

南華大學人文學院宗教學研究所

碩士論文

Graduate Institute of Religious Studies

College of Humanities

Nanhua University

Master Thesis

奧里沙佛教的研究—從考古、歷史的視角討論

The Significance of Odisha Buddhism--From Aspect of
Archeological, Historical Study

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中華民國 108 年 6 月

June 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present work ‘Buddhism in Odisha’ is prepared as my dissertation for the Master Degree. This is an humble attempt to introduce Buddhism, its rich repository and its wide prevalence in Odisha – An Eastern State of India I am grateful to my Professor Chu-Ming (釋覺明) for agreeing to be my supervisor in preparing this work. My thanks go to all my teachers who advised me from time to time on various aspect of my research.

I am thankful to all my class fellows who helped me a lot during preparation of my dissertation. I am also grateful to the president Prof. Lin, who after his visit to Odisha wrote about Odisha’s Buddhist heritage in the News Paper which inspired me. I am also grateful to the Vice President Prof. Wu and the Director International Ms. Guinnessa for their good wishes and help whenever I needed.

This work would not have been possible without the help from Professor Dr. Satyendra Patnaik. Rector, KIIT University India, who literally taught me Odisha Buddhism. His inspiration and constant guidance helped me to prepare this work. I am also immensely grateful to Dr.A. Samanta, Founder KIIT and KISS, a living legend for this blessings and the gift of a Laptop in which I could type out this dissertation.

摘要

佛教是一種偉大的宗教，是在兩千六百多年前由悉達多在印度證道成佛而創立。佛教在印度的文化和文明發展中發揮了非常重要的作用。現今，佛教以一種宗教、哲學、意識型態的方式影響亞洲及世界各地，並型塑當地的文明與生活方式。佛教更對亞洲國家的藝術精神、建築、雕刻等領域帶來深遠的影響。作為一種宗教體系，佛教的影響力幾乎遍及所有亞洲人民的各個面向。

佛教起源於印度的菩提伽耶並迅速流傳，之後，印度各地的佛教中心大量發展出來，創造了許多的藝術品與手工藝品。這些知名的佛教中心包括：鹿野苑(*Saranath*)，山崎(*Sanchi*)，末兔羅(*Mathura*)，犍陀羅(*Gandhara*)，阿馬拉瓦蒂(*Amaravati*)，龍樹湖(*Nagarjunakonda*)，阿姜查(*Ajanta*)，亞蘿拉(*Ellora*)，菩提迦耶(*Bodh-Gaya*)，那爛陀(*Nalanda*)，超戒寺(*Vikramasila*)與拉特納山(*Ratnagiri*)，拉里特山(*Lalitgiri*)等地。現今，這些地方仍留下不少的佛教遺跡，象徵佛教的興衰，或者我們也可以從西元前十五世紀的印度奧里薩邦，來說明它如何成為佛教光榮遺產的一部分。本論文即在說明佛教在奧里薩邦的物質文明，其中包括為數眾多的遺址與古蹟等。

關鍵字：奧里薩邦佛教、拉里特山—拉特納山—烏德耶山、佛塔

ABSTRACT

Buddhism is a great religion that was discovered more than two thousand six hundred year ago, in India by *Siddhartha* the Enlightened – the Buddha. It has performed a significantly very important role for the development of culture and civilization in India. Buddhism was spread over the whole of Asia and the rest of the world on a large scale, as a religion, philosophy, ideology and the way of life, molding a new culture and civilization and life style. A new creative and imaginative spirit in art, architecture, sculpture, literature and reality, the entire gamut of human endeavors in every country of Asia, in particular, was the most purposeful outcome of the influence of Buddhism as a religion.

Buddhism was born in *Bodh Gaya*, rapidly spread out to other parts of the country in India. A whole new complete civilization sprung up, with flourishing centers of creative arts and crafts at *Saranath, Sanchi, Mathura, Gandhara, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Ajanta, Ellora, Bodh-Gaya Nalanda, Vikramasila and Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri* are to mention a few. The Buddhist remains at many such places speak volumes about the contemporary society and the phases of its growth and decline. So also we can mark the growth and development from its inception down 15th century A.D in Odisha, which became as a part of our magnificent heritage. This dissertation intends to focus upon the Buddhist Heritage of Odisha, concentration on material remains such as monuments and archeological finds.

Keywords: *Odisha Buddhism, Lalitagiri – Ratnagiri – Udayagiri, Stupas*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	I
摘要.....	II
ABSTRACT	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
TABLE OF FIGURE	V
CHAPTER I PREFACE.....	1
1.1 Research Motivation and Purpose.....	2
1.2 Research Methods	4
1.3 Overview of Previous Research	5
1.4 Objective	7
1.5 Expected Result.....	8
CHAPTER II THE STUDY OF HISTORY IN ODISHA	9
2.1 Studies in History of Orissa	9
2.2 Major Tropes in the Buddhist Historiography	11
CHAPTER III SURVEY OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN ODISHA.....	15
3.1 The Sites.....	15
3.2 The Settlements.....	24
CHAPTER IV THE STUPA & MONASTERIE ARCHITECTURE IN ODISHA.....	30
4.1 Stupa.....	30
4.2 Monasteries	39
CHAPTER V A STUDY BASED ON BUDDHIST IMAGES FROM ODISHA.....	53
5.1 Sculpture & Images.....	53
5.2 Buddhist deities from Orissa.....	57
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION.....	64
BIBLIOGRAPHY	69

TABLE OF FIGURE

Figure 1 MAHASTUPHA AT LALITGIRI.....	31
Figure 2 STUPA AT RATNAGIRI	33
Figure 3 SUTPA AT UDAYAGRIR	35
Figure 4 APSIDAL TEMPLE (CHAITYA), LALITGIRI.....	37
Figure 5 MONASTERY AT LALITGIRI	41
Figure 6 MONASTERY AT RATNAGIRI	47
Figure 7 MONASTERY AT UDAYAGIRI.....	50
Figure 8 EXPOSED IN UDAYAGIRI II AREA	52



CHAPTER I PREFACE

Buddhism in Odisha is as old as the religion itself. While *Kapilvastu*, *Bodhgaya*, and *Sarnath* are Important Places associated with Lord Buddha, yet it was Odisha which remained instrumental for the spread of Buddhism across the world. It is rather unfortunate that Odisha and its rich Buddhist heritage have not been properly studied by the Buddhist scholars and the lay followers of Buddhism. Because of this, I have tried to prepare this dissertation to introduce Odisha to *Buddhologists* from this part of the world to look towards which still not is properly explored. I am sure that my attempt would definitely create some interest among the scholars to explore Odisha Buddhism.

My knowledge of Buddhism, especially Buddhist heritage in Odisha grew when I came across Prof. Satyendra Patnaik, Rector of KIIT University India. He came to this great center of learning Nanhua University as a visiting professor and taught some lessons on Buddhism. I am grateful to him for helping me to prepare this dissertation. I am also grateful to my Professor, Venerable Chue Ming for her support and help.

1.1 Research Motivation and Purpose

Buddhism as a religion is practiced by an estimated 335 millions of people during 2010 and the number must be growing. The religion followed in Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bhutan, Srilanka, Laos, Magnolia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, China, Taiwan and Vietnam has its origin in India. But very few people know how Buddhism could spread to all part of the world. While Buddha's birthplace, *Kapilvastu*, the place where he attained enlightenment (*Bodhi*), *Bodhagaya* and the place where he delivered his first sermon, *Saranath* are known to the follower of Buddhism, yet the people hardly know the journey of Buddhism as a religion from India to various parts of the world. After the *Mahaparinirvana* of Buddha, The religion could have died it's natural death but the zealous attempt of emperor Ashoka to spread it throughout his kingdom and beyond transformed Buddhism into a world religion. Kalinga war was the decisive battle that changed Emperor Asoka from a cruel king to a benevolent one. The Kalinga war was fought near the river Daya just at the outskirts of present-day Bhubaneswar – The capital city of Odisha – an eastern state of India. After embracing Buddhism Asoka sent missionaries to far-off places, appointed *Dhamma Mahamatras* (Religions officials) to propagate and oversee the growth of Buddhism.

It is believed that Lord Buddha declared Kalinga as one of the twelve places where one can attain perfection. It was one of the four great places having an inexhaustible treasure of precious substance¹. These four precious treasures have also been attended to by the *Divyavadana*, while state the Pingala of Kalinga, Pamduka of Mithila, Elaptra of Gamdhara and sarikha of Varanasi would relive when Maitreya would appear as Buddha.

The Buddhist traditions recorded in the *Buddhavamsa* and *Dathadhatuvamsa* pay tribute to the cultural heritage of Kalinga by admitting that after the death of Buddha. One of his tooth relics was carried to Dantapura, the capital of Kalinga where it was enshrined². The early *Vinaya* text, *Nikayas* and *Jatakas* refer to two merchants of *utkala* (ancient name of Odisha) named

¹ Watters T, *on on yuan chwang's Travel in India*, vol. II, 199.

² Law BC, (ed) *Dathadhatavmsa (Punjab Sanskrit series)*, 101-104.

Tapussa and *Bhalliya (Bhallika)*, were said to have been the first lay disciples of Lord Buddha. These two merchants were said to have received eight locks of hair from Buddha. They are also regarded as first lay devotees of Buddha. Ceylonese traditions also to record *Tappassa* and *Bhallika*.

The excavations in 1985-86 brought out huge Buddhist treasure from Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri in the modern Jajpur district of Odisha. Here one finds remains of great centers of learning, *Chaitya grihas*, monasteries Stupas and a large number of Buddhist images including these of Buddha. Buddha's bone relic has been found from *Lalitagiri*. The travel accounts of the Chinese scholar *Hieun Tsang* speaks about the flourishing condition of Buddhism in Odisha in 7th to 9th c A.D.

Buddhism has been a major religion of the world today. But very few people know that Buddhism in Odisha is as old as the religion itself. While *Kapilvastu*, *Bodhgaya*, and *Saranath* are associated with Lord Buddha's life and teaching, yet it was Odisha which helped to make Buddhism, a world region. It was Asoka who sent missionaries for the propagation of the religion beyond India. There are important Buddhist sites lying scattered all over the state. The rich treasure of Buddhist sculptures, monuments excavated from *Ratnagiri – Lalitagiri* and *Udaygiri* give a clear picture of the Buddhist tradition in Odisha. While these three important establishments are discussed in this dissertation, yet Buddhism flourished in several other parts of Odisha is referred to in the work.

It is interesting to note here that there is not a single district in the state, where a Buddhist image or remains of Buddhism have not been found. Of all the places, *Kuruma*, *Banpur* and Prachi valley in Puri district, *Choudwar*, *Jajpur*, *Kurukulla* and *Lataharvn* in undivided Cuttack district, *Ayodhya* in *Balasore* district, *Junagarh*, *Buddhakhhol* in *Ganjam* district, *Khichhing*, *Udala* and *Baripada* in *Mayurbhanj* district, *Ganiapalli*, *Melchamunda* in *Sambalpur* district, *Boudh* in *Boudh* district, *Sonepur* in *Sonepur* and *Binka* in *Bolangir* district etc. have remained great centers of Buddhism.

It was during this time the *Bhaumakara* rulers were ruling Odisha and they were followers of Buddhism. Under their path, Buddhism reached its zenith. Rock edicts of Ashoka, Buddhist texts, The Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri attest the state of Buddhism in Odisha.

Despite such huge Buddhist reposting Odisha never occupied a prominent position because of the ignorance of people living outside India. Taiwan, despite being a Buddhist country with millions of people following Buddhism has no idea about Odisha vis-à-vis Buddhism. Nobody in this part of the world ever tried to understand Buddhism in Odisha and Odisha's contribution to making Buddhism a world religion.

A couple of years before President Prof. Lin of Nanhua University visited Odisha and on his return, he made on an article an Odisha's Buddhism. My teacher chueming who never visited Odisha during her ling stay in India was mesmerized by finding the rich Buddhist treasure of Odisha. This was my motivation to read about Buddhist establishment of Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. I felt the need of making scholars and students of this Buddhist University aware of such great's centers of Buddhism. With my studies and interaction with a great scholar and historian of Odisha Prof. S.Patnaik, I decided to work on it. I made a field study and tried to write my observation in this dissertation.

1.2 Research Methods

Several methods are being employed to derive at a conclusion of any research. The methodology of the research is thus the science of proper modes and orders of the procedure. The two most accepted methods used in research in the field of business, sociology, psychology, science and technology, economics are Qualitative which relies more on verbal narrative like spoken or written data while the Quantitative research uses logical or statistical observations to draw conclusions. The present dissertation as a subject of history used a method suitable for historical studies. History may be defined as an integrated narrative or description of past events or facts, written in a spirit of critical inquiry, for the whole truth. It is, therefore, the Historical method.

Historical method comprises of the techniques and guidelines by which the researchers use primary sources and other evidence, including the evidence of archaeology. Historians cannot manipulate manipulated independent variables and conduct randomized experiments to establish a causal relationship, as does a physical scientist. History presents observational data, making it impossible to state that 'X' causes 'Y'. Since my goal is to document a data or discover some narrative in the targeted set of cases, the researcher has to leave both qualitative and quantitative methods to prepare this dissertation. Research design here relies on observational data which is rather a quasi-experimental design. Since Quasi-experimental designs cannot randomly assign subjects to levels of the independent variable, casual interferences about the effects of independent variables on dependent variables are difficult to make.

In studying historical cases, it is often helpful to combine observation with an evolving theory – to identify the likely key factors and relationships among factors early in order to be better able to see and interpret historical cases with some sophistication. Qualitative tools can serve as a useful purpose. Though it is possible to draw inferences, eliminate hypothesis and make analytical generalizations, yet historical data being observational, one cannot conclude that the dominant factors that emerge from pattern matching, play some role. Since historical research involves studying, understanding and interpreting past events, the emphasis is given to primary and secondary sources.

The methodology adopted in this dissertation is descriptive and narrative. Regarding the sources, the work relies on Primary and Secondary data, Field study and a Review of the literature.

1.3 Overview of Previous Research

Buddhism in Odisha, by Prof. N. K. Sahu, (Bhubaneswar, 1958) has remained one of the most critically acclaimed works in which Prof. Sahu discussed Buddhism in Odisha at length. Though there are a number of books on History of Odisha which discuss Buddhism in its religious history chapters, yet the religion is discussed at great length by Prof. K. C Panigrahi

in his 'History of Odisha' (Cuttack 1981) and by H. K. Mahtab in ('The History of Odisha' (Cuttack 1959-60), Prof. Satyendra Patnaik's 'Brahmanical Religion in Ancient Odisha' (Delhi, 1987) though deals primarily with sectarian Hindu religion, yet his work deals in showing the flourishing condition of Buddhism in Odisha during the Bhaumakara period.

