

JAINA IMAGES AND THEIR PREDOMINANT STYLES : DAHALA AND SOUTH KOSALA REGION

Dr. R. N. MISRA

The paper attempts to make a brief study of Jaina sculptures in Central India and their stylistic evolution within an over-all pattern of sculptural style that shaped the images of the region under the Kalachuris of Dahala and South Kosala. ¹

It is of interest to note that although the Kalachuris were devout Saivas, their faith did not come in way of development of Jainism in the region under their control. Some official records of the Kalachuris testify to the construction of temples

dedicated to Jinas, while prolific remains of sculptures of Jinas, the seated couples (variously identified as Dharanendra-Padmavati, Ambika-Sarvanha or the parents of Jina), the Jaina *sasana devatas* and *Upasakas* indicate the patronage—both royal and individual—that Jainism seems to have enjoyed during the Kalachuri rule. That some of these images are related to a distinct iconic tradition which is *sui generis* has also been sometimes stressed. ²

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1. Many of the sites in these regions were explored by Cunningham and his assistants Baglar and Garrick in the last century. Among others who worked on this region mention may be made of Bhandarkar and Cousens, Only R. D. Banerji made a study of some consequence in which he attempted to present a systematic survey of the monuments of Haihayas (also known as Chedis or Kalchuris) of Tripuri. Despite these studies no serious attempt was made till recently to systematise the vast amount of Archaeological evidence in terms of sculptures and monuments in the region. These monuments are however are now receiving some attention.
 2. The authors' 'Yakshini images and the Matrika Tradition in Central India', *Prachya Pratibha*, III, (i), pp. 29-34.

Quantitatively the epigraphic evidence with regard to Jain monuments in the region under the survey is scanty. We have an inscription of K. E. 900/ 1149 A. D. referring to the setting up of a Tirthankara image (at Tripuri) by Jasadeva and Jasadhaval of Mathura. This short dedicatory inscription is engraved on the pedestal of this image which is now in the collection of Sir Hari Singh Gour Archaeological Museum of University of Sagar. ³

In the Bahoribandha Jain image inscription of the time of Gayakarna (1123-1153) we find a reference to the construction of a temple of Tirthankara Santinath by Mhabhoja, son of Sarvadhara. ⁴ This inscription affords information regarding the construction of a *mandira*, 'temple', along with a very white *vitana*, 'canopy', in front of it. During its heyday, as the inscription testifies, the shrine was a *ramya*, 'beautiful', construction. Similarly the *vitana* was 'very white' and 'extremely beautiful'. The name of the *sutradhana*, 'architect', who made it was

Sreshthin and the *acharya* who consecrated the image was Subhadra. This *acharya* belongs to the *anvaya*, 'line', of the Desigana in the Amnaya of holy Chandrakara. ⁵

The Alhaghat inscription of V. S. 1216/1159 A. D. refers to the construction of a *shatishadika ghat* and a temple dedicated to Ambika on the road leading to the *ghat*. ⁶ This deed was performed by *Ranaka* Chihula who belongs to the line of the Rautiyas of Kausambi. The *Ranaka* himself was a feudatory of the Kalachuri Narsimhadeva (1153-1163). It is difficult to say whether this temple was dedicated to Ambika, the *sasanadevi* of Neminath or to the Brahmanical deity of the same name. But the coincidence of the existence of a Jain temple at Patyan Dae (Satna district) is interesting in this connection. That this temple is a Jain monument is beyond doubt. It may be dated to about 12th century. Stylistically, the figures of Jinas on the lintel of the doorway and the other decorative figures on the doorframe

3. Cf. Dikshit, M. G., *Madhya Pradesh ke puratatva ki ruprekha* (in Hindi; Sagar 1954), p. 70; *Tripuri—1952* (Sagar, 1955); p. 12, pl. VII, B.
4. Cf., Mirashi, V. V., *Inscription of the Chedi Kalachuri Era*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. IV (i) (Ootacamound, 1955, inscription no. 59, p. 310-311; Cunningham, A., *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, Vol. IX, p. 40; Bhandarkar, P. R. *A. S. W. I.* for 1903-04, pp. 54-55.
5. According to Mirashi this may be identical with the Chandrakapat *Gaccha* of Digambar sect, Cf., *C. I. I.*, IV (i), p. 310, note 3; *Indian Antiquary*, XXI, p. 73. It is also of interest to note that Sarvabhadra the father of donor belong to a line namely Golla parva *anvaya* which still has several adherents in M. P.
6. Mirashi, V. V., *opcit.* p. 323-24.

appear to belong to a period of the art of Dahala when decadence had already set in. But it is curious to note that housed in this temple was an image of Ambika of about 10th century. ⁷ The image now fills the collection of the Allahabad Municipal Museum.

Incidentally, it may be noted here that the Alhaghat inscription refers to several craftsmen also who might have been associated with the construction of the ghat and the Ambika temple. No less than five craftsmen are mentioned in it, namely the *Sutradhara* Kamlasinha and his team consisting of Some, Kokasa, Palhana, and Dalhana. The inscription seems to indicate that the number of craftsmen and artisans was growing while the patronage and style was fast dwindling by now.

This is all that the Kalchuri epigraphs tell about art activity related to Jainism. The Jain remains in the region however are prolific though scattered. Although most of the remains are in nature of loose sculptures, it may be surmised on their basis that Jaina temples must have existed at Bilhari and Karitalai besides the Patyan

Dae temple of the Satna district and the Bahoridhandha shrine of Santinatha in the Jabalpur district. The speculation regarding the former two places is based on the doorframes which still exist at Karitalai and Bilhari. The connected monuments have disappeared now and their ruins shifted to the Rani Durgavati Museum (Jabalpur) and Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum (Raipur). ⁸ Among these places Bilhari came into prominence architecturally when Nohala, the queen of Yuvarajadeva I (915-945) built the reputed Nohalesvara *matha* and Somanath temple there. The remains of these constructions can still be seen in the reconstructed Vishnu-Varaha temple of Bilhari. Karitalai became famous for its temples one of which was built in 840-41 A. D. ⁹ and the other some time during the reign of Lakshmanaraja II (945-70). These constructions define the background of building activity which eventually seems to have influenced the content of Jaina art also, for it was a significant part of a whole in which sharp lines of division in respect of stylistic details get blurred. These circumstances also explain as to why in

7. For the details of this image of Ambika, cf., Saraswati, S. K., *Jisoa.*, VIII. 148; Shah, U. P., *Studies in Jain Art*, Banaras, 1955), p. 18; *Journal of University of Bombay*, Sept. 1941.
8. Cf. Jain, B. C., 'Sculptures from Karitalai in Raipur Museum' *Journal of Indian Museums*, Vol. XIV-XVI (1958-60), pp. 19-20. cf also *Prachya Pratibha*, vol. III (i), 1975, p. 89 During the course of my field work which covered the areas of Vindhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh most of the sites covered contain Jaina Sculptures.
9. This Temple at Karitalai was dedicated probably to the Trinity of Hindu Pantheon. The opening verses of the Karitlai inscription of K. E. 593/840-41 A. D. have : *om namostu Druhinopendrarudrebhyayah.* cf. Mirashi, V. V., *opcit.*, p. 181,

the otherwise wholly Jainistic images there is often a distinctive iconographic touch which does not conform to the conventional Jaina iconography. Any number of examples may be cited to indicate this phenomenon of mutual adjustment in the details of images and iconography. A major example of this is to be seen in the Jain temple of Arang which is an architectural marvel interpreting the *bhumija* style of architecture usually reserved for Saiva temples.¹⁰ Another typical example of iconographic adjustments in Jaina sculpture is afforded by the Hanumantal (Jabalpur) Jina image. A Jaina image from Karitalai (now displayed in the Raipur Museum) similarly interprets a variation of the same idiom which is predominant in the Hanumantal image. Stylistically these images conform to the idiom of sculptures of Karitalai and Tripuri-Jabalpur region as a whole, as obtaining in the 10th and 11th century.

