

JAGANNĀTHAM
*Recent Archaeology and
Contemporary Approaches*
(A Special Volume in Honour of Professor J.N. Pal)



Prof. J. N. Pal

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Editors

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Publisher

Pathak Publisher & Distributors
New Delhi (India)

First Published 2023

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Published by:

Pathak Publisher & Distributors

in collaboration with

Research India Press

E-6/34, Sangam Vihar,

New Delhi-110062

Printed in India.

Composing & Layout :-

Harsh Computer Point

(Khubru Road, Gandhi Nagar, Sonipat, Haryana)

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Sculptural Heritage of Bauridi and Ladhurka in the Purulia district of West Bengal: Some Observations

Shubha Majumder

Introduction

The district of Purulia (23° 42'N-22°43'N and 86° 54' E- 85° 49'E) encompassing a landmass of about 6259 sq.km in area is an extension of Chhotanagpur Plateau region. This western most district of West Bengal is in fact a cut off part of earlier Manbhum district and is mainly characterized by a hilly western part and an open upland eastern part (Chakrabarti 1993: 116). This district has already yielded a large number of prehistoric stone implements. Its rich prehistoric heritage is easily traceable in the hilly tract of the district mostly covering the upland areas of the west. The sequence of lithic objects recovered so far, tends to show that the region harbours Palaeolithic hunter gatherer who gradually developed their refined surviving strategy in the Mesolithic phase mostly by using microlithic tools (Chakrabarti *et al.* 1983: 131-141; see also Chakrabarti 1993). Though, the presence of hunter gatherer Mesolithic survival tradition is an interesting phenomenon of the Plateau as a whole and the region particularly. What is intriguing is that there is apparently no clear cut evidence demonstrating the existence of Early Village Farming settlement which we generally identified with BRW bearing Proto-historic assemblage, and even the data associated with Early Historic phase in the district is yet to trace to reconstruct the early historic sequence of this region.

However, the early medieval phase was really important of this district and during this period the cultural heritage received special impetus with the arrival of political lineages and religious ideologies during the early medieval period (Chattopadhyay & Acharya 2010: 9-31). The monumental feature of settlement structure especially during the early medieval period is categorically envisaged by the enormous wealth of archaeological relics in form of abandoned temple complexes, architectural members and sculptural remains of this region. In all probability the said database is the best signifier of its early medieval socio-cultural milieu. Interestingly, the impressive array of Jaina sculptures and architectural members from this region verify the fact that the region abounds in Jaina heritage and

there were different flourishing Jaina centre at least for a considerable time of the early medieval period. On the other hand Brahmanical religious ideology was simultaneously flow in the then society and we get a huge number of sculptural remains associated with this religious order.

During the course of our explorations in this district we came across a large number of archaeological sites yielding old habitational remains as well as sculptural and architectural fragments (Majumder 2015; Ray, Chattopadhyay & Majumder 2014-15: 205-36; Majumder 2017). Most of the sites are associated with Jaina ideologies which underwent socio-religious transformation under the influence of the Brahmanical mode of appreciation. In the present paper we will discuss the archaeological contexts and iconic details of some Jaina and Brahmanical sculptural specimens from both the sites of Bauridi & Ladhurka. These two sites are archaeologically very potential and we have documented sculptural remains along with architectural remains and also some Hero stones. Most of the earlier works while investigating individual sculptural specimens, a temple or group of temples, have often ignored not only the archaeological context of their findings but also comparative stylistic study with reference to other contemporary Jaina remains found at other sites. Often, while reporting the Jaina images from this district, they have placed them within the early medieval/medieval time bracket without suggesting the stages of stylistic development.

Sites and their Archaeological Assemblages

A. Bauridi: The present village, Bauridi is a large village and situated under the jurisdiction of the Hura Police Station and is about 3 to 4----- km from the Ladhurka temple complex, which is another important site in this region and also discuss in the present paper (Majumder 2017). In a recently constructed Siva temple opposite a Primary School of this village we recorded five Jaina icons, of which four are Tirthankara icons and the fifth one is an image of Ambika (Fig. 1). It is evident that the temple has been constructed on a low structural mound which has the scattered ruins of a remarkable ancient temple. The local villagers claim that they frequently find fragmentary Jaina sculptural and architectural remains from different parts of this mound. We also recorded two Siva lingas from the eastern part of this mound. The temple site itself is locally known as Bhairavathan and this village was earlier known as Haralia-dih.

Details of Sculptures

1. The image of Tirthankara Candraprabha is damaged and only the lower portion (below the waist) of the image is extant (Fig. 2). It reveals the Jina standing in stiff kayotsarga posture on a double-petalled lotus seat placed on panca-ratha pedestal. A stylized lotus creeper with scrolled leaves and buds occupies the centre of the pedestal. The centre lower projected portions of the pedestal contain the crescent moon, identifying the cinha of the Jina and the remaining portion decorated with geometrical motifs. Stylized representations of crouching lions occupies the both

the side of decorated lotus creeper. A meal and a female devotee kneeling in *namaskara mudra* along with *ratna – patras* heaped with offering are placed on the remaining portions of the pedestal. The Jina is flanked on both sides by stout male *cauri-bearers*. Unfortunately, the left side *cauri-bearer* is completely damaged and the face of the right side *cauri-bearer* is mutilated. The *cauri-bearer* wear deeply incised loin cloth and elaborate jewellery. They stand on lotus pedestals and their left hands are in *katyavalambita* posture and the right hands hold a fly-whisk. This is a *caubisi* type of image. However, the edges of the back stele, on a projected frame, is relieved with twelve – figures of miniature Tirthankaras arranged in three vertical rows of two each on either side of the *mula-nayaka*. Like the principal image, they also stand in *kayotsarga* posture on a lotus pedestal and their respective *lanchanas* are carved at the centre of their thrones. They have a plain oval shaped halo. On the basis of their respective *lanchanas* the twelve – figures of miniature Tirthankaras are identifiable. Right side of the *mula-nayaka* the Tirthankaras are Vimalanatha, Anantanatha, Kunthanatha, Aranatha, Naminatha and Neminatha (top to bottom). On the left side the Tirthankaras are Dharmanatha, Santinatha, Mallinatha, Munisuvrata, Parsvanatha and Mahavira. The existing portion of the present image shows that the *mula-nayaka* bears a svelte figure and the carving of the image is very sophisticated. The arms of the Jina hang down vertically along the stiff torso and the finger tips touch the thigh on either side.

2. Among the three images of Rsabhanatha, comparatively well preserved specimen is made of chlorite stone and measures 88 cm x 47 cm x 15 cm (Fig. 3). Visually, it is quite schematic and rigid and the plastic tendencies are minimal. The Jina is standing in *kayotsarga* posture on a double-petalled lotus placed on a *panca-ratha* pedestal. The bull *lanchana* of the *mula-nayaka*, is neatly carved on the centre of the pedestal and placed between two crouching lions. A male and a female devotee in *namaskara mudra* (folded hands) occupies the both the end of the pedestal. The upper portion of the back stele of the image is completely lost and the face of the Tirthankara is slightly mutilated. The *mula-nayaka* obviously devoid of any worldly attire, has elongated earlobes, and most probably wears an elegant *jatajuta*. The *kesa-vallari* of the Jina is falling down the sides of the head and over the shoulders. An almost circular *sirascakra* with leafed edges adorns the head of the saviour. The Jina is flanked on both sides by stout male partially damaged *cauri-bearers*. They wear deeply incised loin cloths and elaborate jewellery and both of them have plain, small oval shaped halos. Obviously, the modulation of surfaces apparent from the drapery and jewellery are restricted to these *parikara* elements. These *cauri-bearers* stand in *dvi-bhanga* pose and holding a fly-whisk in their right hands and left hands are in *katyavalambita* posture. The back throne of the image 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. On the projected part of the back

stele there are eight planets (Joytiska-devas) arranged in a vertical row of four on either side of the Jina. Unfortunately, only six planetary deities with bad stage of preservation presently exist. These on the dexter side appear to be Mangal, Brhaspati and Sani; while those on sinister side are Budha, Sukra and Rahu. The image of Surya and Soma are completely lost here. All these figures are seated on high *visvapadmas* (except Rahu) and show individual iconographic features. The figures of the planetary deities are not possible to study with minute iconic details due to their defaced condition except the Sani, Sukra and Rahu. Sani (Saturn) is clearly distinguished by his peculiar sitting pose and the staff with a roundish top. On the left side Sukra is depicted just above the Rahu. In this image the defaced planetary deity Sukra seated in *samparyankasana* and his right hand is damaged and left hand is resting over his thigh and holding *kamandalu*. According to the Jaina conical texts Sukra is the ruler of the south- Eastern region and teacher of Demons. None of the Jaina texts refer to the terrific form of un-auspicious planetary deity Rahu who has only been referred to as ruler of south-Western. In the present sculpture the bust portion of the Rahu with his robust like head is visible and his hands are in the *tarpana mudra* same as in the Brahmanical *Navagraha* sculptures. In the present image the organization of space evident from the entire composition is remarkable as well as static. Elaborations in the back-slab are kept to a minimum.

3. The second image of Rsabhanatha (Fig. 4) is measures 86 cm x 60 cm x 18 cm and the head of the *mula-nayaka* along with the upper part of almost rectangular stele is completely missing. The Jina stands on a lotus placed on a *panca-ratha* pedestal having a bull flanked by stylized representations of crouching lions in the central part. The right side corner of the pedestal is occupied by the kneeling donor couple while the other side decorated with a *ratna-patra* heaped with offerings. Though the head of the image is missing however, some hair locks of the Jina is visible. He is attended by two stiff and robust looking *cauri*-bearers, profusely bejeweled, with their left hands in *katyavalambita* posture and the right hands holding *camaras*. They are wearing short almost transparent lower garments and simple ornaments including armlets, wristlets and *ekavali*. The Jina figure is flanked by pillar like structural appendages surmounted by triangular entities. This is a *caubisi* type of image. On the edge of the back-slab, on a projected frame, are miniature figures of twenty-four Tirthankaras (presently only twenty exist) arranged in six vertical rows of two each on the either side of the *mula-nayaka*. Like the principle image they also stand in *kayotsarga* posture with their respective *lanchanas* carved below each on a small lotus throne.
4. The third image of Rsabhanatha (Fig. 5) is very much similar with the earlier image. This is also a damage specimen; only the lower portion (below the abdomen) of the image exists, which is measuring 88 cm x 68 cm x 19 cm. The remaining portion of the edge of the back – slab is relieved with twelve-figures of miniature Jinas arranged in three vertical rows of two each on

either side. Like the principle image they also stand in *kayotsarga* posture with their respective *lanchanas* carved below each on a small lotus throne. The surviving portion of the body of *mula-nayaka* shows his natural body and the arms of the Jina hang down vertically along the torso and the finger tips touch the thigh on either side. In this image the *mula-nayaka* stands in *kayotsarga* posture on a double-petalled lotus placed on a *panca-ratha* pedestal. The Jina is flanked on both sides by stout male *cauri*-bearers stands on double-petalled lotus placed on same pedestal. They wear deeply incised loin cloths and elaborate jewellery. Obviously, the modulation of surfaces apparent from the drapery and jewellery are restricted to these *parikara* elements. These *cauri*-bearers stand on lotus pedestals and their left hands are in *katyavalambita* posture and the right hands hold a fly-whisk. The pedestal of the image is of considerable iconographic interest. A stylized lotus creeper with scroll leaves and buds occupies the centre of the pedestal below, under which there is a decorated bull, the identifying *cinha* of the Jina. The bull is flanked by a male and a female devotee kneeling in *namaskara mudra*. Two lions crouching in opposite direction occupies the both the end of the pedestal.

5. Like the other images of this collection the image of Ambika, Yaksi of Tirthankara Neminatha, is also damaged (Fig. 6). In this image only the lower portion (below the abdomen) of the deity is surviving and its measures 77 cm x 57 cm x 17 cm. The bejeweled goddess stands in graceful *abhanga* posture on a double-petalled lotus placed on a *panca-ratha* pedestal. She is holding a frolicking little child, who is her younger son Prabhankara, with her left hand. In her right arm she possibly holding the branch of a mango tree, unfortunately this is broken now. A male attendant, who is her elder son Subhakara, stands in cross leg posture to her right side and holding a *punthi* in his left arm-pit. The goddess wears a diaphanous *sari* fastened by an ornamented girdle and profuse jewellery. Some parts of her long scarf falling on her both side. She wears multi-stranded armlets, *mekhala*, *ratnopavita*, etc. Left side of the damaged stele of the deity consist a lady *cauri*-bearer. The projected part of the pedestal below reveals a lion, the *vahana* of the Yaksi. The stylized lion is flanked by a male and a female devotee kneeling in *namaskara mudra*. Iconographically the present image of Ambika is more or less similar with the Ambika images from Pakbirra. On the basis of stylistic ground and iconographic features the above discuss Jian images are belongs to c. 10th to 12th century CE.

Except these above mention Jaina images some broken architectural parts are scattered in the nearby area of the modern temple and according to the local villagers they collected these type of structural remains from this mound. These sculptural relics along with the architectural ruins indicate that there must be a huge Jaina temple during the early medieval period. This site needs proper scientific excavation to known the hidden history of this site.

B. Ladhurka: The present village is a well known locality laying on Purulia and Hura road, approximately 20 km. east of the former and 16 km. to west of the later this site is situated on

western bank of a tributary of the River Kasai. Ladhurka is well known for a temple complex of Chandeswar clearly indicates its affluent condition as a popular religious site from a very long time suggesting the tradition of uninterrupted continuity of worship. The present temple complex apparently stands on the ruins of an earlier structure. The present site possesses a few sculptural remains and four *insitu* specimens of some memorial stones lying inside the temple complex. The natural occurrences of such Hero stone suggest that this complex was used for memorial purpose. The details of these specimens are given below.

Details of Sculptures

1. Among these four specimens of Hero stone three are similar and representing the *Jhampasingha* type or Warrior type (without horse). The lower portions of these three specimens are buried. The first specimen (Fig. 7) is measuring 95 cm x 50 cm x 25 cm. and is carved in a very crude manner. Probably it depicts the image of a deceased hero in common posture with widened legs. The left hand is shown holding a bow where as arrow is held by the right hand. A broad and heavy weighted rampart lion caps the slab on its top. Modeling and proportion are more or less conspicuous by their absence.
2. The second example (Fig. 8) is measure 70cm x 50cm x 25cm and iconographically is similar with the earlier one. In this specimen the figure of the warrior carved in a low relief and it is only shown up to its waste portion. The hero stands with usual attributes held by both the hands i.e. sword in his left hand and bow in his right hand. This whole part is kept with a giant figure of lion. The figure of lion is very crudely carved.
3. The third one is measuring 67cm x 50cm x 20cm and it is a prototype of the earlier two specimens.
4. The last one among the four specimens is very unique and it represents a *linga* type of specimen. It measure 128cm x 28cm x 28cm. and look like a monolithic miniature form of *rekha deul*. It is *tri-ratha* in plan. The *padapitha* portion of the present specimen is not visible. The *gandi* portion of this specimen has three divisions. The frontal side of the central *paga* of the specimen has a small niche. Inside the niche a small *yonipatta* type of *linga* is neatly carved. The two *kanika pagas* are plain. This miniature temple is crowned by a small *amalaka* and it surmounted by most probably a *kalasa*.

Besides there are some other fragment pieces of hero stones scattered at the site. It is to be noted that the site was earlier a memorial spot which was converted into temple complex dedicated to Chandeswar Siva linga in latter period. In this temple complex we also document some Jaina and Brahmanical stone sculptures (Fig. 9). Among them two are identifiable i.e. image of a Jaina tutelary couple and Surya image. The Jaina tutelary couple image is measure 58cm x 25cm x 23cm and lower portion of the image is presently buried. The couple is seated on a throne in *ardha-paryankasana* posture under a tree on a full blown lotus, placed on a *tri-ratha* pedestal. However, it is very difficult to record the iconographic details of the sculptures because of its abraded condition. The male figure

holds a child on his left lap by his left hand and the right hand is in *abhaya-mudra*. He wears a *dhoti* like garment reaching well below his knee, and elaborate jewellery comprising bracelets, armlets, beaded necklace, large circular *kundalas*, and an elegant *ratna-mukuta*. The female figure holds a child in her left lap while her right hand is in *varada-mudra*. The female is attired in a diaphanous lower garment reaching down to her 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. The stylized foliages of a tree shelter the couple and a miniature seated Jina in *dhyana-mudra* is depicted above one of the branches. The *lanchana* of the Jina is not clearly visible. *Vidyadharas* are in their usual position at the top corners of an apsidal stele.

The image of Surya is highly abraded and it measure 60cm x 22cm x 23cm. In this image the god stands in *samapadasthanaka* posture. The lower portion of the image is under soil and the chariot of the god is not visible. His cloth descends down to the knees and a second piece of tight cloth round the waist is profusely ornamented and is further decorated with ornamental hangings. The breast is protected by armor, the outlines of which intertwine to form a knot on the breast. The god wears elaborate necklaces and earrings and an intricately worked-out coronet bedecks his head. He holds two lotuses in his two hands which rise a little above his shoulders. Bearded, pot bellied *Pingala*, stands on the left side of the god holding an indistinct object, which could be a pen and an inkstand. *Dandi*, who is also shown in armor, stands on the right with a sword in his right hand and the left resting on a staff. The two wives of Surya stand respectively on the left and the right sides of the god.

Observations

In the foregoing pages we have analyzed our data to achieve a clearer picture of archaeological sites and their sculptural remains. It is quite clear from the above data that these evidences, ascribable to the Jaina pantheon, are well connected with the growth of Jainism and the spread of Jaina settlements, rituals and their relationship with the sculptural art of the said region. It is quite obvious that such concentration of Jaina heritage is not restricted to these particular sites. There are some other sites/settlements associated with Jaina ideology in an around this region. It is also worth mentioning here that during our survey in this area we documented some Brahmanical sculptural specimens i.e. Surya images etc along with hero-stones. The presence of the Surya image and other Brahmanical images indicates that though Jainism was very much popular in the area, however, Brahmanism was also simultaneously marked its presence in the religious life of the people of the region.

Sculptures briefly described and discussed above are on stylistic and iconographic grounds may be assigned to the period between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries CE. These, including the other stupendous sculptural remains from this district as well as other parts of the *radha* region of Bengal, were products created by the fusion of the art idioms of neighboring areas of the Chhotanagpur plateau region and were laid in an essentially local matrix from which came out this

distinct school of a regional tradition. This regional tradition was guided by powerful local ateliers which were not driven necessarily by the ideas of the plastic art exhibited in the mainstream 'Pala-Sena' idiom of expression. However, these local artists became perfectionists in their own way (Majumder 2016: 240).

The present work thus shows that the western sectors of West Bengal deserve more careful archaeological investigation in order to understand the nature and pattern of distribution of early medieval sites/settlements and of locating the regional cultural and artistic identities as well as the nature of their religious character. This type of present study indicates that such micro-regional case studies are expected to throw welcome light on the nature of linkages witnessed by the different religious and ideological orders within a given local tradition, which also help us to reconstruct an overview about the history of the socio-religious character of the region as a whole.

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चित्र 20/12: अशोक स्तम्भ



Fig.21/1: Jaina icons from Bauridi



चित्र 20/13: अंधकासुर वध



Fig.21/2: Image of Tirthankara Candraprabha, from Bauridi



Fig.21/3: Image of Tirthankara Rsabhanatha, from Bauridi



Fig.21/4: Image of Tirthankara Rsabhanatha, from Bauridi



Fig.21/5: Image of Tirthankara Rsabhanatha, from Bauridi



Fig.21/6: Image of Yaksi Ambika, from Bauridi



Fig.21/7: Warrior type Hero-stone from Ladhurka



Fig.21/8: Monolithic miniature form of *rekha deul* type of Hero-stone with *linga* depiction from Ladhurka



Fig.21/9: Jaina tutelary couple and Surya image from Ladhurka



Fig.22/1: A complete view of Chandaneswar Temple



Fig.22/2: Image of Visnu found from the sanctum of Chandaneswar Temple



Fig.22/3: Image of another Visnu sculpture found from same place

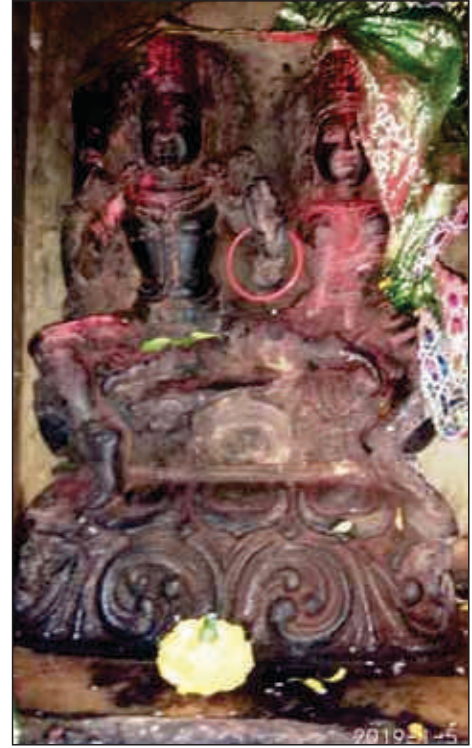


Fig.22/4: Image of Uma-Maheswar from Chandaneswar Temple



Fig.22/5: Garuda Stambha or Pillar