'Buddhist heritage of Odisha' by Sunil Patnaik, (Bhubaneswar 2012) 'Buddhist Bronzes of Odisha' by Dr. Sagarika Mohapatra (Delhi 2017) and 'Bronzes of Achyutarajpur, Odissa' by Dr. Debala Mitra (Delhi, 1978) discuss extensively about Buddhism in 'Odisha while studies in Buddhist iconography' by D. C. Bhattacharya (New Delhi 1978) A K Coomaraswamy's 'History of Indian and Indonesian Art', (London 1937) 'Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu period)' by Percy Brown, (Bombay 1942) and many other important works of distinguished scholars have given enough materials to understand Buddhist art and iconography of the sculptures excavated from various sites under study.

'Stylistics of Buddhist Art in India' by (2003) she assumes Stupa construction as religious parity superiority. She discussed the stylized forms, the importance of Stupa and a comparative study of Bodhgaya and Ratnagiri.

The works on Odisha to have a broader viewpoint on the origin, evolution and architecture of the Stupa, books and papers written by many national and international scholars on Stupa architecture. 'The origin and development of Stupa Architecture in India' by Sushila Pant (1976), throws discover the Stupa architecture in general, beginning from second century to seventh century CE.

'History of Odisha' by panigrahi (1981) to get very little information on Buddhist remains in Odisha. In the end, discussing the Art and Architecture he has mentioned the Brahmanical, Jain and Buddhist remain in the state.

Several research papers published in various important journals are also studied to prepare this dissertation, besides some Pali texts published, Inscriptions of Odisha Vols, Epigraphica Indica and journals like OHRJ, (Odisha Historical Research Journals) JASB (Journal of

Asiatic Society of Bengal) are studied to reconstruct the history of Buddhism with special emphasis on Ratnagiri – Lalitagiri and Udayagiri.

Apart from the books, several Journals including Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Orissa Historical Research Journal, Epigraphic India, Archaeological Survey of India reports have been studied. Some original texts and the translations are studied to get authentic information about Buddhism in Odisha. These texts include *Anguttara Nikaya*, Blue Annals, *Gandavyuha*, *Mahavastu*, *Katharastu*, *Jnanasiddhi*, *Sadhanamala*, *Taranath's History of Buddhism*, *Pali* texts etc.

1.4 Objective

Like every research work, this dissertation has also an objective. It is for the first time, some attempt is being made by a student studying in a Buddhist University of a country predominantly inhabited by followers of Buddhism, to showcase Buddhism in Odisha which has been responsible in spreading the religion across the world. Besides, the rich Buddhist cultural heritage, hundreds of Buddhist sculptures scattered all over and a great center of Mahayana Buddhism need to be explored by all. The great centers of Buddhism like Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, and Udayagiri situated at a distance of 10 km from each other, speak about the flourishing condition of Buddhism.

The Stupes, the viharas, monasteries and a number of Buddhist icons including those of Buddha in various poses, *Aparajita*, *Avalokitesvara*, *Manjushree*, *Tara*, *Jambhala* and many others give an interesting insight to the great religion. The discovery of the Buddha's tooth relic in a golden casket enshrined inside a Stupa definitely makes it one of the greatest Buddhist centers of the world. To explore this and to bring it to the notice of millions of Buddhist followers residing in this part of the world, a small attempt is being made through this work.

1.5 Expected Result

From Introduction to Conclusion, discussions on Odisha, its great Buddhist heritage will be made, besides the review of the literature, collection of data from a field study and the help of my teacher. The dissertation would have a select Bibliography and photographs of some of the great sites.

The study will be based on field and review of the literature. Since the study will be on a broader subject and on macro-level importance will be given to reviewing the literature and the excavation reports.



CHAPTER II THE STUDY OF HISTORY IN ODISHA

2.1 Studies in History of Orissa

The present work Buddhism in Odisha aims at projecting the history of Buddhism in Odisha with special reference to the great Buddhist establishments at Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri, and Udayagiri, known as Diamond triangle in the tourist circuit of Odisha.

For the people of this part of the world, Odisha is definitely not known much. Odisha is a state in India which has been occupying an enviable position in the historiography of the subcontinent. The rich cultural heritage of Odisha, temples, art, and architecture make it a unique destination for tourists from all parts of the world. Situated in the eastern coast of India between 17.48' and 22.34' North latitude, 81.24' and 87.29' East longitude, Odisha is bounded by Jharkhand in the North West, West Bengal in North East, Andhra Pradesh in the South, Chhattisgarh in the West and the Bay of Bengal in the East. This 1,56,707 sq km. the area in a population of 70 million, due to its geographical location, is often treated as an extended region of north India or an annexure of South India. Because of its proximity to the north and south, it has retained all the traits of both beside its own.

Great religions of the world flourished in Odisha because of the catholicity of its successive dynasties. It is rather interesting to find Odisha as the nerve center of Buddhism and Jainism, though neither of the founders of these two religions ever set their feet here. Odisha is a great center of *Brahmanical* religion, particularly *Visnavism*. Despite being a great *Vaisnava* center, Odisha remained one of the most important centers of Buddhism.

The study of Buddhism in Odisha is a subject of absorbing interest in view of the great contribution of the state to the domain of Buddhist culture. Here in *Dhauili* near the present state capital, Bhubaneswar, the Kalinga war was fought. Numerous Buddhist images and other remains along with several mounds not yet been excavated and some great sites in Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri, and Udayagiri make it clear that Odisha was the most happening state, so far as Buddhism was concerned at least up to 11th – 12th A.D. So much of influence of Buddhism

was on the people of Odisha that Buddha has been accepted as an incarnation of Lord *Vishu – Jagannath*, a reference which can be found in the *Dharma-puja vidhana*³ Though Buddha never visited Odisha, yet several early texts refer to two merchants *Tapassu* and *Bhallika* from *Utkal* meeting the Lord on their way to *Madhyadesh* and offered him cake and honey. *Anguttara Nikaya*⁴ speaks of Buddha's gift of eight locks of hair to the merchants which were later enshrined in a Chaitya built by them. Despite these references, there was nothing to prove that Buddhism was a major force to reckon with in Odisha till the advent of Asoka in Kalinga.

It is needed to recapitulate the general historical geography of Odisha to understand the politico – socio – economic upheaval through the historical period. Odisha the land on the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal, known variously as Kalinga, Utkala and Odra at the different periods of history. Again, the name of Orissa has been changed to Odisha with effect from November 2011 with the notification issued by government.

Major portion of this extensive territory was known in ancient time as the land of Kalingas, a people who are referred to, in the early *Brahmanical* literature, in old cannons, as well as Asokan inscriptions. In its earliest history, Kalinga had become a province and later, even the centre of great empires under two most important rulers of India, i.e. Ashoka 3rd C.B.C. and Kharavela 1st C.A.D. then the historical stratigraphy of Odisha is very clear with the influence of Kushanas and Guptas down to Ganga and Gajapatis, the ruling dynasties of Odisha up to 15th C.A.D.

³ Mukherjee, P., *The History of Medieval Vaisnavism in Odisha*, 20.

⁴ Morris, R & Hardy, E., (Ed) *PTS London*, 1885 – 1900 (5 vols).

2.2 Major tropes in the Buddhist historiography

In all practical purposes, the Kalinga War in 261 BC was the turning point in the history of Buddhism in the world. The death and destruction caused by the Kalinga War changed Ashoka who gave up *Digvijaya* (to win the World) in favor of *Dhamma* Vijay (victory by Dhamma) Separate Rock Edicts at Dhauri reflect Asoka's change of heart. The edict at Dhauri is significantly designed by the sculptured for part of an elephant is definitely the theriomorphic representation of Buddha and this representation perhaps indicate the entry of the white elephant into the womb of *Mayadevi*, the mother of Lord Buddha.

Traditions refer to Asoka's building of a monastery in the name of his brother *Tissa*.⁵ Even *Huien Tsang's* view that Asoka built more than ten Stupas in Wu (U) – to (Odra) (an ancient name of Odisha) at places where Buddha preached speak about the flourishing state of Buddhism in Odisha. But there is no corroborative evidence to prove that Buddha ever visited Odisha. Our attention is drawn towards the *Nagarjunakonda* inscription.⁶ Which speaks of the Ceylonese monks preaching in *Tosali* (a part of ancient Odisha)? Buddhist text *Gandavyuha*⁷ informs about the entry of Mahayana into the city of *Tosali* around 4th C. A.D. Taranath's *History of Buddhism in India*⁸ speaks of Odivisa being the first country to have Mahayana Buddhism before Kaniska.

It is thus clear that in the post Asokan period. Odisha made a significant contribution towards bringing out the religion from monastic exclusion to the level of common men and it was in Odisha, the earliest *Prajna Paramita* in the *Astasahasrika* was composed giving rise to the full-fledged system of Mahayana Buddhism. In the post, Asokan period Stupa architecture was definitely popular.⁹ The discovery of three pieces of railing pillars by R. K. Mukherji in 1925, N. K. Bose in 1938 and K. C. Panigrahi in 1948 with human figures carved on those indicate that those belonged to a post Asokan period, possibly to the periods, of *Bahrut*, *Bodh Gaya*

⁵ Malaleswkar, G.P., *Dictionary of the Pali Proper Names*, I, 585.

⁶ Sricar, D.C., *select Inscriptions bearing on India History & Civilization*, 233.

⁷ Vaidya, P.L., *Buddhist Sanskrit Text*, 138.

⁸ Chimpa, Lama & Chattopadhyaya, A (tran) Ed. *Chattopadhyaya*, 90.

⁹ K.C., *History of Odisha*, 306.

and *Sanchi* Stupas. These pillars contain ventricular sockets into which the cross bars were fitted. The four Yaksa statues discovered there now preserved in the Odisha state Museum were also originally utilized in the Stupa architecture, possibly on the gateways of the Stupas, supporting architraves, such as figures do in the gateways of Sanchi Stupas. All these archaeological evidence suggest that Stupas used to be there in Odisha even during the post Asokan period.¹⁰

Archaeological evidence coming from Lalitgiri (Chauley 1985-86: 62), Sisupalgarh (Ota 2007: 67) suggest Buddhism had already made its presence in Kalinga in the last quarter of the first millennium BCE. This is again corroborated from the early *Pali* literature like *Vinaya Pitka*, *Anguttara Nikaya*, *Majjhima Nikaya*, *Buddha Vamsa*, *Dathadhatu Vamsa*, and *Lalit Vistara*, which speak about His relationship with Kalinga.

The recent archaeological investigations and excavations reveal the subsequent development, continuation, and interaction with contemporary Brahmanism and Jainism with its various sub-sects till thirteenth-fourteenth century CE. The Buddhist activities in Odisha continued for a longer period than seen in some of the important centers in the subcontinent. The general cause for the downfall of Buddhism in Odisha could be similar in nature to those seen in other parts of the country, but its continuance for a longer period and sudden decline could have been influenced by a regional religious, economic, social and administrative perspective.

The prevalence of Buddhism in Odisha in the early Christian era is known from the traditions recorded in Buddhist Literature. *Tosali*, *Tamralipti*, *Che-Li-ta-lo-Pue -sie -Po - Ki - Li* as mentioned by the Chinese Pilgrim *Yuan Chwang*. Ratnagiri, Jayaram Vihar were great centers of Mahayana Buddhism in the early centuries of Christian era. The Buddhist ruins at Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitagiri in Jajpur district provide important evidence to show that the monastic establishments in these hills started at least from the 5th – 6th C. A.D. The memories of Archaeological Survey of India No. 44 has published a fragmentary inscription in the cursive Gupta Script of the 5th – 6th C. A.D. which indicates that the place existed as a Buddhist Tantric establishment in the Gupta period.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Scholars opine that both *Hirayanism* and *Mahayanism* prevailed side by side in Odisha. By the first century A.D., these two forms of Buddhism that grew out of primitive Buddhism became antagonistic to each other.¹¹ Buddhism flourished from the beginning of the 7th C.A.D., which has been attested by several evidences. The titles like *Paramatathagata*, *Paramasaugata* has taken up by *Bhaumakara* kings show that they were Buddhists. One ruler of *Bhaumakara* dynasty. *Sivakara Unmatasimha* sent an autographed manuscript of the Buddhist work *Gandavyuha*, a part of the *Avatamsaka*, to the Chinese emperor *Te – Tsong*, who received it in 795 A.D.¹² The great monastery of Ratnagiri became the center of the Buddhist religion, learning, Tantra, and Yoga.

The great heritage of Buddhist culture in Odisha tempted me to do some research to prepare this dissertation. It is an attempt of surveying the great Buddhist establishments in Odisha with special reference to Ratnagiri – Lalitagiri and Udayagiri which flourished from 7th C. to 12th C. A.D. While restructuring the topic under discussion and putting it in a format of the dissertation, the work is divided into five Chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion, apart from plates and a Select Bibliography.

In the Chapter following introduction, a discussion is made on the Research methodology adopted, the statement of the problem, Review of Literature, objective etc. In the subsequent Chapter III, the discussion is made on the various Buddhist establishments with a detailed study of Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, and Udayagiri. The subsequent chapter IV will be focusing on the sculptures, Stupas excavated from these sites.

After discussing the 'Introduction' in which the previous research work done by different scholars on the Buddhist sites of Odisha and my aim and objective for taking up this topic for my research work, in the next chapter 'Geomorphologic, Political and Religious History of Odisha', geographical location, the land formation, the important rivers flowing from Odisha and political and religious history of Odisha beginning from the time of Asoka, second-third century till the fourteenth century has been done.

¹¹ Panigrahi, K.C. – *op.it*, 310.

¹² Mishra, B. *Odisha under Bhaumakings*, 53.

In the concluding Chapter, the summary of the dissertation, the significance, and contribution of Odissan Buddhism and scope for further study on each aspect in micro level would be discussed. A select Bibliography and Plates are there in the work.



CHAPTER III SURVEY OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN ODISHA

3.1 The Sites

There is no denying of the fact that the great Kalinga War fought in 261 BC was the turning point of the history. It is unique in many senses considering the fact that a great warrior king after a decisive victory over a powerful kingdom decided to renounce war for ever in favour of winning the hearts of people through *Dhamma*. Emperor Asoka's patronage to Buddhism, his zealous propagation of Buddhism has been responsible for the spread of the religion beyond India. Odisha was fortunate to have great ruling dynasties which were religiously tolerant and because of their catholicity Buddhism continued to remain as a major religion in the state. The excavations conducted at different sites in Odisha have revealed great centers of Buddhism in various parts of the state. Both the explored and unexplored sites in Odisha give credence to the belief that there were numerous Buddhist establishments in Odisha.

Apart from Ratnagiri – Lalitagiri – Udayagiri circuit, excavations at *Ganiapalli* in *Bargarh* district, *Kuruma* in *Puri*, *Tarapur*, *Vajragiri*, *Deuli*, *Panturi* in Jajpur district, Prachi valley and many other places used to have Buddhist settlements. Since it will not be possible to have adequate discussions on each and every site, which need extensive study, we would rather discuss some of the important settlements in brief giving more space to the Ratnagiri – Lalitagiri and Udayagiri Buddhist circuit.

Buddhist establishments, in and around Bhubaneswar must have started even before Asoka's war with Kalinga. Asoka embraced Buddhism after Kalinga War and in the Kalinga Edicts the Emperor has expressed his solitude for the people of Kalinga who must have received his special attention for their material and spiritual uplift. After Kalinga War, Asoka firmly believed that it was through Buddhism, that the uplift of the spiritual and moral conduct of the people could be achieved. It is observed by scholars¹³ Ashoka through did not propagate

¹³ N. K. Sahu. *Buddhism in Odisha*, 83.

Buddhism in Odisha yet his two separate edicts for the people of Kalinga speak about Dhamma based on Buddhism.

We have no literary source to throw light on the missionary activities of Asoka in Kalinga though the remnants of his monuments in Odisha bear ample evidence to such activities. His Edicts in Dhauli and Jaugarh were definitely intended to attract the people towards Buddhism. The elephant figure at Dhauli symbolizes the birth of *Gautam* Buddha. Similarly scholars¹⁴ believe that the huge linga enshrined in the temple of *Bhaskareswara* at Bhubaneswar was originally an Asokan pillar on which the lion capital was crowned. The fragmented portion of the Lion capital is now preserved in the state Museum. The four Yaksha Statues found from the suburbs of Bhubaneswar, now in the state Museum are believed to be stylistically similar to their prototypes in the Gateway of Sanchi¹⁵ and are assignable to the second half of the 1stc. B.C. The findings of Buddha, *Lokesvara* and Tara figures from near *Brahmesrawar* temple datable to 8th – 9th C.A.D. make us to believe that Bhubaneswar was a strong hold of Buddhism in the Pre-Christian era and it continued to be a Buddhist centre till 12th – 13th C.A.D.

Aragarh: A team of archaeologists from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) visited *Aragarh* situated along the Daya river not very far from Bhubaneswar. Evidence found here suggests that it was a Buddhist settlement. Four Buddhist icons of *Vajrapani*, several votive lamps, a circular pillar, rock cut caves, good enough for marks to sleep, found here made scholars¹⁶ to suggest that there existed a famous Buddhist monastery *Bhora saila* in the 4th C. A.D. Close to *Aragarh*, the village *Benupada* was also a great centre of Buddhism. The existence of five Stupas representing five primordial elements of five Dhvani Buddhas supports our claim.

¹⁴ Panigrahi, K.C. – *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, 1961 Mitri, R. C. – *Antiquities of Odisha*. 1880 Bana, B. M – *Ashoka and his Inscription*, Pt II, 2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sahu, N.K., *op,cit*, 83.

Achyutarajpur – From the abundance of Buddhist images and Buddhist artifacts, it becomes clear that *Achyutarajpur* in modern *Banpur* was a flourishing Buddhist establishment from 7th C. To 12th C.A.D.¹⁷ While constructing a college near the rivulet *Sulia*, large number of antiquities were found and the findings recovered from the site were a gold spouted metal water pot, three earthen pots of red ware consisting of ‘hoards of metal figures, metal Stupa, a metal bell, a copper (bronze) spouted pot and other things.¹⁸ By the side of these three pots, there was a deposit of some more metal objects (two Stupas and seven figures, six representing Buddhist deities of larger dimension.¹⁹

Apart from the hoard of 92 bronze icons, of which nearly 77 are Buddhist, a set of three copper plates²⁰ informs about *Khadiravani* – *Tara*, *Heruka*, both are deities from Mahayana Buddhism. All the bronze icons are now in Odisha State Museum. The Buddhist affiliation of this site is also suggested not only by the finds of as many as twenty metal Stupas, forming a part of the hoard but by the discovery of a Chlorite fragmentary slab with the relief of a Stupa and the lower portion of an image of – *Lokesvara*. These Stupas are definitely Buddhist because four of the bronze Stupas have Buddhist images in the niche with most of them bearing Buddhist creed. From the study of the materials at hand, it can be said with fair amount of certainty that the antiquity of the place can date back to 7th C. AD if not earlier. The period when *Banpur* flourished as a prominent Buddhist centre, Mahayana School was fast becoming popular with the people.

Tarapur – Discovery of several Buddhist sculptures including Buddha, *Avalokitesvara*, *Prajnaparamita*, *Marichi*, *Tara* etc. from the village *Tarapur* near the river Mahanadi in Cuttack make us to believe that it was also a centre of Buddhism. These images dating from 8th C. To 11th C. A.D. attests the fact that Buddhism continued to be a major religion here with a considerable influence.

¹⁷ Mohapatra, S, *Buddhist Bronzes of Odisha*, 5.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Mitra D, *Bronzes from Achyutarajpur*, Odisha, 43.

²⁰ JAS, 1966, VIII, 271-76.

Banesvaranasi – The picturesque hillock on the river bed of Mahanadi in *Narasimhapur* of Cuttack district stands *Banesvaranasi* from where lot of Buddhist images has been discovered. These images have *Prajnaparamita*, Buddha in *Bhumisparsa mudra*, *Avalokitesvara*, and Tara demonstrate artistic excellence in plastic art. This site needs further excavation so that considerable information on the Buddhist heritage could be gathered from here.

Vajragiri- An excavation conducted in 2005-2006 near Jaraka in Jajpur district on the National Highway revealed the existence of a rock-cut monastery in *Vajragiri*. A number of Buddhist images including *Padmapani*, *Manjusri*, now shifted to Odisha state Museum speak of a Buddhist establishment which flourished here from 8th to 12th C. A.D. Because of its proximity to Ratnagiri and the presence of the monastery and a head of Maitreya image, it can be assumed that it was also a centre of Buddhism.

Boudh Diha - Boudha(Buddha) Diha (Place) situated 15kms away towards the North-east of modern Jajpur is an important site. Here one can notice two Buddha images seated in *Bhumisparsa mudra* in a lotus pedestal. The images are every beautifully carved in the post-Gupta period. The remains of a monastic complex clearly visible with some stone pillars like those found in Lalitgiri and Udayagiri. All these indicate the existence of a Buddhist settlement here.

Similar Buddhist ruins are also traced in the nearby villages of *Alada* of Jajpur district. Number of votive Stupa, images of *Avalokitesvara* and remains of monastic complex clearly make us to believe that it was also an important Buddhist establishment.

There is also another village Kopala in the same locality where number of walls having cells in plan were traced with Buddha and *Bodhisvattva* images. This site can be dated to 5th to 8thc.AD.

Solampur - Buddhist remains scattered all over the village *Solampur* of *Bhadrak* district and images in the panels of the temple wall here speak of the existence of a great Buddhist centre here. One finds the ruins of a monastery at the entrance of the village. On the wall of the village temple *Dwarabasini*, one can find a panel measuring 08"x08" having Buddha images

besides other sculptures including *Lokesvara*, *Padmapani Avalokitesvara*, *Jambhaca* and *Tara*. All these images are now worshiped as Hindu divinities, showing Buddhism making inroads into Hindu religion.

A unique of Buddha seated in *Vajra Prayankasan Mudra* was found in Raghunath temple measures 2ft in height. This image is unique in the sense that a panel of eight miracles of Buddha is found in the back of the image. The miracles showed include the birth of Goutama from *Mayadevi*, attainment of Buddhahood, preaching the first sermon in *Seranath*, Miracle of *Sravasti (Mahapratiharya)* the descent from Heaven (*Devabarana*) at Sankisa, taming of wild elephant *Nilagiri* at *Rajgriha*, Monkey offering honey to Buddha at *Vaisali* and Mahaparinirvana. This image is considered to be one of the finest sculptures of Buddhist art in Odisha. Interestingly this plaque again formed in the design of the *Mahabodhi* temple of *Bodhagaya*. Similar small terracotta niche from *Bodhagaya* dated 8th – 9th C. AD. is displayed now in the gallery of Indian Museum.

Another unique *Manjusri* image in *Tribhanga* style is found standing on the entrance of the temple. Besides the above images, most of the remains are buried within the extensive mounds at the place. This place is perhaps the *Solampur Mahavihara* referred to in the Ratnagiri copper plates of *Somavamsi* King Karna.²¹

Our attention is drawn to the chlorite image of *Vajrasattva* now preserved in the Indian Museum. This is a fine specimen of plastic art. It sits in *Vajraprayanka* attitude carrying *Vajra* on its right palm that has been placed against its breast, while its left hand resting on the thigh holds the *Ghamta* which is damaged. *Vajrasattva*, known as *Vajracharya* in Nepal is regarded as the sixth Dhyani Buddha and is worshipped only by those who are initiated into *Vajrayana* cult.²²

Khadipada - Few colossal life size images of Buddha and Bodhisattva have been recovered from village *Khadipada*, situated nearly 12 kms, from *Solampur*. These images now kept in Odisha state museum attract attention of visitors both for their size and style. Buddha in

²¹ EI.XXXIII. 1956, 267.

²² Sahu N.K, *op.cit*, 201.

Bhumisparsa Mudra, in *Dharmachakra Mudra*, *Padmapani Avalokitesvara* make it clear that it was also a great centre of Buddhism in 8th – 9th C. AD.

Jajpur - Jajpur, the district headquarter town of the District was the ancient Capital 'Guhesvara Patak' of the *Bhaumakara* dynasty.²³ The *Bhumakara* Kings were Buddhists, hence they patronized the religion. During the reign of the *Bhaumakara*, one King *Sivakaradeva Unmattasimha* sent an autographed manuscript of the *Gandavyuha* to the Chinese emperor *Te-t song* in the year 795 AD.

A large number of Stupas, monasteries were believed to have been constructed under the royal patronage in Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Kolangiri, Rameswar, Arada, Langudi, Kapila, Tarangasarpur etc. Large number of Buddhist images still lay scattered speak volumes about the state of Buddhism here.

Ayodha - Surrounded by three rivers *Ayodha* in *Balasore* district was definitely an important Buddhist Centre in the 8th – 11th C. A.D. A huge *Padmapani Avalokitesvara* image now kept in Odisha state Museum was found from here. Ruins of monuments lay scattered all over the village. The *Morichi* temple²⁴ has huge carved stones. Large granite pillars, some even as 16ft. long and 3 cubits, are there. Beautiful images of *Manjusri*, *Lokesvara* and *Varahamukhi* have been found here. All these are important divinity of Mahayana Buddhism. Even *Marichi*, a Buddhist Goddess having three faces and eight armed is showed here on a chariot being drawn by seven pigs. On the top of the slab with *Dhyana* Buddha *Vairochan* is found stated with the Buddhist formula inscription 'Ye- dhamahetuprava' written.

Besides the *Marichi* temple, there appears to be another magnificent temple for Tara. The Tara images of *Ayodha* are remarkable in their size, number of variety as well as artistic beauty and grandeur.²⁵ The whole village of *Ayodha* is an archeological treasure. It was definitely a very prominent Buddhist centre during the *Bhaumakara* period and it continued to be a great centre

²³ Patnaik. S, *Bramhanical Relegion in Ancient Odisha*, 44.

²⁴ JORS, 34.

²⁵ Sahu N.K. *op.cit*, 211.

even after that. This assumption holds good as we find two Buddha images and two *Avaloktesvara* images from another here by village *Avana*.

Khichhing - *Khichhing* in *Mayurbhanj* district has been described as an art centre till 12th C. A.D.²⁶ Excavation carried out here brought remains of a group of old temples, sculptures belonging to various religious sects. *Kichhing* is dotted with many low lying mounds from where number of stone images has been excavated. One such mound, after excavation revealed the remains of Stupas believed to be a Buddhist one,²⁷ with a casket of ashes enshrined in it. A museum at this site preserves an inscribed image of *Avalokitesvara* and a colossal image of *Dhyani* Buddha with the representation of the Bodhi tree above his head. Another image of Buddha in *Bhumisparsa mudra* is found seated on the lotus throne in Yogic posture. Some images of *Vajrasana* Buddha are also found here sitting on lotus pedestal in *Varada* pose. Similarly important figures of *Manjushri*, *Marichi* have been found from here. The beautiful Tara image, being worshipped by the Hindus is also a Buddhist deity. There seems no doubt that it was a great Buddhist centre in the post Gupta period till 12th C. A. D.

Boud – The district head quarter town Bound was a great centre of *Mahayanic* and Tantric Buddhism in the medieval period. Historians like Prof. R. D. Banerji is of the opinion that Buddhism lingered for longer period in *Boud* than other places.²⁸

The most important Buddhist remain in *Boud* is the life size image of Buddha found at present near the royal palace. This seated image of Buddha is in *Bhumisparsa Mudra* measuring 6ft.9" in height and 4ft.6" in width. This image is like the ones found in Lalitgiri. There is evidence to suggest that the image is sitting on the shrine chamber of the monastery. However remains of large stone blocks supposed to be used in the monastery have been found lying scattered all over. The area adjoining to this image housed in a shed is suggestive of the fact that once it had residential complex.²⁹ There are few other images in the premises of the *Rameswara* temple. The 10th century inscribed Tara image and the big monastic complexes, the ruins

²⁶ Joshi A, *New light on cultural Heritage of Odisha*, 93.

²⁷ Panigrahi, K.C. – *op.cit*, 441.

²⁸ JBORS – 1929, 69.

²⁹ Patnaik Sunil Kumar, *Buddhist Heritage of Odisha*, 74.

scattered in the area, several bronze images of which two are identified as Buddhist Maitreya and Lokeshvara³⁰ attest the fact that Boud was a great Buddhist centre that flourished in the upper and lower Mahanadi Valley.

Prachi valley – Prachi Valley, on the banks of river Prachi comprised mostly places of a small part of modern *Kakatpur, Astrang, Niali, Adaspur* in Puri and Cuttack district has reminded one of the ancient sites from where lot of Buddhist monuments have been found to prove that it was also a centre of Buddhism.

From the survey of the Prachi Valley, it is clear beyond doubt that both Buddhism and Brahmanism flourished here side by side.³¹ The important Buddhist images of Prachi Valley are the images of Buddha in *Bhumisparsa mudra*, new fixed on the other outer wall of the Siva temple at Dakshinesvara near Kantapada, Tara image kept inside Isvaradeva temple at Jiunti, *Avalokitesvara* at Mudgala, another *Avalokitesvara* image at Latharana, still another *Avalokitesvara* image kept inside Laksmi Narasimha temple at Amaresvara (Now shifted to state Museum). There is also another *Avalokitesvara* in Kenduli, being worshipped as a Hindu God. The image of Tara in village Phiriphira, Vajraghanta worshipped under a tree, *Jambhala* at Krakavata and Buddha in *Yogasana* fixed on the walls of temple of *Gramesvara* in Nivarana village speak 20 sculpture of Prachi Valley, speak about the flourishing state of Buddhism in the Prachi Valley from 7th C. A D. till 12th C. A.D.

The eight armed Marichi in Astranga, and findings of so many Buddhist sculptures in the valley clears all doubt that it was an important Buddhist Centre. The Buddhist viharas and chaityas too existed in the Prachi Valley. Kuruma, an ancient site situated at a distance of 8 kms from Konark has remained an important Buddhist centre at least in the 9th C. A.D. The unique image of Buddha in Bhumisparsa Mudra and Heruka still worshipped in the temple built on Buddhist Chaitya testify the fact that it was a prominent Buddhist Centre.

From the evidences available, it can be said that Prachi valley was a very important Buddhist Centre. The image of Buddha is worshipped in many places in Prachi valley in various forms

³⁰ Sahu, N.K.*OP.Cit*, 52-53.

³¹ Sculptures of Prachi Valley, 51.

of Hindu divinities. It was a time when Buddhism made in roads to Hinduism and Hindu religion accepted Buddha as an incarnation of *Visnu*.

Hundreds of Buddhist images lying scattered in almost all the districts of Odisha attest the fact that Odisha was a great centre of Buddhism. The colossal image of *Amoghasiddhi* found from G. Udayagiri in Gajapati district now preserved in Odisha state Museum is found sitting cross-legged on a lotus throne supported on either side by a crouchant lion and below the lotus in between two lion is engraved the wheel of Law (*Dharam chakra*) flanked with two deers. This conception of Amoghasiddhi belongs to *Vajrayana* school of thought and in Nepal he is considered as the fifth Dhyani Buddha in order.

Even in the city of Cuttack, many Buddhist images are now worshipped as Hindu divinities. In Bania Sahi, the images of Chunda,³² four armed *Avalokitesvara*, several images from Kendrapada including *Vajrapani*, Manjusri, *Tara Avalokitesvara*, now shifted to the Indian Museum, Kolkata³³ demoustrate the importance of Buddhism in this part of Odisha.

All the figures, sites and the evidence speak volumes about the flourishing state of Buddhism in Odisha in the period under discussion. The most important Buddhist establishment of Odisha is perhaps the Diamond triangle, comprising of Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udaygiri which is a delight to the eyes of lay followers and a treasure house for the students of Buddhism, Since it needs elaborate discussion it is discussed at length under the sub section exclusively prepared here.

³² Sahu, N.K. *OP.cit*, 220.

³³ *Ibid*,193.

3.2 The Settlements

Lalitagiri – Ratnagiri – Udayagiri

Despite being one of the most important Buddhist sites of the world, Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri in the present Jajpur district, did not draw any attention of the scholars because nobody knew about it till 1958, when the site, Ratnagiri was taken up by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for excavation. Subsequent excavations revealed the existence of a sprawling monastic centre and in both Lalitagiri and Udayagiri similar monastic centers were excavated. These discoveries have enormously helped in reconstructing the history and spread of Buddhism in Odisha as well as for understanding the growth of art and architecture. Though these centers are contemporary yet in the present state of our knowledge we cannot arrange Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri chronologically, yet those sites cannot be studied in isolation as these reflect the gradual growth and transition of Buddhism in this part.

Lalitagiri:

Lalitagiri (lat 20.35" N and Long 86".15'E) in the Birupa - Chitrotala valley is one of the major centers of Buddhism. The village Lalitagiri is couched between the hills of the Assia range. It is 90 km, north – west of Bhubaneswar and 65 km from Cuttack on the Express Highway. The rich treasure of Lalitagiri remained buried till the excavation was undertaken by the ASI. From 1960 – 61, then again in 1977 by Utkal University and again six excavations from 1985-91, the site revealed huge Buddhist settlements from 6th C. A.D. to 13th – 14th C. A.D.

Lalitagiri has everything of a Buddhist settlement, the place of worship, residential area and monastery complex. One can observe here the plain worship of a Stupa in the early period. The name of this settlement is revealed from a monastic sealing depicting “Sri Chandraditya Vihara Samagra Arya Bhikshu Sangha”. The name Chandraditya has not yet been identified as

any ruler of Odisha, though he was believed to have been a Gupta Ruler.³⁴ It can be assumed that it was an affluent establishment during the Guptas.

Number of monuments like Stupa which yielded relic caskets, one huge Chaitya Griha and four monastic complexes have been excavated from inside the Stupa three relic caskets are found. The Stupa is 15 meters in diameter, built following the conventional style as that of Stupas discovered at Sanchi. Though the caskets in which the relics were kept unfortunately bear no inscription, yet it can be said that these caskets preserved the relic of Buddha.

A large number of architectural stones carved with motifs were also found out from the site. The majority of the sculptures discovered at Lalitagiri are of images of Buddha in different poses and postures and of sizes. These sculptures are badly weather beaten. The life size sculpture representing Buddha is shown in standing pose with drapery and abhaya pose. The sculptures primarily depicted Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra, Dhyana Mudra or Varada Mudra. At least seven medium size images of Lord Buddha represent the Bodhagaya episode of protection by the snake king. In this sculpture Buddha is seen seated on the coil of a snake and at the back above the head of Buddha, a seven hooded snake is shown as a canopy. A few images of this type are found in Ganiapalli village of Bargarh district.

A stone plaque 2' x 2' carved in bold relief depicting the story of Buddha's descent from Tushita heaven accompanied by Brahma and Indra equate Buddha with great Brahmanical Gods. Another great image of Buddha found here needs to be informed. There is a colossal statue of Buddha that in the expression of divine grandeur on its face has few rivals in India.

Through generations of experience and practice artists mastered in creating the form of the Master and the compassionate Bodhisattva. Though we have scanty information about an active Gupta rule in Odisha yet the reverberations of the art from were felt in Odisha in about 6th – 7th C. A.D.as evident from some sculptures at Lalitagiri.

The standing images of Bodhisattva now housed in the Museum of Lalitagiri speak the subtle art of the period.

³⁴ Patnaik, S. K. *op.cit*, 78.

The first scientific excavation at Lalitagiri was conducted by Utkal University in 1977. The location was at the southern slope of Londa hills which yielded remains of the basement of a large number of Stupas. The next excavation was carried out at Lalitagiri by the ASI, Bhubaneswar circle in 1985-86 to 1991 -92. In this excavation it has been established that this site represented the oldest Buddhist monastic establishment in Odisha and the time period was from 2nd C. B.C. to 11th -12th C.A.D.

The excavated site brought out huge monuments. These can be broadly categorized under Stupas, Apsidal temple (chaitya) and the monasteries besides images of Buddhist Gods and Goddesses. The details of these are discussed.

Ratnagiri:

Ratnagiri (lat. 20° 48' N Long 86° 26' E) is located midway between the rivers Brahmani and the Birupa in Jajpur district. Ratnagiri village is presently located around the hillock containing Buddhist remains, bounded by all sides by three rivers Brahmani, the Kimira and the Birupa

In 1906, Manmohan Chakraborty reported in the Bengal District Gazetteers about some of the images found here. In 1927 and 1928, R. P. Chanda from Indian Museum visited the place and collected some images. Subsequently H C Chakaldar and Nirmal Kumar Bose explored three sites Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri, Schoolas³⁵ started mentioning about the art of the images, Stupa which Hiuen – Tsang witnessed to the north-east of the stone Stupa of PuSi.PoKi-Li (Puspagiri) Monastery.³⁶

In his work History of Buddhism, Taranatha³⁷ it is stated that towards the last part of his life, king Bhddhapaksha built a temple called Ratnagiri on the crest of a hill, situated near the sea.

³⁵ rree, R. D. *History of Odisha Vo. I*, 138.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Thisory of Buddhism – Taranath (tr) Lama Chimpa and Alka Chaltopadhayaya*, Simla, 1970.

He prepared three copies of each of the scriptural works of the Mahayana and Hinayana and kept these in the temple. He maintained five hundred marks³⁸ there.

The Chinese scholar Hiuen Tsang also mentions the glory of Buddhism in Kalinga and Kongoda. He was mentioned and given description of Pu – Si – P'o. Ki-Li (Puspagiri). In the seventh century a monastery was built in Ratnagiri. The unprecedented growth of art and architecture of the place Received Patronage of the Bhaumakaras.

Some Tibetan records speak on the religious trend of Ratnagiri towards the end of 10thc. AD. One teacher Acharya Tsi-Lu-Pa (Cheluka) has studied Kalachakra – tantra in the Vihara of Ratnagiri (Rin – chen – rito). Tibetan text Pag sam-jon-zang³⁹ speaks about Chilu Pandit (Cheluk) born in or-bi-san (Odisha) studied Tripitaka in Ratnagiri Vihara, Vikramasila and Nalanda. From these references, it can be assured that Ratnagiri was a great academic centre for Kalachakra tantra in the late 10th and early 11th C.A.D. It is also a fact that reputed teachers and scholars from all parts of India were coming to this establishment for teaching and receiving knowledge on Buddhist religion and philosophy.

The excavation at Ratnagiri made us to believe that Vajrayana and its offshoot Kalachakrayana found a strong footing here. The excavation yielded, apart from religious edifices, numerous votive Stupas with the reliefs of divinities of the Vajrayana pantheon, separate images of these divinities and inscribed stone slabs and molded terracotta plaques with dharanis.

The only set of copper plates found here speak about the gift of a village, Kona to Rani Karpursri who came from Solampur Maha Vihara of Utkal. The charter⁴⁰ issued in 11th C.A.D. by Somaramasi King Karna for the maintenance of Rani who probably lived in the monastery of Ratnagiri.

Towards the middle of 10th C. Bhaumakaras were succeeded by the Somavamsis and by the end of 12th C. Gangas ruled over Odisha. Though they followed Brahmanical religion yet

³⁸ History and culture of India people – Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan V, 651.

³⁹ Ed. Sarat Chandra Das, Calcutta 1908.

⁴⁰ Memoirs of the ASI, No. 80, Vol – II, New Delhi, 416.

Ratnagiri monastery was never disturbed. After the Gangas came Gajapatis who were followed by the Pathan rule and during this time Buddhism got a setback and Ratnagiri passed into oblivion.

Ratnagiri yielded many artifacts, Stupas, monastery, chlorite door frame to monastery, images of Buddha, Padmapani Avalokitesvara, Tara, Manjushri, Lokesvara, and Bodhisattva etc. Since all these need a detailed discussion, it is discussed in the next chapter.

Udayagiri:

Udayagiri Lat 20°39' N long 86°16' E is located at a distance of 12 kms from Krishnadaspur on way to Ratnagiri is perhaps the youngest among the three establishments, via – Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. ASI conducted excavation and brought to light a huge monastic complex with huge Stupa in front. This site was explored by many scholars like N K Bose, R. P. Chanda, R. D. Banerjee, D. Mitra, N K Sahu and many others.

The excavation conducted by ASI proved it to be a great centre of Mahayana – Vajrayana that flourished between 7th C. to 13th C. A.D. The terracotta sealings from here revealed the name from the writing “Madhavpur Mahavihara Arya Vikshu Sangha. Besides, it revealed a complete monastic complex to a wellbuilt Stupa which signified the religious merit of the monastery.

Earlier excavation here revealed the Monastery- I had an enclosure wall and exposed on three sides. The monastery has a Buddha image in Bhumi sparsa mudra in the sanctum. The doorjamb is fully decorated with flower design. This monastery seemed to be in operation from 8th to 13th C.A.D.

A huge brick Stupa standing on the South – East corner of the monastery at Udayagiri was excavated in 1985 and renovated subsequently. The Stupa was encircled with a compound wall. It is about 5 meters in its total extent of height and the dome portion is on a square platform. This Stupa has significant place in the development of Buddhism in Odisha. There

are four Dayani Buddhas on the four sides of Stupa which is a tradition of Vajrayana Buddhism. In Vajrayana, Vajrasattva is regarded as Adi Buddha (the Primal enlightened one) who possesses five kind of knowledge, conceived as his five attributes from which five kinds of meditation flow. These five deities are known as Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi and Akshobhya. These Dhyani Buddhas are generally represented on the four sides of a Stupa, regarded as the symbol of Buddhist universe.

Another excavation conducted in 1997 to 2003 revealed Udayagiri-2 having a fully fledged Monastery and a huge temple complex. Another Chaityagiha has been discovered here too. Since rafter a long break, the excavations were resumed in the South Eastern half of the valley, it has been named as Udayagiri-2 to distinguish itself from the previously excavated areas. The excavation yielded remains of Monastery-2, Shrine complex, Stupa and Chaitya enclosure. On the basis of large number of terracotta sealing's inscribed with 'Sri Simhaprastha Mahavihara' in characters of 10th C.A.D.⁴¹ it can be identified as the Mahavihara of the same name.

There were about 50 unique sculptures of Buddha, Bodhisattva, Avalokitesvara, Tara – Jambhala, Aparajita, Heruka, Chunda have been found. A detailed discussion on the findings is being made in the subsequent chapter. The excavated antiquates from Udayagiri are mainly in stone, terracotta and metal. The discovery of two unique bronze images of standing Buddha and Bodhisattva are so far the biggest early metal sculptures discovered from here.

Besides, the rock cut sculptures on the hilltop at Udayagiri depicting Buddha, Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and Kurukulla make interesting observation which need to be studied at length to know the flourishing condition of Buddhism in this area.

Therefore, this settlement occupied a central place for the development of Buddhist culture in Orissa. Thought, the area is not inadequate to this excavated site. This historical site mutually with the earlier two and nearby Langudi hill can be comparable to any other Buddhist settlements like Nagarjunakonda or Vikramasila. The stratigraphy is very much authentic.

⁴¹ Patnaik, S. K. *op.cit*, 88.

CHAPTER IV THE STUPA & MONASTERIE ARCHITECTURE IN ODISHA

The Buddhist remains at Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri, collectively known as the Diamond Triangle speak volumes about Buddhism in Odisha. Here, we find Stupas, images, sculptures etc, which are unique and each of one of those need detailed discussion. It is therefore necessary to throw some lights on each of those to understand the Buddhist treasures once buried here about which no one knew till those were excavated

4.1 Stupa

The Buddhist remains at Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri, collectively known as the Diamond Triangle speak volumes about Buddhism in Odisha. Here, we find Stupas, images, sculptures etc, which are unique and each of one of those need detailed discussion. It is therefore necessary to throw some lights on each of those to understand the Buddhist treasures once buried here about which no one knew till those were excavated.

The Stupa is essentially a relic structure constructed in honor of the dead – the Holy and Great. The practice of holding Stupa as a great esteem in Buddhism was in vogue prior to Asoka as proved by the Nigalisagar pillar inscription.⁴² It was during the time of Asoka, large size Stupas are believed to have been constructed for ceremonial public worship. Stupa used to be worshiped and it became popular institution. Stupa used to be a mound of earth or stone scaled over crops, it's ashes or its bones. From at least 3rd C. BC, Stupas in India seem to have become elaborate in palm and elevation, as known from Stupas of Bharut and Sanchi.⁴³

All the Stupas in Odisha found in this Diamond triangle are together with monastic complexes. The main Stupa or Stupa 1 found on the top of the hill of Lalitagiri is believed to be the oldest in Odisha.⁴⁴ It is located on the highest point of the site behind the present sculpture shed. The

⁴² Scn. AC – *Ashokan Edicts*, 125.

⁴³ Cunningham, A – *The Stupa at Bharut*, 64.

⁴⁴ Patnaik, S. K. – *OP-Cit*, 110.

Stupa is made of dressed stones and commands a view from a long distance. The imposing size and its loftiness impress everyone.

The main Stupa is 15 meter in diameter at the base and built of random rubble masonry. The Stupa has a ledge of 1.20 meters at a height of 1.30 meter from the floor level. The monument stands on a hard rock-base and the core is filled with mud-mortar. The Stupa was encircled by the massive stone-balustrades. Just three to four meters down below towards North- Western side of the main Stupa, there is a cistern for the collection of natural water which has been excavated in the natural rock.



Figure 1 MAHASTUPHA AT LALITGIRI

It is three meter in width and four meters in length and one meter in depth. Several miniature and votive Stupas are found from the apsidal temple (Chaitya) area. Votive Stupas are small in

size mostly erected by the pilgrims when they visit the sacred sites for attaining religious merit.⁴⁵

The most important discovery from this Stupas is the relic caskets. They were three in number found from the south – east and north side of the Stupa. During the clearing of the eastern part of the Stupa, a huge stone was noticed about 2mts, above the floor on the core of the Stupa. It was like a Khondalite votive Stupa with two parts, the lid and the inner part, resembling a dome and a drum. After opening the top part, it was found that in the lower part, within a groove a small steatite container was kept. In it there was a silver casket within which charred bone pieces wrapped in gold foil was kept. Two more such caskets were discovered subsequently from the same region of the Stupa in its southern and northern side respectively. However, one of them yielded only the outer part in khondolite, thus out of three sets, two were full.

Though the caskets were not inscribed, yet their significance for containing the corporal remains of Lord Buddha cannot be ruled out due to their disposition on the Stupa analogous to the inscribed relic caskets of the Master and his two most famous disciples like Sariputra and Moudgalayayana, found from the great Sanchi Stupas. It is known from the Buddhist literature that after His Mahaparinirvana, the corporeal remains of Buddha were distributed to various kingdoms.

Since Buddhism was prevalent in a flourishing condition in Odisha even during the reign period of Ashoka. it can be presumed that a fragment of holy relic was enshrined in some Stupa and the relic kept inside the Stupa in Lalitagiri was definitely the Buddha relic enshrined inside the Stupa. Like all other Buddhist sites, the main object of worship at Ratnagiri was the main Stupa, situated at the highest point of the hillock towards its south- western corner. Though the super structure is not there now yet the structure in its ruins too look impressive. The base of it about 14ft high is made of fine brick work with a coating of shell lime.

⁴⁵ Memoirs of ASI, No. 81.

The main Stupa in Ratnagiri can be assigned to 10th C. A.D. and it was built over a construction, possible on a Stupa dating back to Gupta period. The area around the Stupa is covered with Stupas of various sizes and shapes.



Figure 2 STUPA AT RATNAGIRI

The Stupas at Ratnagiri represent a vast array of iconographic representation of Buddhist deities in particular of the Vajrayana pantheon, as most of the Stupas in chlorite or Khondolite have on one or all four sides of the drum's inside cavred niches images of Buddha, Dhyani Buddhas, Tara, Lokesvara, Vajra Tara, Marichi, Chunda etc. Besides, the structural Stupas have yielded varied objects.

It we accept these view, then the image on the western side represent Buddha in Dhyana Mudra accompanied by Avalokitesvara on the right and Vjrapani on the left while the image on the south represents the Master in the boon giving posture (Varada) accompanied by Manjusri on the right and Avalokitesvara on the left respectively. The other image enshrined

on the northern niche is represented as sitting on Vajraparyankasana attended by Bodhisattva Manjusri on the right side and Avalokitesvar at the left. All the images now fixed in the niches of the Stupa are excellent works of art exhibiting graceful charm and sublime bliss.

There are some minor Stupas discovered at Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and also at Langudi as the hillock in the northern side. While at Lalitagiri and Ratnagiri, these Stupas are few, in Udayagiri only base of the Stupas were traced. These structural Stupas were built either of Khondolite or of brick. The architecture of these Stupas consists of a platform or a base, dome, sometimes with Chattra or sometimes without it.

There are about three hundred minor Stupas discovered at Ratnagiri alone. There is all together around one thousand monolith or votive Stupas with Buddha and Buddhist divinities. Since this aspect is beyond the purview of the dissertation, these are not discussed at length as it requires separate research.

A huge brick Stupa standing on the south-east corner of the monastery was excavated at Udayagiri. It is located on a plain area and encircled with a compound wall of which only a trace is available now. Architecturally this Stupa had a square platform devoid of any projection like that of Ratnagiri Stupa or Lalitagiri. The height is about 5 meters. The drum portion is very big and there are four niches in the four cardinal directions. Four Dhyanī Buddhas were fixed in these four niches. These four *Dhyanī Buddhas* were *Amitabha*, *Akshyobha*, *Amoghasiddhi* and *Ratnasambhava*. These four with *Vairochana* at the centre represent five cosmic elements. The antiquity of Dhyanī Buddhas date back to 7th – 8th C. A.D.⁴⁶

This Stupa with *Dhyanī Buddhas* must be very important at that point of time as these relate to *Vajrayana* Buddhism. The Stupa proves beyond any doubt that Udayagiri was an important centre of *Vajrayana* Buddhism. There is however difference of opinion regarding the

⁴⁶ Agarwalla V.S, *Dhyanī Buddha and Bodhisattvas- studies in Indian Art*, 137.

identification of these *Dhyani* Buddhas as some scholars opines that these images can be identified as Buddha in different postures accompanied by Bodhisattvas.⁴⁷



Figure 3 SUTPA AT UDAYAGRIR

⁴⁷ Bandyopadhyay Bimal, *Buddhist Centre of Odisha*, 70.

CHAITYA- (Apsidal Temple)

In Buddhist literature Chaitya was used as Cult-object. In the *Mahaparinibban Sutta*, the Buddha speaks of the efficiency of erecting Chaityas and he himself visited Chaityas like *Udama, Gotama, Sattambaka* etc. *Digha Nikaya* also shows that Lord Buddha lived in *Anonda Chaitya* at *Bhojanagar*.⁴⁸

Chaityas can be divided in to three categories according to the nature of their ground plans normally (I) Circular (II) Apsidal (III) Quadri lateral. Chaityas were used as prayer halls, and to keep images of the Buddha and Buddhist divinities which end with a Stupa at one side.

In the early centuries of Christian era, there has been a number of structural activities producing apsidal building, mostly in 3rd C. A.D.⁴⁹ Chaitya Griha earlier were unearthed at Ramtirtham and Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh, Mathura, Taxila and Udayagiri. The Apsidal temples discovered in the East Coast were however made of bricks. We have Apsidal Chaitya Griha in Khandagiri and Udayagiri near Bhubaneswar and also in Lalitagiri. Evidence of one more Chaitya Griha has been excavated at Udayagiri – the Buddhist site.

The Apsidal temple at Lalitagiri is located in a strategic position on which from all sides, except east, there were monasteries and Stupas. Perhaps the Buddhists first constructed this temple and then gradually other monuments came in to existence. As per the evidence available, there is a Stupa, of which the base portion is traced on the middle of the shrine chamber. The Chaitya Griha or the Apsidal faces the east and is built of the fine bricks. The length of the temple is 32 meters and 11.40 meters in width. The 3.30 meter thick wall provides an inner space of 4.75 meter width. In this space, a circular Stupa with an average diameter of 3.35 meter was constructed towards the western side. The base moulding and stone paved apron, further extends the area around this Stupa. In the remaining interior floor area a compact ramming area is provided for the devotees.

⁴⁸ Law, B.C. *Geography of Early Buddhism*, Appendix.

⁴⁹ Sarkar, H. *Studies in early Buddhist Architecture in India*, 8.3



Figure 4 APSIDAL TEMPLE (CHAITYA), LALITGIRI

The courtyard around the Chaitya Griha is found paved with stone slabs on the North West and Southern sides. It is evident from the shape and size, the stone slab, were part of earlier structures. There is also other evidence to know of another brick Stupa, which drum portion was encountered while cutting the rammed line floor inside the chaitya Griha. All these constructions were imposed within the Apstidal Chaitya Griha.

A stone paved pathway of nearly 10 meters in length and 3.50 meters of width was delimited with the porched brick Stupa due to semicircular end constructed at least in 3 phases. On the Southern side of the pathway an almost square pedestal we find an inscription in Brahmi which is said to have been recorded by the Epigraphy branch of ASI, Mysore Circle, its association with some Buddhist teachers. This perhaps gives us an impression about the popularity of Chaitya temples.

One more Apsidal Chaitya measuring 10x6.50 meters to the North-West of the stone shrine was discovered at Udayagiri. It has preserved seven courses of the northern arm while the corresponding southern one is traceable on plan. The apse used wedge shaped bricks. In course of time within Chaitya three square / rectangular platforms were raised for creating Stupas. At this time the apse was abutted by straight wall (north-south).⁵⁰



⁵⁰ IAR, 2002, 191 (Indian Antiquary Report).

4.2 Monasteries

During the excavations undertaken in Lalitagiri, Ratnagir, Udayagiri and some other Buddhist sites some beautiful, well constructed Monasteries have come to light. Before describing the monastic complexes here in the Diamond triangle, it is necessary to know what a Buddhist monastery was and how it developed.

Monastery in Sanskrit is called Sangharama⁵¹ which sometimes denote to Vihara. Both the terms are used to mean a place where Bhikkhus used to live. Sangarama literally meant Sangha or the Buddhist order and Aramas meaning Park. So it was the garden where Buddha stayed with his disciples.⁵² This parks could be of two types like orchard and flower garden. Instead of arama, in many Buddhist literature, these are mentioned as Viharas. Sangha has a two – fold meaning in Buddhism. It was like an association of the Bhikkhus or Monks where the entire monk-fraternity is represented as one body.

Being wanderers (Parivrajaka), the monks had no fixed habitat. They used to stay wherever they could, viz, forest, hill side, mountain, open air or on heaps of straw⁵³. Gradually they started staying in temporary shelters like caves, or under trees during three rainy months. This was also not convenient. On one occasion, Lord Buddha, not being an advocate of extreme asceticism accepted the offer of sixty dwelling places at Rajgriha from a local merchant for use of the Sangha in four directions. Thus came into being the monastic abodes where Bhikkhus could meditate at a place during their rainy retreats and perform the communal ceremonies.⁵⁴

The *Paliext Chullavaga* informs that the entire monastic complex consisted of Vihara (dwelling room), *Parivena* (private chamber) *Kottnaka* (Gate Chamber or porches) *Upatthanasala* (Service hall) *eggisala* (hall with fire place) *Kappiyakutis* (store house outside the vihara) *Vachchakuti* (Privies), *Charikarma* (promenade), *Herikasalas* (rooms with promenades) *Udapana* (well) *Udapana salas* (shade attached to well) *Janataghara* (bath room)

⁵¹ Wathers T, *Hiun Tsang*, Vol. – II, 168.

⁵² Mahavagga, VI, 22.1, 20.

⁵³ Chullavagga, *SBE Vol. XX, London*, 1952, 204.

⁵⁴ Mitra, D. *Buddhist Monuments*, 31.

Pokkharani (tanks) and *Mandapa* (hall). The site of the monastery should not be too far or too near a village, suitable for coming and going of people whenever they want.

The monk settlements were never built to a blue print, there was no planning as each grew up bit by bit as donation came in so there were many half – constructed and unfinished monasteries. From the style of construction, one can imagine that there was no fixed style for the construction.

From the construction and style, plastic decoration, concept of the cult object, either a Stupa or an image, necessary emblems and symbols and the comparative roughness or fineness of workmanship, it appears that the first settlers who came, perhaps early in the second century BC or late in the first, were monks of *Hinayanist* sects, *Theravadins* or *Mahasanghikas*. Later on some time, in the 5th C.A.D. Mahayanist monks occupied the settlements in considerable numbers. The enlargement of monastic complexes with addition of decorations like *Mandapas*, verandas, images of Buddha and other divinities mark Mahayana character.

With this background discussion, we should discuss about the monastic complexes at Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. The excavations brought to light full-fledged monasteries at Lalitagiri, two at Ratnagiri and two at Udayagiri. All these monasteries as per the excavations by the ASI are numbered. All the monasteries display similar features, though variation lies in size only. Most part of the brick monasteries display signs of huge vandalism. Vagaries of nature is apparently another major cause of decay.

Lalitagiri – Monastery 1

This monastery is located adjacent to the apsidal temple. It is square on plan with a measurement of 36 x 36 m facing the east. The entrance porch, 3.5m in width and 3 meter long has been found extensively damaged, its northern wall retained up to the plinth level, while the southern wall found wising even from the plinth level. It has a porched entrance on its eastern side and an exist on the southern side near to the western end. The sanctum chamber is on the west.

There are five cells on the northern side and five cells on the southern side of the monastery. On the western side, one centrally located cell flanked by minor cells each on either side has been found. The central cell is supposed to be the shrine chamber and measures 4 x 4 meters. The peculiarities of the cells found during excavation were that, there was no trace of opening of the cells in the ground level though the shrine chamber has its usual opening and space. There was no track of door jambs in the cells. Perhaps, the monastery was double storied as there was the trace of a staircase having three to four steps found on the south – east corner.



Figure 5 MONASTERY AT LALITGIRI

The verandah of 270 meter wide on all sides is found along the courtyard. Each side of the verandah extends towards a corner, thus providing the space for an approach to the corner cells and therefore it looks in plan as cist – chamber of megaliths or swastika symbol. This feature has been noticed in almost all the structural monasteries discovered in Odisha except monastery no.2 at Lalitagiri and the single winged monastery at Ratnagiri.

The courtyard is at the centre of the edifice measuring 12.60 x 12.60 meter. The special feature of this courtyard is that, it is not stone paved though almost all the monasteries discovered so far have a stone paved courtyard, which is a common feature. The present monastery under discussion most possibly was paved with stone block which was robbed later on. The drain on the north – east corner is covered as usual. The courtyard was separated from the verandah by a stone kerb all around. These kerbs measure 1.25 x 1.25 meter. The top surface of these kerbs is relieved with the markings for the pillar base. These pillars were on the course of the stone kerb after an interval of 1.45 meters.

An additional opening is found on the southern side through the extended arm by eastern side of the veranda. From the Veranda level there was no entrance visible to the cells. The separate wall between the cell and the verandah measures 3.10 meters and is uniform all along with other wall. There is no trace of addition in this later phase. This is the unique feature of the monastery. The monk's probably used the cells in the first floor only and the ground floor, via, Verandah and the courtyard was meant for the congregation.

The entrance porch of the Monastery is located on the eastern side of the central portion walls of the two cells. The porch is 3.60 meter wide with brick pylons on either side which seem to be later addition. Unfortunately only the remains of the northern side are there today. The porch was opening into a verandah through a wide threshold built of khondolite stone slab on which two monolithic stone blocks are still standing on the pedestal that make the entrance.

This monastery like all other monastery of Lalitagiri was built with fine brick masonry. The use of stone is restricted to some important places like door jambs, lintels, steps, pillars and verandah kerbs.

This Monastery was built on the plan and pattern similar to the monasteries of Nalanda and Nagarjunakonda. The entire monastery is built on the slope of Landa hill of Lalitagiri village. There is a high ridge formed by the rocky – out slope the western side of the Monastery. The rain water had a natural slope to come down towards the monastery's western wall. The hard and compact rock surface prevented the water accumulated on the backside of the Monastery, thus the natural calamity was turned into natural facility for water storage. A battered buttress

was provided on the back wall of the Monastery to check the water thrust as well as seepage on the either side. This is an unique feature of this monastery which is also there in a monastery at Udayagiri. This monastery no.1 is the biggest Monastery of Lalitagiri, excavated for far.

Monastery – 2

Located on the north-eastern side of the hill top and extremely ruined to its lowest level, this monastery 2 must have been a great place earlier. Structural remains available now, suggests it to be a small settlement having 8 to 10 cells and a courtyard devoid of the pattern like other monasteries excavated here. The entrance porch of this edifice is found from the eastern corner and is marked with stone pavements flanked by two door jambs. Unfortunately only the marks of the pillar base is visible now. The length of the opening is about 8.45 meter.

The maximum length of the northern side wall measures 17.70 meters (east – west direction). This wall serves as the outer wall of the Monastery and forms a part of the cells. On plan there are three cells having the partition walls. On the western portion, the shrine chamber faces the east like the monastery. The floor of the shrine chamber is brick parged. The visible western portion outer wall is 16 meters in length and the cell measures 4 x 4 meters. There is however no trace of any wall on the southern side.

This monastery in comparison to the Monastery 1 is small though it is contemporary to it. There is however not a single image of any kind found from here through there are three quadrangular stone pillar supposed to be the pillars of the monastery found laid on the top of the mound. In one of the pillars, there is a carving of a standing image at the bottom.

Monastery – 3

This Monastery found on the middle slope of the mound just behind the modern temple and towards the north – east at the back of the apsidal temple faces east and forms a row in which

habitational area has been excavated near the huge banyan tree near the monastery 1. This is 28 x 28 meters in length and breadth and the brick size is 24 x 15 x 8 cms. 22x14x8 cms, which were used throughout the edifices. Stones are limited in use for decoration and in the entrance.

Designed in the usual plan, it has a courtyard, a running verandah in front of the cells, the sanctum chamber and the side exit. The courtyard measuring 9 x 9 meter has stone paving with the provision of a kerb. A over drain is running from the North-West corner of the courtyard. In total fifteen cells have been located with an average size of 3.60 x 2.40 meters. The cells are beautiful in their construction. Some cells have brick paved floor. The entrances of the cells are beautified with door jambs, door sills and line felts. However the lintels are missing and the total height of the door jamb is not found.

Cell 2 of this Monastery had a beautiful mark on the wall which perhaps serves the purpose of a bed, like that of rock – cut Monasteries and in the cells of Nalanda. The main shrine facing the east is exactly straight to the entrance porch. It is 3 mts in length and 4 mts. in width. The opening is decorated with door jambs and is connected with a stone paving porch or Antarala. The shrine at present is empty. One beautiful image of the seated Buddha in Bhumisparsha mudra who found from the southern side riche of the shrine.

On the southern side of the Monastery, there are six cells, all openings to verandah. These cells are also decorated with door jambs and door sill. In some cells, there are riches for the keeping of essentials. There is an opening to the side in one of the cell.

Monastery – 4

This Monastery exposed in the mound in front of the Monastery 3 has a square plan with a dimension of 30 x 30 meter. The entrance of the Monastery has two small pylons on either side like Monastery 1. The entrance is followed by the verenda running round the courtyard. The courtyard consists of stone kerbs measuring 10 x 10 meters. There are altogether five cells exposed at present on either side.

All the five cells on the northern side are clearly visible and open to verandah. All the cells are approximately equal to each other measuring 4.10 x 4.10 meters. The entrances to the cells are decorated with stone door jambs and door sills. The entrance to the sill measures 0.80 meters. The interior of the cells are also decorated with brick paving. The extent height of the cells is 1.60 meter at present. The southern side cells are not exposed fully. However all of them are clearly marked in the plan. These are also decorated similarly to that of above ones as found in one partially exposed cell.

The sanctum of the Monastery lies exactly on the midpoint of the western side just in front of the main entrance. The verandah in front of the shrine is marked with stones on two sides and there is a porch to the shrine decorated with stone pillars.

The shrine measuring 4 x 4 mts has an equal size stone pedestal on which a huge image of Buddha (headless) sittings in the *Bhumisparsa mudra*. The image measures 7 ft in length and is proportionate in body construction. The lower portion of the pedestal is flanked with two lion figures. These lions are decorated as Kirtimukha aboriginal form of lion art motif, found in early temples of Odisha. The middle portion of the pedestal is seen with the lotus root with two worshippers.

Ratnagiri – Monastery

The glory of Ratnagiri lies in the monasteries. There are three monasteries discovered so far. Monastery 1 and 2 located side by side are the principal edifices. These are located adjacent to each other with a narrow passage in between facing main Stupa. Another one is a single winged monastery which has no substantial architectural design. Here as per the convention, the layout of the two principal units of the Buddhist edifices. Main Stupa is on the South and monasteries are on the North.

Monastery -1 This is the larger one than the other two monasteries. The basic plan of this monastery is the same as it consists of a spacious stone paved central courtyard around the four side of the verandah. This is again surrounded by twenty four cells, a shrine chamber in front with an antechamber and an entrance complex. The last includes a front or portico flanked by pylons and a rear perch that opens to a verandah. The Monastery had an upper story with the entrance from the South – West corner. The monastery is square – shaped 55.32 x 54.86 meters externally. There is a vast pavement laid out with flag stores in front of the building. The monastery reveals two major well defined periods of construction apart from minor additions in some places.

The Monastery is approached by a flight of steps from the paved fore court, the entrance complex consists of a front porch flanked by a massive pylori on either side and rear porch. The two porches being connected by a portal the principal entrance to the interior. The rear porch opens on a spacious verandah which is separated from the courtyard by a raised stone Kerb, round in front of the cell, the antechamber of the shrine and the stair case leading to the upper storey. The width is 2.60 meters. It has four extensions, oriented along the cardinal directions and ending only at the peripheral (back) walls of the monastery.

The Monastery is approached by a flight of steps from the paved fore court, the entrance complex consists of a front porch flanked by a massive pylori on both side and rear porch. The two porches being connected by a portal the principal entrance to the interior.



Figure 6 MONASTERY AT RATNAGIRI

The near porch opens on a spacious verandah which is separated from the courtyard by a raised stone Kerb, round in front of the cell, the antechamber of the shrine and the stair case leading to the upper storey. The width is 2.60 meters. It has four extensions, oriented along the coordinial directions and ending only at the peripheral (back) walls of the monastery.

The spacious four flanked verandah, apart from giving access to the cells, must have served as a promenade for the walking of the resident monks. The verandah flanks a vast square courtyard, each side being 24.4 meters. The latter is laid out with flagstones. Several of the flag stones (slabs) bear inscribed letters. The courtyard stopped sharply towards the North-East corner where there is a drain that runs below the eastern kerbs, floor of the verandah and floor of cell-II.

The central cell on the northern flank constitutes the shrine of the Monastery. A narrow but long antechamber or porch edging the verandah connects the shrine chamber. Apart from a passage communicating the ante chamber, within the shrine, there are two secret cells which form the part of the shrine complex. The secret cells are found at other big Monasteries of Nalanda, meant for keeping the valuables. The door jambs of the shrine are elegantly and richly decorated. At the base of each jamb is an oblong niche with a beaded raised border on three sides. There stands a dvarapala (guard), gracefully leaning against the staff with his night palm placed on the head of the staff.

The shrine is narrower than the other cells because it accommodates the ante – chamber. The inertial measurements of the shrine are 3.80 meter (East –West) and 2.90 meter (North-South). The interior is plain. Edging the entire north wall of the shrine is a pedestal of stone masonry having a tri - rath plan.

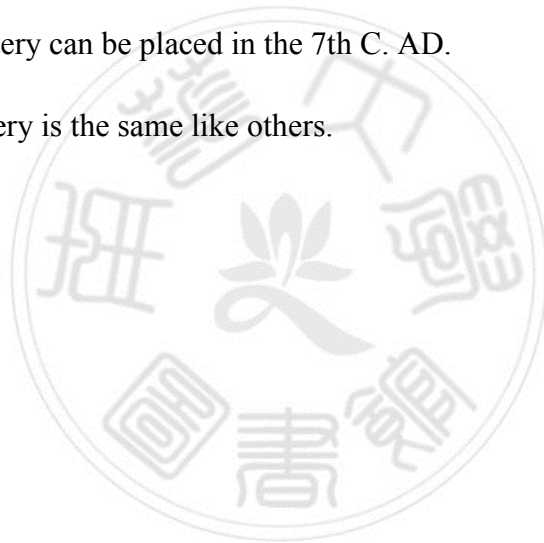
There are twenty four (24) cells in the ground floor distributed on four sides, the Eastern and Western sides, each having seven cells and six and four cells in Northern and Southern sides respectively. The cells are spacious with a length of 3.86 meters and breadth above 3.66 meters in eighteen cells and 3.30 meters in five cells while cell no 11 is 2.97 meters in width. The height of the cells above the top of their floors was 3.61 meters. The ceilings of the cells were flat resting on a series of wooden beam as evident. There are however individual passages in front of the cells. Few stone rotary crushers for grinding grains for preparation of paste are found amidst the filling, almost of the floor level in some cells. The Kitchen block with refractory was outside the Monastery.

It is important to mark that none of the cells had any window though all of those had their individual doors which opened directly on the verandah. Most portions of the doors disappeared though the doors of the tree corner cells are still there.

Monastery – 2

This monastery lies on the Western side of Monastery 1. It is separated by a passage of 3.65 meters width. It is single storied and it faces south towards the main Stupa. This is also a quadrangular Monastery and it measures 28.75 mts x 28.95 mts. The Monastery presents three structural periods which means construction was carried out over and above the ruined Monastery. The Monastery can be placed in the 7th C. AD.

The plan of the Monastery is the same like others.



Udayagiri

At Udayagiri, in 1986- 87, a complete monastic complex has been exposed. Though a number of monastic complex are still under the earth, however a complete monastic complex together with a Stupa area has been exposed. Here, the architectural description is limited to the monastery exposed completely. However one more complete monastery is exposed in Udyagiri II area.

This monastery located in between the Udayagiri hill and plain land enclosed by the hills. The Udayagiri hill and plain land surrounded by the hills. The monastery area was constructed near a well built Stupa which signifies the religious merit of the monastery. Here, the excavation erealed that the monastery had an enclosure wall and was exposed on three sides. I.e. North, East and South.



Figure 7 MONASTERY AT UDAYAGIRI

The whole edifice found constructed in four phases. Thus, there is no uniformity in construction and there are number of cells got closed in a period and in the next phase some have come into operation.

The monastery faces east and has a gate in its eastern side. The gate opens inside in which is found the stone paving verandah which goes round the courtyard like the monasteries of Lalitgiri the court yard is stone paved and a drain on the north-east corner. The shrine chamber or the sanctum is found completely intact and well decorated. The sanctum has a porch which is decorated by door jambs. In the sanctum there is a huge seated Buddha image in *Bhumisprasadra* and two other small Bodhisattva image on either side. Though this monastery is built on the age old chautha sala type, still the remains are not similar to the of excavated monasteries of Lalitgiri or Ratnagiri.

After a gap of eight years the Archaeological Survey of India again in the year 1997 took up excavation at Udayagiri called Udayagiri-II which continued up to 2003. During the excavation a complete full-fledged brick monastery measuring 29x29 metre has been exposed in the year 2000 A.D. This monastery has some unique features like pradakhina around the shrine chambers, which have not been encountered in the previous excavated monasteries.

The monastery is double storied for which steps are provided on the north – eastern corner. A water reservoir or a tank has been exposed on the south – western side of the monastery comparatively bigger in size than one found in monastery - 1 of Lalitgiri. This system of water reservoir is called “podhi” in Buddhist literature often associated with Buddhist sites.

One more shrine complex has also been exposed on the north – western side of this monastery. This shrine complex is a big one having small miniature shrines at corner. Niches are provided on the back side wall of this shrine chamber, perhaps for keeping of images. A running verandah is attached to the side and back wall of this shrine. The entrance to this complex is provided through a flight of steps on eastern side. A hoard of sealings was discovered inscribed in the Dharini mantra during the excavation in the year March 2000.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The name of its monastery revealed from seals and sealing.

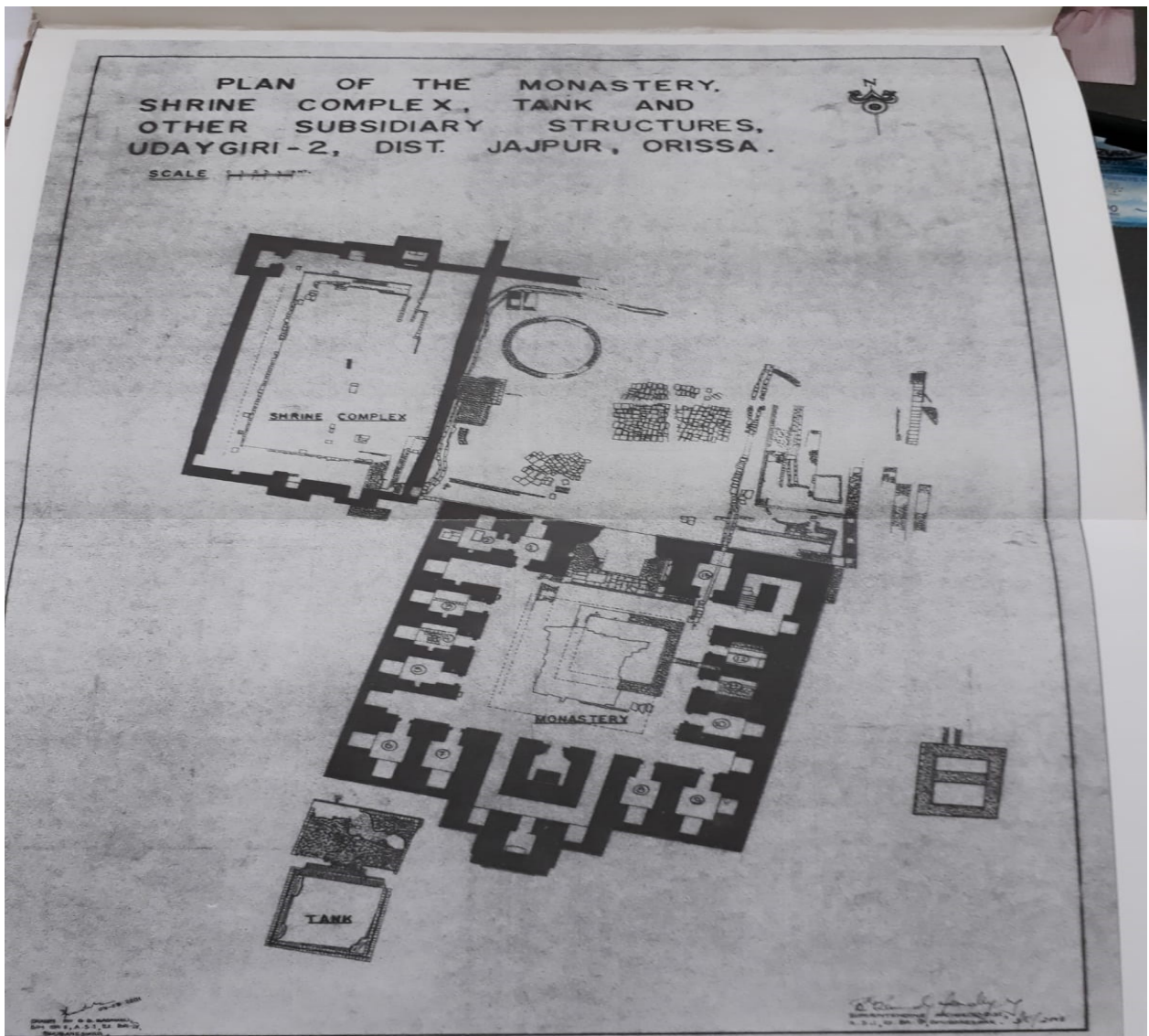


Figure 8 EXPOSED IN UDAYAGIRI II AREA

CHAPTER V A STUDY BASED ON BUDDHIST IMAGES FROM ODISHA

It is an accepted fact that at the Pre-iconic stage in the development of Buddhist sculpture. The worship of the non-image as image was contrived through the use of five well known symbols associated with most important events of The Life of Buddha. While elephant for Birth, riderless horse for street departure (Nirvana), the Bodhi tree for enlightenment, the wheel for preaching and the Stupa for final passing away (*Mahaprinirvana*) by the 18th c. BC, Buddha had acquired the character of almost a *mahatmya* with representation of various historical scenes such as visit by *Ajatasattu* the miracles and the Jataka stories depicted on the gateway of *Sanchi Stupa*, *Nagarjunikonda* and *Amaravati* which were great centers for pilgrims from all over the world.⁵⁶

Episodes relating to the life of Buddha are known from *Pali* literature, *Jatakas*, the *Buddhacharita* by Asvaghosh and many other foreign accounts like those of *Fa-hien* and *Hiuen-Tsans*, where references of Buddha images are formal. Till the late. BC, we have no information regarding the anthropomorphic form of Buddha.⁵⁷ The human representation in the early Buddhist Art has been done with delicate and supple joined limbs, miserable caves and feeble muscles, light built slippery eel-like on that of today with an agreeable child like naturalism large eyes and thick lips which can be seen in Buddhist panels.

5.1 Sculpture & Images

Large number of seated and standing images is reported from Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri besides in the adjacent Languil hills and other important Buddhist sites like *kuruma*, *Ayodhya* etc. Some images are still found in the monastic complexes in Lalitgiri and Ratnagiri. The general feature of these images is all seated in *Bhumi-Sparsha Mudra*. The images consist of a separate block with broad shoulders, long and round hands, smooth bust

⁵⁶ Parimoo ratna, *Lidw of Buddha in Indian sculpture*, 42.

⁵⁷ Sharma RC, *Buddhist Art of mathura*, 150-152.

and fleshy chin. Most of the images seated on a lotus pedestal and below the pedestal we find representation of various images like squatted lions, lotus, worshippers and sometime a Stupa. These images are contemporary in all between 7th - 9th C.A.D.

Besides, the number of standing Buddha images there are number of sitting images of Buddha in *Dhyana Mudra*, *Dharmachakra pravartana mudra* and in *Abhaya Mudra*. The general features of all the seated Buddha images are same. These images consist of a separate block with broad shoulders, long and round hands, smooth bust and fleshy chin.

Four varieties of seated Buddha images are found in Lalitagiri. It is necessary to know about the basic character of images.

Perfectly balanced image of Buddha made of Khandolite stone bearing the registration NO.1987-88/62 is shown seated in *Bhumisparsa mudra* on a full blown lotus pedestal below which there are two crouching lions seen facing each other with the lotus string shown in the middle. The image measures 0.09 meters in length and 0.66 meters in width. The right hand is damaged and the left-hand is in *Dhyana mudra*. Buddha here is shown with half – closed eyes with a graceful face with a symbol on the forehead. The head with curly hair has a central knot in the middle. The body is perfectly balanced on the backdrop exists a halo on which a peepal tree on the head is carved machine the sign of golden throne.

The image however is not the best specimen of Buddha image excavated from here. The image lacks the serenity as it does not show the graceful appearance of Buddha, reported to have excavated from monastery III. This image can be dated to early 6th C.A.D.

Another image of Buddha registration NO 87.-88/61 mean nine 0.07 meters in length and 0.42 meters in width found from here is seated in *Bhumi sparsa mudra* on a full blown lotus pedestal with two lions facing an opposite direction having a lotus root shown in the middle. On the right side of the pedestal there is a worshipper kneeling down offering prayers. This image is believed to be the earliest images discovered so far.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Patnaik S.K., *po.cit*, 153.

An image measuring 0.80 meters in length, 0.65 in width seated on a double petal lotus pedestal in *Bhumi sparsa mudra* discovered in Lalitgiri bears the registration NO. 5-245-90/91. Dressed in Dhoti, the traditional Indian attire, this image on the right palm damaged with three horizontal bands on the neck are seen with half – closed eyes, elongated ears with the earring, curly hair with a central knot, this image shows youthfulness and face having a well proportioned body. Behind the head is a beautiful design on a rope and the garland bearers are seen on either sides of the image. The inscription found below the garland can be dated to 8th – 9th C. A.D.

A Buddha image bearing registration NO.86-87/26 is seated in Dharma Chakra Pravartan mudra is shown on a pedestal on which the central wheel is seen flanked by either side by two sitting deers with – three worshippers in right side and two in the left side. The image has broad face half- closed eyes with grave yet serene face curly hair having a central knot. On the backdrop is a halo on which two flying garland bearers are seen on either side just above the shoulder, below the halo two elephant heads are also carved.

The image measuring 1.10 meters in length and 0.50 meters in width is seated in a niche on a double petal lotus pedestal. Below the pedestal on the front is a beautiful design of lotus 1.10 mt. and the niche is decorated with various designs of stamp, flame, leaf etc. the Dhoti clad image with half – closed eyes presents serenity in the face with curly hair and a knot.

Besides, there are a number of standing images excavated from Lalitgiri. Though many standing images of Buddha have been found from all over Odisha. The ones discovered in Lalitgiri show its majority in style and variety.

Apart from the sitting Buddhas. There are many standing images of Buddha in *Abhaya Mudra* and *Varada Mudra* have been traced from all over Odisha. The excavated standing images of Lalitgiri show many images with style and variety.

An image with registration NO.90/88-89 is 1.80 meters in length and 0.90 meters in width, shown in the *Sarnath* style. It is a remarkable image in its fitness and construction. This image

shows Buddha in *Abhaya mudra* in half – closed eyes, plain fleshy body, elongated ear and curly hair. Two worshippers are shown below the pedestal. It is dated to 6th – 7th C. A.D.

Another standing image on pedestal with two worshippers offering prayer bears the registration number 182/89-90 is a remarkable piece of sculpture. The image stands like that of *Sarnath* though the right hand is mutilated. The half – closed eyes curly hair and elongated ear of the image can be assigned to an early date considering its crude treatment to the subject.

The life – size image meaning 1.80 meters in length and 0.90 meter width, curved in relief stands in *Sarnath* style is remarkable image in its fitness and construction. This image with the registration number 183/89-90 is serene with half –closed eyes the image hold a *cheevar* in the left hand and the right hand shows the *Abhaya Mudra*. The body is covered with dhoti. This is the biggest figure found from here with *Sarnath* style.

The image having the registration number 25 is a standing figure of Buddha standing on double petal lotus pedestal in *Sarnath* style. He holds a *cheevar* in the left hand and the right hand is in *Varada Mudra*. The image is little bent towards left fro, above the knee. It has curly hair and elongated ear. A worshipper seeking lord's attention is seen sitting in knee down position on the right side of the image. This unique figure with visible indo- Javanese style is a unique piece of image found from here.

The art idioms found in the Buddha images have most of characteristic features of Mathura style, though these images bear distinct style of Odisha which was in continuation of the art that started at Dhauli in 3rd C. B.C. all the registration number mentioned to describe the images are the numbers given as per records of archaeological survey of India.

5.2 Buddhist deities from Orissa

Avalokitesvara – The Bodhisattva *Avalokitesvara* is said to have been there during the period between the disappearance of the mortal Buddha and advent of future Buddha *Maitreya*. There are huge numbers of Avalokitesvar found in Lalitagiri, Udaygiri, Ratnagiri and in almost all the Buddhist sites of Odisha. Avalokitesvara images are represented four Stupas at Ratnagiri. As many as six life size images also found in Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. Hundred of sitting images are now preserved at the Odisha state Museum, Bhubaneswar.

The standing Bodhisattva now housed in the sculpture shed at Lalitagiri despite being bereft of his right hand below the elbow is a master piece of double lotus sculptural art. Bodhisattva stands on a pedestal, holds stem of lotus in forwardly extended left arm in *abhaya* posture while a lotus stem is placed below the broken right arm. The image wears a crown over the forehead and the matted hair is held high over head. On both sides of the figure towards lower part are seated his female counter parts over double lotus seats placed over lotus stems. The oblong back slab is marked by the figures of garland bearing *Vidya dharas* on both top corners. The edge of the black slab on its sides is marked by the flames. This figure with a slight flexion of the body and beautiful stance shown by the slightly forward left leg, demotes animation further accentuated through the tips of the fingers, vibration lips and broad chest indicative of the life force within. The extremely proportionate mode thing of the torso, the elongated form, delicate rounded limbs, charming face and the inner vision are all indicative of the influence of the Sarnath idiom and the image has been placed to 6th – 7th C. AD⁵⁹.

There has been another standing Bodhisattva with the same posture is shown on a double lotus pedestal. Unfortunately both the hands are broken while a lotus stalk issuing from the left is shown culminated in a lotus over which a *vajra* is placed. In this image animation is also conveyed artistically through the stance, the extremely attenuated waist, broad chest and wide shoulder sloping downwards forming a curvilinear shape. Though the body represents the vital life- force yet the facial expression is extremely charming.

⁵⁹ Bandyopadhyay brinal, *Buddhist centuries of Odisha*, 32.

Almost all the monasteries have *Avalokitesvara* images. On the entrance porch of monastery at Ratnagiri, beautiful images of *Avalokitesvara* are carved. One image standing on the right side have four arms. The right hand holds Akshayamala with lower right hand showing *Vardha* pose, while the upper left hand holds a lotus flower, the lower left hand holds a sprinkler. Standing on a lotus pedestal, decked with ornaments, the image is unique. There is a tiny image of *Dhyani Buddha Amitabha* is shown on the crown on the right side below there is a human image in the pose seeking compassion. Similar image is also found on the left side niche of the monastery.

Of all the *Avalokitesvara* images, mention needs to be made for one unique piece of sculpture with Registration number 21 which stands holding a long lotus flower in left hand. Decked with ornaments, the image stamens with serenity in face, closed eyes, elongated ears with earrings, having jatamukuta. There is an inscribed dharani on the top backside of the image. Below the images are two mere figures inclusive a female figure in the right side seated in Rajalila asana and on the left is a male skeletal image seeking the compassion.

There are about twenty-five life size images of *Avalokitesvara* found from here and the adjoining areas and it needs a volume to deal with all these images individually, hence it is left outside the purview of this work.

Maitreya - Maitreya is believed to have been in the *tusita* Heaven as a Bodhisattva. He was said to be coming to earth four thousand years after the disappearance of Buddha Gautama for the deliverance of all saintly beings. Interactively he is the only bodhisattva who is worshipped both by the *Hinayanists* and *Mahayanists*.

Maitreya is represented as a standing figure, adorned with rich ornaments and holding in his right hand the stalk of lotus, he is distinguished from padmapani mainly by the figure of a small chaitya which he bears in his crown.

The sadhanamala furnishes us with only one description of Maitreya as a principal divinity and several others in which he is represented as a monor God. When he is accompanied by

others as minor God, he is holding cowries in the right hand and a *nagakeshara* flower in the left. Maitreya is popular in Tibet and his images are found in plenty in China.

There are several life size individual Maitreya images found in Odisha definitely meant for worship as cult images. Many life size standing Maitreya images were found from the vicinity of Lalitagiri. Two seated Maitreya and two monolithic Stupas depicting Maitreyas were also found from Ratnagiri. A very big head of Maitreya measuring 6ft in length is found lying in the mound Kolangiri near Ratnagiri. Besides, number of Maitreya images were also found scattered in different parts of Odisha and these images can be dated to 7th – 10th C.A.D.

Manjusri - Believed to be one of the greatest Bodhisattvas, *Manjusri* is considered as a benevolent giver of wisdom, retentive memory, intelligence and eloquence. *Manjusri* is worshipped in various forms and through various mantras by the Mahayana followers. Though his name appeared for the first time in *aryamanjusri – mulakalpa*, thus writing at his entry very late in Buddhist *pamtheon*, yet his images are found plentifully in the sculptures of *Saranath*, Magadha, Bengal and Odisha. As many as 41 *sadhanas* are devoted to the worship of Manjusri and in all those, he has been described in several distinct forms of *Bodhisattva*. In the simplest way, he is found carrying a sword in his right hand and the manuscript *Prajna Paramita* in his left. Sometimes he is represented as his symbols placed on lotus and sometimes, he is accompanied only by his sakti or female counterpart. He is also represented through divinities like Jalinprava, also called Suryaprava, Chandra prava, Kesiri and Upakesiri.

A number of *Manjusri* images have been found from Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri and now preserved in the museum at sight. There are altogether 29 votive Stupas representing his five different forms reported from Ratnagiri. Seventeen of them hold the stalk of an utpala, supporting a book in their left hand and the right palm in the varada mudra resting on the knee. All of them are seated in the Lalitsara. Most of the figures are characterized by locks of hair. Two images recovered from Lalitagiri which are partially damaged. Of course there are other images of Manjusri found from Ayodhya and Khichhing .

Jambhala - Jambhala is believed to have Non- Buddhist origin and he was yaksha. In the *Sadhanamala*, The parental *Dhyani* Buddha of *Jambhala* is either *Ratnasambhara* or

Akshobhaya. Jambhal is connected with wealth and is said to distribute gems, jewels and riches to his devotees.

Several forms of *Jambala* are there is *Sadhanamala*. As the God of wealth he commands respect in all the Buddhist countries. The characteristic feature of *Jambala* emanating from Ratnasambhara is that he carries the mongoose in his right hand and citron in the left.

Lots of *jambhala* images are found from almost all the Buddhist sites of Odisha. *Jambhala* images in good form were excavated from Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri.

Marici – Marici is the female prototype of sun god in Hindu religion. She is a Buddhist deity emanated from the *Dhyani Buddha Vairochana*. Sixteen *sadhanas* of *sadhanamala* describe eight distinct forms of the deity. She may have one, three, five or six faces with two, eight, ten and twelve hands.

The images of Marici were reported from *Udala, Ayodhya, Nigiri, sajanaparh, Puri, Astaranga* Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri.

There are fifteen small three headed, six armed images of Marici in the niches of drums of votive Stupas at Ratnagiri, but only three of them depict seven pigs pulling her chariot. In three images, there are three pigs and in another there are eight pigs are shown dragging her chariot. There are several Marici images found from Udala, Achutarajpur, Khiching of Odisha.

Aparajita – Very few images of *Aparajita* have been traced in Odisha. In the western niche of a votive Stupa No. 16 (Regd. No.1586.) at Ratnagiri an image of Aparajit is found.

The image is clothed in long sati fastened to her chest and left shoulder. The goddess is decked in ornaments. The bun shaped coiffure is decorated with flowers and leaves. She is seated in Lalitasana on a lotus petal throne with her left foot resting on the head of a prostrate elephant; she raises her right hand in the pose of dealing a slap, her left palm, held near the chest, carrying a noose.

Another very big image is now preserved at Lalitagiri sculpture shed present standing in alinda attitude, two crouching figures and holding a flower in her uplifted right hand, while an

attendant goddess standing on a raised platform on her right, hold parasol over her head. Crouching figure under her feet, is seen as crawling Ganesa and the other are as retreating mara.

A standing image at Lalitgiri which measures 1.55 x 70 cms. Stand in a slightly flexed pose with four arms (Regd. No.10) dressed in sati cloth, decked with bracelets and armlets, she bears kundala in the ear, bangles in the hand with ring in the finger. Right hand in Varada mudra and upper right hand holds Rudrakha Mala and lower left hand holds a goose.

Vssudhara – There are two votive Stupas with the reliefs of the two armed *Vasudhara*. These two images are almost same. Within the arched niche *Vasudhara* is seated in the *lalitasana* attitude on a double petal led lotus. Her right hand displays the *varda* mudra while her left carries a stalk ending in ears of corn. Another similar type of image measures 77. Cm of Vasudhara is in high relief found in the monastery – 1 of Ratnagiri. Two more images have been found from the courtyard. Both the images are seated in *lalitasana* and holds in their raised left hand ears of corn (*dhanya-manari*) and the right palm rests on the knee. These images are artistically very beautiful and master pieces of Odishan art. The dating of the images may be assigned to 10th century A.D.

Tara – As many as fifteen Tara images are reported from Ratnagiri. The dating of the images are 10th century A.D. to 12th century A.D. The Ratnagiri images are displayed artistically superb than other Taras.

Khadiravani – The image has a half closed eye and seems as a celestial virgin. As image is also kept in patna museum which was taken from Udayagiri. Such an image found inscribed in niche of a Stupa at Ratnagiri as well.

Vajra Tara – Vajra Tara originates from the *Dhyani* Buddha *Ratnasambhava*. *Vajra Tara* is a popular deity in Buddhism and her images are found almost everywhere in India. Vajratara images in Odisha are discovered from *Ayodhya (Balasore)* and Ratnagiri⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ Mitr D ,Ratnagiri,*MASI*, Vol-80,1981, Plate-XCVII.

Mahattari Tara – In one miniature Stupa one *Mahattari Tara* is reported from Ratnagiri. And another reported from Boudh which is worshipped at Ugratara⁶¹. The Ratnagiri images is seated in a *vajra- prayanikasana* attitude on a double petal led lotus, below, there is boat of offerings. With her right palm in the *varda-mudra* and left holds an utpal stalk.

Mahattari Tara is distinguished by the *Vajra-prayankasana* attitude in which she sits, and also by the fact of her being represented without any companion⁶².

Heruka – Heruka, an emanation of *Aksobhya*, is one of the most popular deities of Tantric Buddhism. He is generally found with his consort *Vajra- Varahi* in *Yab-Yum* pose. A remarkable Heruka image was found from Ratnagiri measuring 5'.2''x2'. 6''. He is two armed, wears a long garland of human skulls. The image is seen holding a *khatranga* in its left arm dances with intoxication over a corpse in *ardhaparayanka* pulse. His head is marked with five skulls with an effigy of *Akshobhya*. The Ratnagiri image is the most successful representation of *Heruka*.

Prajnaparamit – The worship of *prajnaparamita* was very popular among the Buddhist and *Arya Asanga* is credited to have composed one of the *Sadhanas* for her worship which is said to confer wisdom and erudition on her devotees. In the *Aadhanamala*, there are as many as nine *Sadhanas* (Nos.151-159) devoted with the iconographic description of the goddess *Prajnaparamita*. Of these only one (*Sadhan* No.156) describes the four handed form of the goddess. The remaining eight speak of her two handed form⁶³. In additions to the descriptions of *Sadhanamala*, four other descriptions of the four handed form of the goddess are known to us. One from the *Nispannayogavali* and the other three from the *Dharmakosa Sangraha*. Of the *Sadhanmala*, only two are assigned to the kula of the *Dhyani* Buddha *Aksobhya*. She too like *Manjusri*, could not be assigned to any one of the *Dhyani* Buddha's because the

⁶¹ Sahu N.K, *Opcit*.

⁶² Bhattacharya, *Opcit*, 307.

⁶³ Bhattacharya D.C. *Studies in Buddhist Iconography*, 49.

Prajnaparamita scripture was chronologically earlier than the *Dhyani Buddhas*⁶⁴. The book and the gesture of teaching are two iconographic distinctiveness of *Prajnaparamita*.

The Ratnagiri image is seated in *Prayanikasana* attitude on a *visvapadma*, displays the dharma chakra mudra with two palms. A manuscript or book is seen on the lotus which passes over her left arm. She is adorned with beaded valayas (one around each wrist), beaded amulets, a beaded *upavita*, a beaded *hara* with a pendant. She wears a high ornate *kirita-mukata* with fan shaped projection of the ribbon on either side. The sculpture is 16.5 cm. in height. The image peraphas are carved in the niche of a Stupa and dated, probably of 13th century A.D. (Regd. No. RTRI No. 591).⁶⁵



⁶⁴ Bhattacharya B, *Opcit*, 197.

⁶⁵ Sunil patnaik, *Buddhist heritage of Odisha* ,Bhubaneswar, 174.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

There has been no doubt that Buddhism as a religion continued to occupy a prominent place in Odisha. Since the Kalinga war and Ashoka's initiation to Buddhism, Odisha played a very significant role in the spread of the religion beyond India. Rock Edicts and pillar Edicts of Ashoka, visit of Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwan, catholicity of Odisha rulers, and patronage of the *Bhaumakara* – the Buddhist kings, discovery of large numbers of Buddhist sites, sculptures speak about the rich Buddhist traditions of Odisha. Of all places including *Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Khurda, Puri, Boudh, Ganjam*, the Diamond triangle Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri stand out as the most important centers of Buddhism in the world.

Archaeological excavations have proved, the nucleus of Buddhist centers at Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri. Following Lama Taranath's History of Buddhism in India, Debala Mitra suggests that towards the end of the life of king *Buddhaprakash*, a Vihara called Ratnagiri was built in the east of the kingdom of Odisha on the crest of a hill near the sea and that in that Vihara, were kept three sets of Mahayana and *Hinayana sastra* and there were five hundred monks.⁶⁶ Inscriptional evidence from Lalitagiri attest the fact that the growth of Buddhist establishment in this area happened during the Imperial Guptas.⁶⁷

With the change in the political scenario after the Guptas, both Kongoda and Utkal parts of ancient Odisha witnessed the growth of Buddhism. Odisha's ruling dynasties were catholic enough to all religions while the *bhaumakaras* were devout Buddhists. In the 7th C. A.D. there were hundreds of Buddhist monasteries as described by Yuan Chwang.⁶⁸ It was during the time of the rule of the *Bhaumakara* king Sivakaradeva, we find reference of him to have sent an autographed Buddhist manuscript to the Chinese Emperor Ta-tsung.⁶⁹ The manuscript sent by the king contained the last section of *Avatamsaka*, the section known as *Gandavyuha*.

⁶⁶ Mitra, D; *Ratnagiri (1958-61) Memoirs of the ASI*. No. 80 Vol.I, 20.

⁶⁷ Chauley, G C ; *Excavated Remains at Lalitagiri, A Buddhist site in Odisha, Archaeology of Odisha*: K K Basa and PK Mohanty(ed), 540.

⁶⁸ . Watters, T; op.cit, 193-94.

⁶⁹ E.I vol. XV, 1919-20, 363-64.

Monk *Prajna* was entrusted with the translation of the text. It is said that *Prajna* after studying 18 years in Nalanda and other places preferred to study Yoga in a monastery of Odra before proceeding to China. This clearly indicates the exalted position of the Buddhist centers under the realm of the Bhaumakaraa and most probably Ratnagiri was the monastery.⁷⁰ Where *Prajna* had his education.

Buddhism had a steady growth in Odisha specially in Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. Subsequently it became a great centre of *Vajrayana* school from 9th c AD, which is attested by the discovery of numerous Buddhist deities. In order to understand, *Vajrayana*, we must understand that Buddha himself did not believe in the idea of personal worship. In the early Buddhist art of Sanchi or Bharut, we do not find any image of Buddha who has been represented by some symbols like *Bodhi* tree, His foot prints, chhatra etc. . However with the increasing popularity and the spread of Buddhism, the lay followers started worshipping the images of the Master. The emergence of such new thoughts to visualize the Master in a shape led to the anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha. If traditions are to be believed then the third Buddhist Council was held during the period of Kaniska-I. Though scholars differ on this issue, yet the Graeco-Roman Buddhist school of Gandhara art and in the indigenous Mathura school of art, it is amply demonstrated.

The treatise, *Manjusrimulakalpa* gives description to number of Gods and Goddesses. The *Vajrayana* texts give description of five *Dhyani* Buddhas, their mantras, *mandalas* and their female counterparts. Around 7th C. A.D. *Vajrayana* practices were wide spread through mystic songs, precepts and rites. The *Sadhanamala* describes various forms of Gods and Goddesses and the elaborate process of worship. This concept developed by *Saraha*, *Nagarjuna*, *Indrabhuti* etc. The evolution of a pantheon of Buddhist Gods and Goddesses was largely due to the influence of *Vajrayana* philosophy which was an admixture of magical practices in religion. Besides, the worship of various Gods and Goddesses introduced by *Vajrayana* was for the purpose of visualization, mantra, tantra, yantra and mudra, mystic and psychic act of various nature.

⁷⁰ Bandopadhyay, Bimal, op.cit, 7.

From 8thc. Buddhism got a new impetus in Eastern India especially in Odisha. While Nalanda and *Vikramsila* became important centers of learning under the Palas, Ratnagiri became the great centre of learning and *Vajrayana*⁷¹ under the royal patronage of the Bhaumakaras. Many Tibetan texts speak about Ratnagiri as the centre of *Kalachakrayana* and teachers like Acharya Cheluka residing there. Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri continued to remain great centers of Buddhism till 13th C.A.D.

The excavations in Lalitagiri - Ratnagiri and Udayagiri revealed the rich treasure of Buddhist art and architecture, beautiful sculpture, Stupas and the relic of Buddha enshrined in a Stupa to prove how important these are for the study of Buddhism. Images of Buddha, *Bodhisattva*, *Maitreya*, *Vajrapani*, *Padmapani*, *Manjusri*, *Lokesvara*, *Chunda*, *Tara*, *Heruka*, *Hariti*, