisch. *op. cit.*, figs 22, 23.

<sup>75</sup> Cf., Pramod Chandra, *op. cit.*, nos. 284, 286, 378, 388, 397, 421.

of the images show eight Jyotiska-devas in vertical rows. Some other sculptures mostly broken pieces show variation in the composition of side figures and additional elements are added to accentuate its spiritual content.

The figure of the Rsabhanatha (No. 37, Pl. 30) in this series represent a massive and masculine feature with a fully developed stature. The curves on the side chest show a more smooth glide while the body planes remain perceptible. The face is oblong showing a sturdiness with broad and long nose. It is more of a placid but earthly contentment of a human look than a divine grace that appeared in this image. This sturdiness is no doubt a reflection of the modelling of the Bihar images, particularly of Gaya region of the 9th-10th Century A.D.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, there is a pliable body plane, and a slight spread out of the body. The lankiness of the legs is gone ; instead a robust, heavy body appears. The upper curvature of the stele along with the decorative motifs are seen as usual. This robust masculinity is a feature that finds a closeness with the Bihar images in the 8th-9th Century A.D.

The development of sculptural art in the western part of Bengal particularly in the Manbhum region *vis-s-vis* in the Chhota-Nagpur plateau was not an even one. There had not been a smooth transition from the Gupta tradition through a linear path to the Pala aesthetic ideals, characterised by sensitive and tense system with emotion expressed on rhythmically drawn slim and spread-out body limbs. While the images of Ambika (No. 1, Pl. 8) show the general affinity with the early Pala aesthetic norms, in respect of certain features already noted above, some other images of the second group, have not had the same ideals followed in their modelling.

The lightening of robustness in the modelling of the figure of Santinatha (No. 45, Pl. 38) has been effected by the sudden curves in the sides of the chest and a soft and round modelling of the hip stretched upwards to meet the concavity of the side curve ; the gap between the elongated hands and the body proper has as such been widened. The neck is short but face is broad and round with mute protruding eye-balls. The eyebrows are stretched upwards which could not produce the expected sensitive feeling on account of the muteness of the eyes and overall flabby and soft modelling. The fleshy lower part replaces the lankiness of the

<sup>76</sup> P. Chandra, "Some Remarks on Bihar Sculpture from the 4th to the 9th Century", in Pratapaditya Pal (edited), *Aspects of Indian Art*, Lieden, 1972, pp. 59-64, pls. XXVII, XXVIII.

early images. The *sapta-ratha* pedestal and the stele decoration appear to represent the fully developed format of the Pala schools. The *caurī*-bearers are squat and robust in formation but their fattened legs and flat feet-palms remind the Orissan type of the *Circa* 10th Century A.D. Besides, their straightened gait also reflect the posture of *alasa-kanyā* in the Orissan temples.<sup>77</sup> The late date is corroborated also by the intricate pattern of aureole and a certain clumsy ornamentation of the stele. The colossal Padmaprabha (No. 2, pl. 9) image is, perhaps, the outstanding example of the Jain aesthetic ideal of the period. It is through this image, that we find the expression of spiritual ideal. The body without any back support, stands aloft like the mount Sammeta with half closed eyes in a perfect poise. The figure, with a broad frame of the breast and a bulging hip and thigh has been delineated within the unswerving curves, which tend to form opposite folds of body planes. The angle formed on the waist has a certain jolt and a tension which is counter balanced by the softly modelled voluptuous body planes. The flesh has been distributed in different planes. The neck is short holding a fully bloomed placid face. The Jain aesthetic ideal as seen in its height at this Pakbirra image in the 10th Century A.D. has preferred a subdued emotion and relatively soft modelling while the general rhythmic modulation and the spreading out of body limbs of the period has been attenuated through the side curves and body planes. This formal approach has attained a more accurate poise and measure in the image of Rsabhanatha (No 5, Pl. 11). The balanced posture, the measured flowering of the body limbs and the perfect stance represent the final satiation of the Pakbirra style. The surplus flesh is gone, the curves have a soft modulation. A soft smile shines on the placid face, whereas the neck is raised to present a perfect frontal look. The broad and round shoulder, clearly modelled breast gradually tapering to a slightly modelled flesh of navel base. The legs are slightly tapering, but flabby.

The style has its counterpart in the bejewelled standing Visnu images of Bengal in the 10th Century A.D.<sup>78</sup> It has some association with the Rajgir-Vaibhara hill standing Neminatha images of *Circa* 8th Century A.D.<sup>79</sup> though in a more evolved form and workmanship.

<sup>77</sup> Cf., Kanwar Lal, *op. cit.*, pls. 47, 60.

<sup>78</sup> Cf., Visnu Torso, basalt, from Sunderbans, West Bengal, 10th Century A.D., Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, University of Calcutta (No. 74). Description, Sir Leigh Ashton (edited), *The Art of India and Pakistan, A Commemorative Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1947-8*, London, 1949, No. 251, p. 57; Reproduction, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, University of Calcutta, *Twelve Pictorial Cards of Bengal Sculptures*, Set II, No. 7.

<sup>79</sup> Asher, *op. cit.*, pl. 184.

The closely affixed smooth tapering legs and loose fleshy bodied image of Rsabhanatha (No. 47, Pl. 40) may recall the slender legged flabby, short necked images of Pakbirra of the earlier period in its subdued platitude. The artistic style of the western India,<sup>80</sup> where we find slender legged elongated soft fleshy body types, may have a corresponding influence on the images, though the corresponding spreading of body limbs and the vitality therewith is absent here. The loose and soft surface of the body, the absence of body planes, and the overexecuted smoothness are the features that distinguishes it from others ; while the pronounced flexions in the figures of *caurī*-bearers is also at par with the widespread practices in the 10th Century A.D. in northern India. The image is carved out within a rectangular stele with side frames. This fleshy softly modelled type has a more balanced and flowering example in another representation of Rsabhanatha (No. 46, Pl. 39). The image is carved out on a rectangular stele with *pañca-ratha* pedestal having the same type of stele decoration as the former one with pilasters, triangular motif on the crossbar emanating a roundish halo disc with beaded and flame-tongued border devices, reminiscent of the Pala type. The projected side-frame shaft also appears, on which pairs of Tirthankara images in vertical rows are carved out. The height of the figure appears to be remarkably elongated with the body limbs closely affixed. The soft fleshy body is devoid of modulations of planes. This closeness of limbs in a narrowed strip and the absence of jolting curves give an impression of accentuated height and elongation of limbs as well as a soft and placid contentment. This image also has the same traits of short neckedness, but the head is round and smaller in size. The change and intermixing of different traits and modelling in different images speak of a quest for developing a style of its own for ideological expression. On the other hand, this variation points to the multi-directional associations, approach, and effort to formulate a style of mediaeval period in eastern India. The harmonious blending of the elements, that become necessary for the attainment of eastern Indian emotion, sensitive feeling and iconometrical stability, has been found to have represented in a Rsabhanatha image (No. 48, Pl. 41), the last of the series in the second group of sculptures under review. In both the stele decoration and the main figures, the known idioms of the region is perceptible. The rhythmic curve of the aureole, the mouldings of the lintel-cum-crossbar, the criss-cross scratches on the pilaster and the *pañca-ratha* pedestal with tenon at the bottom are the prevalent features of the Bengal and Bihar sculptures of the 10th-11th Century A.D. The attendant *caurī*-bearers have a stout stature ; while their flexions have an extra flavour of straightening—

<sup>80</sup> Particularly Ellora, late phase.

the stiff forward thrust of the chest, and the curve of the left legs of the *cauris*—make an angular tension on the hip. This tension and straightening is obviously present in the major temple sculptures of Orissa, Khajuraho, from the 10th-11th Century A.D. But the main figure is on the whole a representative of the Pala aesthetic ideals, the chest-  
navel triangle forming the usual *gomukhākṛti*—the head of a cow. But there is a marked angularity in the body format. However, these groups of sculptures may be classified into the following categories :

- (1) Short stature, slender legged, short necked type  
No. 32, Pl. 24 ; No. 40, Pl. 33 ; No. 29, Pl. 22.
- (2) Broad shoulders, elongated type  
No. 30, Pl. 23 ; No. 5, Pl. 11 ; No. 48, Pl. 41
- (3) Fleshy type  
No. 40, Pl. 33 ; No. 47, Pl. 40.
- (4) Fleshy, elongated type  
No. 47, Pl. 40 ; No. 46, Pl. 39.
- (5) Masculine type with prominent body planes  
No. 37, Pl. 30 ; No. 45, Pl. 38.

Keeping in view of above discussion, we may now approach to the other sculptures yielded from Pakbirra. There are another series of fragmentary pieces of sculptures showing mainly the lower part of Jina images, and a few high pedestals with elaborate carvings, delineating the Jyotiska-devas, Yaksi, Naga couple etc. Amongst them the sculpture representing the fragment of the image of Parsvanatha attended by the Naga couple (No. 44, Pls. 36 & 37) deserves special mention. We have already known of the 'serpent imagery' of the Maniyar Math stuccos. There were three niches on the south-west side of the Maniyar Math cylindrical shrine where the images of serpent deities or Nagas were represented. On the southern side of the same cylinder contained two Nagas and a Nagi. The Maniyar Math is, most probably, derived from the name of Maninaga. It was believed that the realm of the Nagas was located beneath the Vaibhara hill of Rajagrha, close to Maniyar Math.<sup>81</sup> There is a legend of a black snake on the eve of the birth of Parsvanatha and we also find the legend of a snake Dharanendra by name

<sup>81</sup> Asher, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 and 25.

who was saved by Parsvanatha from the burning wounds.<sup>82</sup> However, the entwined snake is generally taken as an auspicious symbol. As the keeper of sacred wisdom, the serpent deities are being worshipped. Here this imagery of Naga couple, probably, appears to be offering the pitcher of wisdom. This piece of sculpture shows a very bold and lively composition with a balance and symmetry. The spread out of the composition, the elongation, and rhythm of the stance of the attendant figures as well as the ease and freedom of expression reminds affinity with the Rajgir-Nalanda type in an evolved form, and may be dated to the early 9th Century A.D. These *caurī*-bearers in respect of spreading out of the body limbs, and their stance resembles the figures of Lokanatha, of Nalanda,<sup>83</sup> while this type, does not appear in any other sculpture so far discussed. The stance of the *caurī*-bearers as attendant figures of Rsabhanatha (Nos. 17 & 19, Pls. 14 & 15 lower part) show the same stiff curve of the left leg making an angle on the hip as we have found in the image No. 48 (Pl. 41). This straitened posture and, a sudden jolting concavity in the back of the upper portion making forward thrust of the chest, all point to the affiliation to central India type of 11th Century A.D. The amorous *surasundarī* figures of Orissa and central Indian temple have the similar stance evoking a confident sensibility. The idioms and the modelling are more pronounced than that of earlier piece of sculpture (No. 48, Pl. 41) belonging to the second group. The front faced goggle-eyed lions have their own glyphic characters with schematic manes, bulging chest, one of the leg being foreshortened. This type of leoglyphs have their other representation in the fragmentary pieces No. 44 (Pl. 36), No. 26 (Pl. 21), No. 22 (Pl. 17). This mode of representation of leoglyph also appears in an early piece of Mahavira image (No. 32, Pl. 24). The remains of the legs of the fragment of the Rsabhanatha (Nos. 17, 19, Pls. 14, 15) is smooth round and soft and has a perfect equipoise in the stance.

The fragment of a Jina figure (No. 20, Pl. 16) showing the lower portion of the body without the feet and flanked by two attendant *caurī*-bearers, has the same traits of smoothened surface through long, round and soft column like legs with a slight trace of knee cap. The beautiful smooth curves of the modelling gradually develop into a flowering body. The easy flow of the curves, without any restraint is a sign of maturity and stability of a style possibly ushered in this area in the 10th-11th Century A.D. In the stance of the *caurī*-bearers this case is achieved. The fleshy curves in the navel and pelvic region is absent here and the

<sup>82</sup> Basanta Kumar Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124 (911-94).

<sup>83</sup> Asher, *op. cit.*, pl. 162.

soft flesh is evenly distributed through this elongated body type. This soft flesh and modelling with a trace of flabiness of flesh is apparent also in the fragment of a Jina figure (No. 19, Pl. 15). The full flowering of the body limbs without the least trace of modulation of body planes, and showing a fleshy, soft and smoothened modelling and the easy flow of curves as appeared in these sculptural fragments, suggest a mature, stable style in the later period and may perhaps, form a new group, with distinct stylistic traits of the last phase of artistic activity of the region. However, stylized scroll of the foliage in the pedestal with under-cut treatment which also stems out of the lotus feet for the images reminds the intricate pattern and devices of the late Pala and Sena periods.<sup>84</sup> The tendency towards outer ornamentation and emphasis on floral decorative designs round the images on the stele surface is a very common feature particularly of the Bengal sculpture in the 11th-12th Century A.D. These fragmentary pieces, of Jain pantheon, found at Pakbirra, Purulia, have provided some space with floral scroll (No. 19, Pl. 15; No. 26, Pl. 21; No. 22, Pl. 17) with high plinth pedestal having architectural carving.

Beside the standing images, the temple site at Pakbirra contains some architectural fragments (No. 22, Pl. 17; No. 26, Pl. 21) probably used as the high plinth of the image pedestal with elaborate carving of architectural components—miniature pillars, niches, etc. One of them shows a *pañca-ratha* type (No.22,Pl.17) while the other is a *tri-ratha* one (No. 26, Pl. 21). Their big size tends to give an impression of being a member of the temple architecture. Each fragment contains a Yaksi figure in their central niches; while goggle-eyed leoglyphs bigger in size than the Yaksi figure (in case of No. 26) are represented in separate niches in the next lower projection seemingly, meant for Tirthankara image, seated above. Lower projections are bedecked with *grahapati* images. The Yaksi image of No. 22 Pl. 18, in the central niche, may be identified with the representation of Prajnapti, the Yaksi of Tirthankara Sambhavanatha. The aesthetic idioms followed in this image show an approach to a sensitive and emotional type allowing deep shadows through the concavity of planes, and rhythmic lines, belonging to C. 10th Century A.D.

There are other detachable *pādapīthas* being carvings of motifs on which Jina images may have been placed.

<sup>84</sup> Cf., Kramrisch, *op cit.*, fig. 19; R. D. Banerjee, *op cit.*, pl. LVII (b), LVII (c), LXII (e); A. C. Chakravarti, *Balurghat College Museum Memoir, 1975, Balurghat, n.d.*, illustration on cover page.



A fragmentary piece of Gargoyle (No. 43, Pl. 35) has also been found at Pakbirra which is conceived as a Nagi holding a water spout. Only the half portion of the mouth of the water spout is opened for the control of the water flow. The figure shows a round volume with a pliable smooth surface. Along with this a mellow restraint is also visible in the modelling of this figure suggesting a date of *Circa* 10th Century A.D.

Whether as a centre of carving or as a recipient, the temple site of Pakbirra has undoubtedly flourished for a long period of about 500 years plus minus. As indicated above, these sculptural remains show this wide span of time in as far as their stylistic traits are concerned. They appear to show different stylistic phases, of which each phase, also, gives out variation in some individual traits within the major stylistic phase. It may thus be stated that the growth of the style in different phases was not simply linear but had also horizontal expansion, which admits of various traits of the adjacent or remote stylistic zones. All these traits or elements have not been assimilated into idioms and some have been left behind as a temporary, isolated phenomenon. Stylistically the early phase appears to have the lower limit of time to C. 6th Century A.D. Hereafter a process is presumed to have taken place for the elimination and identification of different aesthetic traits and elements for achieving a coherent style. It appears that the vibrant post-Gupta traits of the early period remained active in this area down to late 8th Century A.D. or more. The flowering Sarnath ideal, may be as indirect source, has been felt by the sculptors of this area as a major force but for a short period in the late 6th Century A.D. Otherwise the old plastic ideal, say the Mathura idioms, in various moulds and mixtures have a say to this sculptural art.

Along with this, some foreign traits, unabsorbed in the style made appearance again and again even in the later period. The fleshy mass on the body, sometimes distended, on lanky legs is one of such traits which appears in a few images of the later period. The stout formation of neck, appearing in the early and later period sculptures at Pakbirra, is also a distinctive feature of the workmanship. This feature may be regarded more as mannerism than as a component part of the style. It did not add to the aesthetic quality. But some other aesthetic traits grew out as basic form of expression and therewith some subsidiary but important features, could be traced which may be regarded as the characteristic stylistic traits and affiliation. Most of the sculptures show the over-reaching hip curve, apparently, extended over the waist and forming a broader convex curve meeting the concavity of the two sides of the

upper part of the body. This deep concavity on the two sides of the upper part of the body is deeply pronounced, and runs in opposite folds through the waist and heightened hip curves. This deep concave curve produces a forward thrust on the chest. This forward thrust, though not accompanied with this pronounced side curves, may also be seen in the Orissan sculptures.

There appears also some other subsidiary stylistic features, that have close parallel in the Orissan or central Indian sculptural art. In somewhat late period, the attendant *caurī*-figures of a number of images show a straightened gait producing a back twist and twisted gesture (Pl. 14, No. 41 frontal effect is shown) in place of rhythmic flexions of the Bengal and Bihar sculptures of the Pala period. This shows close resemblance with the stance of Orissan *surasundarī* and the amorous female figures of the central Indian temples.

But this concave side curvature of the Pakbirra sculptures seems to have been a basic formula in the modelling of image figures which is almost, invariably, present in Manbhum and Singhbhum sculptural art (Visnu from Benisagar, and seated Matrka images, Seraikella, Singhbhum District, Bihar).<sup>85</sup> This feature may also be found, in a wide area, as far as Champapur, Bihar (standing Rsabhanatha image).<sup>86</sup> While the Singhbhum images show robust, heavy and stunted stature, the Champapur image appears to be slender, delicate and fully grown. The earthiness in the Pakbirra images have never had robustness or heaviness as that of the Gaya, Shahkund or Singhbhum images. Whatever crudity or aesthetic loss may be encountered in some of the Pakbirra images, the predilection towards soft and delicate chiseling has never been lost sight of.

<sup>85</sup> Asher, *op cit.*, pls. 102 and 206.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 200.

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