natha, Sambhavanatha, Santinatha, etc. and Ambika. Some of these images have now been spoiled due to liberal dabs of oil applied on them. Iconographically however a pillar now standing in the compound of the Town Council office at Narsinghpur is interesting. This pillar originally was decorated with the surmounting *sarvatobhadrika* images whose pedestals with their empanelled *sasanadevi* figures have fortunately escaped damage. Thus on them we have the figures of Padmavati, Ambika and Chakreshwari (the fourth figure is damaged).¹¹ A Jina image in the Subhash Park of Narsinghpur is also of interest and seems to articulate the same breadth of style which interprets the Jina images of Sohagpur (the Thakur's collection) and Jabalpur (Cursetjee's collection) published by Banerji.¹² Images of Jinas *sasanadevis* and *upasakas* having their bearing on the Jaina art and iconography are¹³ fairly abundant in the region of Shadol, (Antara, Singhpur), Jabalpur (Tewar, Karitalai, Bilhari, Darshani Gurji, Bahoribaodha), Sagar (Bina-Barha, Deori, Ranital), Satna (Ramvan Museum collection, Patyan Dae), all of which once formed the part of an

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10. For a detailed study of Bhumija mode in temple architecture, see Krishna Deva, 'Bhumija Temples', in *Studies in Temple Indian Architecture*, Ed. Pramod Chandra (1975) pp. 90-113.
 11. Cf. Munikanta Sagar, *khandaharon ka baibhava* in (Hindi), pp. 199-200.
 12. Banerji, R. D., *The Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments* (M. A. S. I. No. XXIII), p. 100, pl. XLI, B; p. 102, pl. XLVIII, B.
 13. Bajpai, K. D., in the *Bulletin of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology*, (Sagar 1967), p. 74.

extensive Dhala Mandala. In the South Kosala region similarly images are known from Bilaspur and Raipur districts at such places as Sirpur, Malhar, Dhanpur, Ratanpur, Padampur, etc.¹⁴ Among these notable examples are from Arang and Malhar. All in all, the content of Jaina art in the regions under observation here is fairly rich in types, iconography and style. It is the last aspect which has been discussed in the following pages.

II

In the period following the Guptas, Central Indian region indicates a very definite idiom of style in sculptures which seems to have derived itself from the classical mannerisms of art that came up mainly of the Gupta-Vakataka tradition of the north and the Deccan. Although securely dated images of the post-Gupta phase in Central India are mostly absent, the stylistic features of evolving images are to some extent traceable in stages from certain dated examples known from Eran, Mandoor and certain other regions in Rajasthan. In the Dahala however the images from Nandchand (Panna district)

and Sagar (Ardhanarisvara image in the Sir H.S. Gouar Museum), provide stylistic indices to the evolution of modes and mannerism in sculptural art and help in establishing its forms that obtained during the transitional phase. A study of transformation of 'classical idiom into 'Medieval' has reference here geographically to two different regions of Central India namely the Dahala and the South Kosala.¹⁵ In terms of patronage, it appears that the Panduvamsis in the South Kosala and the Kalachuris in Dahala were mainly responsible for developing different styles. Of these to the South Kosala idiom has a greater sophistication artistry and a concerted historical tradition. The inscriptions of the Sarabhapuriyas,¹⁶ Pandus¹⁷ and Nalas¹⁸ in the South Kosala indicate that this region had come to assume an important position in the wake of political conflicts and change of power following the dissolution of the Guptas and the Vakatakas. Even as the different dynasties of the South Kosala succeeded the Guptas and the Vakatakas, the prevalent art idiom of the region underwent a change.¹⁹ Although the majority of

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14. *Raipur District Gazetteer*, pp. 65-66; *Bilaspur District Gazetteer*, p. 61.
 15. Cf. Pramod Chandra, *Sculptures in the Allahabad Museum*, (1970), pp. 33 ff.
 16. Cf. Dikshit, M. G. opcit, (1954), pp. 58-61).
 17. Cf. Mirashi, V. V., "*The Pandva Dynasty of Mekala*", *Indica* (Silver Jubilee Volume of Indian Historical Institute, St. Xavier College, Bombay), pp. 268-73.
 18. Dikshit, M. G., opcit (1954), pp. 60-61; Mirashi, V. V., *E. I.*, XXVI. 54.
 19. The brick-temples of South Kosala have been assigned to the period of 6th and 7th century A. D. A transformation from the Gupta-Vakataka to the Traditional phase in the monuments of the area may be traced through the recently discovered temple at Tala near Sirpur. The credit for this discovery goes to Sri Vishnu Singh Thakur of Raipur and Mr. Don Stadner of California University, U. S. A.

monuments existing in this region belonged to the Buddhist and Brahmanical sects, some Jaina images coeval in time and mannerism to these are known from Malhar (Bilaspur district). These images are housed in a dilapidated enclosure known as Parghanian Deva temple. Some other Jaina images of a later date are studded in the walls near the house of Sri Amarnath Sao of Malhar. Important among these and belonging to late 7th (or probably to 8th) century are the images of Adinatha inside the Parghanian Deo temple and of another Jina, buried outside the said temple. This latter seated image is of massive proportions; both the images however, reflect a sophistication and purity, distinguished by a balanced conglomeration of conver surfaces bounded with a rhythmic movement. In the mellowed and sensitive form of the torso, the sophistry is accentuated by a balanced dispersal of solidity and mass. The modelling of these images is superb to the extent that even the somewhat stiff thrust of limbs seems subdued. These features represent a re-statement of classical' idiom and in articulating it,

the images seem to follow distinctly the breadth of a style which flourished in such areas as *Ratanpur* (Kalyansundera panel in the Raipur Museum), *Dhamtari* (same collection), *Kharod* (doorframe of the Sondaridevi temple), *Rajim* (Rajibalochan and Ramachandra temple sculptures and *Mukhlingham* in the Parlakimedi Taluk of Ganjam district in Orissa. Although the form of sculptures evident in these reliefs seems to have declined in course of time in the South Kosala, it did not completely disappear. On the other hand, the Orissan monuments of early phase (e. g. Mukteshvara), particularly seem to have imbibed in them the features of this artistic tradition.²⁰ It has been suggested that the art and architecture of the upper Mahanadi valley made a deep impact when it travelled Utkal. In that region it helped in initiating a 'revival of artistic conception with certain modifications.²¹

Not much is known regarding the sculptural tradition of South Kosala next to the Pandus and Nalas till the advent of

20 The Harbingers of this South Kosala tradition in the Orissan region were primarily the Somavamsis. The Brahmeshwar inscription indicates that Janmejaya, the Somavansi conquered Odra and during the reigns of his successors, the regions of Kosala, Utkala, Kongoda and the parts of what then was known as Kalinga assumed a unity distinguished by cultural and linguistic bonds. Panigrahi, K. C. *Archaeological Remains of Bhuvaneshwar* (Orient Longmen, 1961) p. 251.

21. Ibid, p. 251. For special characteristics of Orissan sculptures of the period under the Somavamsis, cf. Panigrahi, K. C., pp. 251 ff. He (pp. 158 ff. says that three temples of the former Baudha State in the upper Mahanadi valley also indicate a similar sophistication.

the Kalchuris, except for a short interlude of the kings of the Bana dynasty.²² During the Kalchuris who first started as a branch of the main line of Tripuri and sometime during the reign of Jajjildeva I (1090-1120) became independent, Jina images seem to have come up at various places specified above. These images cut in black stone (Ratanpur, Bilaspur) or in greyish sandstones (Malhar), reflect the same modes of style which inform the other sculptures of the region. In their lengthening limbs tending towards extreme lateralism, swollen faces, broad plump chest suddenly constructing to an almost triangular waist with a central lump near the navel, below which are attached feet which look more like unhappy appendages, the sculptures of the South Kosala during this phase interpret an idiom which is emphatically provincial.

The exuberant or languorous variations of this idiom are fairly recurrent in the art of South Kosala from about 10th cent. to 14th cent. The images of Chadraprabh, Rishabhadeva and others in black stone from Ratanpur (C. 12th cent.) have such features. The seated Jina type of images seem to have helped in evolving the devotee images of black stone found at several places such as Ratanpur, Kharod, Chhapari, Amarkantak and Malhar. On the whole the Kalachuri phase of South

Kosala is peculiar for its artistic idiom which was sufficiently wide-spread. Geographically, it covered almost the whole of the present Chhattisgarh and Baster regions besides such other places as Amarkantak and Marakanda (Maharashtra). The origins of this idiom may have their moorings in the Mahanadi valley. While in the Orissan region it assumed a greater sophistication in various stages at Jajapur, Ranipur Jharial, Bhuvaneshwar and Puri, its form in Chhattisgarh remained almost changeless, certain inspired phases here notwithstanding.

Exceptional in this regard are the images on the Bhand-Dewala at Arang (Raipur district). This Jaina temple, stellate in plan stands on a *lofty pitha* decorated with seven mouldings in which the major ones consist of *Gajapitha*, *aswapitha* and *narapitha*. The *jangha* of the temple has six verticle butteresses decorated with two bands of sculptures. The sculptured bands are demarcated from each other by a moulding called *vidyadhara pattika*. The images on the *jangha* represent Jaina *sasanadevis* on the Bhadra niches and minor deities, *dikpalas* and *Apsaras* on the other projections. The recesses alternating with buttresses have the usual motifs of erotic couples which became an essential feature of the Kalachuri temples from 11th century onwards in the Dahala

22. Mirashi, (C. I. I., vol. IV), intro. p. CXV; CXVII.) Ascribes the construction the Pali temple to the Bana king Vikramaditya in C. 9th century. Stylistically however the temple in its reconstructed form, door-way excluded, is ascribable to 12th century. cf. Krishna Deva, *Temples of North India*, p. 53.

as well as South Kosala region. Certain mouldings on *jangha* have figures of Yakshas and Jinas. No less than twenty-one figures of Yakshas appear here. However it is difficult to relate them to any definite iconographic tradition in absence of their clear cognizances. The recesses and projections on the *jangha* follow a definite scheme of decoration regarding placement of motifs such as Apsaras, erotic figures, *sansanadevis*, *upasakas*, *dikpalas*, etc. But the *vyala* figures so commonly used in the other Kalachuri temples everywhere are conspicuous by their absence here. The only notable exception in this is a loan *vyala* figure occupying a recess by the side of the Central Bhadra projection on the south face of the temple. The figures of non-Jaina deities e. g. Bhairawa (South face), Natesa (in a recess on south face) and *Krishna Lila* scene (in a recess of north face) also occur on the *jangha* of the temple. But the most spirited decorative figures belong to the miscellaneous group thrown around the various places on the walls of the temple representing dance groups, Warriors, wrestlers, etc. One such figure on the south face, upper band represents a flute player having two torsos aligned to a single head. Below him we have a drummer. The *sikhara* of the temple, a *bhumija* type, has the usual *latas* rising from *bhadra*; the *latas* have on them a series of panels containing Jina figures in a group of two or more.

The temple on the whole is a unique monuments coming from this region and

its importance has recently been proven beyond doubt by Krishna Deva.²³ Stylistically, the decorative images on this temple do not show the contortion of limbs, a feature which otherwise is predominant in this region. So the inspiration as well as the execution of the temple should be traced to some other locality preferably the Dahala region. That the Virateshwara temple of Sohagpur might have influenced the Bhandadeval is a probability accepted by Krishna Deva.

As regards the Dahala region, it is possible to determine the predominant idiom of sculptural style, their epicentres and their spread. Roughly stated, the early images following the Ardhanarishwara of Sagar University, tend to indicate simple decoration unencumbered with profuse ornamental features of the *parikara*. In the anthropomorphic form the distinctive features in images reflect an ovaloid face, a simple hair style or crown wherever found, and a short almost squatting proportions devoid of any exaggerated lateralism. The images of Jinas at Bina-Barha and those of Natesa from Marh-Piparias and Bina Barha indicate these feature rather emphatically. These forms may be related to the 9th century. The 10th century however was a turning point in the artistic tradition of Dahala when the Kalachuri rulers invited the saints of Mattamayura sect into their territory and established several *mathas* for them. This seems to have brought out an upsurge both in quality as well as artistry of sculp-

23. Krishna Deva, *Bhumija Temples* (1975), pp. 110 ff.

ture. The Jina images from Bilhari and Kalitalai mentioned above seem to belong to this tradition. Stylistically, the doorways and other art remains at Baijnath, Marai, Gurgi, Mehson, Bilhri and Arjula in that order seem to mark the various stages of development of sculpture during the period extending from 10th through 11th century. They indicate a style in which figures are elongated, torso triangular instead of squarish, resting on thin waist, and feet sometimes columnar. The whole standing posture has an elegance attenuated by the *bhanga* on the main axis of body. The close parallel to this idiom is found in the images of the Lakhamaneshwar temple of Khajuraho.²⁴ The images of Karitalai (Raipur Museum) and Bilhari (Dharmasala Compound) have these features adjusted to the canonical requirements from Jina images. Among these, of particular significance are the images of Parshvanatha and of Chandraprabha, Padmaprabha and Parshwanatha at Bilhari. However in the comparatively remote regions of Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur a variation of the same idiom is reflected in the Jina images which have otherwise the features similar to the Bilhari-Karitalai idiom with the exception that the face is more squarish than oval.

The idiom has an anterior history in the region, but in the notable examples of 10th century, reference may be made to the images of Jinas and their Yakshis from Narsinghpur. Close to Narsinghpur at Barahata and Naunia there are figures of Adinatha, Parshwanatha and Mahavira which also seem to belong to this period.

The 11th century, particularly the second and third quarter of it, witnessed the efflorescence of sculptures in the Dahala region. The decorative details increased in the parikara of the sculptures. A very delicate scroll work elegantly covering the portions of halo and the whole background of relief heightens the aesthetic quality of sculptures of this period. The tracerred scroll work, beaded festoons regularly looped through the span of pedestals or seats, the filigried crowns of the attendant deities and minutely fretted and carved *chhatras* on the head of the Jinas leave the viewer spell bound at the wealth of carving displayed on the individual images. Although the Jina images are monotonously similar in their seated or standing postures, the wealth of decorative details on the parikara is what makes the images of this period very distinctive. As regards the images them-

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24. Krishna Deva, *Temples of North India*, p. 62. He assigns the Lakhamaneshwar temple to 950 A. D.
25. Prof. K. D. Bajpai deals with these images while describing the Jaina art of the Central India during A. D. 1300-1800. He however has indicated that the Jaina art flourished here from about 11th to 13th century A. D. For his comments c. f. *Jain Art and Architecture*, vol. II, Ed. A. Ghosh (Bhartiya Jnanpitha, New Delhi, 1975), p. 353.

selves, although their stiffness is mitigated by the profuse ornamentation, none the less, angularities lateralism and idealisation seems to have started showing up in them now. Some typical examples of this sort are known from Jabalpur (the Aranatha image in the Jaina temple), Sohagpur (the Thakur's collection), Lakhanadaun, Narsingpur and Bilhari. In these we have variations of the same style but the angularities are always present in them.

We may conclude by some remarks on the *parikaras* of the Jaina images from Dahala region. The early images of 9th century lack in details except for the garland bearers at the top of stele and an attendant or attendants on the either side of the Jinas. In the 10th century images, the details of *parikara* tend to

proliferate and have such motifs as elephants, attendants, Jinagroups standing or seated and fly-whisk bearers. Below the Jina images we usually have a couch from which in the middle, hangs an *astaraka* which is sometimes decorated with festoons and carries the cognizance of Jinas. Pedastals indicate balusters with the inset figures of devotees or the lions or such symbols. The garland bearing *vidyadharas* and the attendants flanking Jina figures are sometimes striking similar in almost all the details to those found on the images of other deities including the Brahmanical ones. This similarity seems to suggest that same artists or their guilds brought out images as required and where iconographic considerations could be relaxed, they took liberty in experimenting with details irrespective of the sectarian plurality.

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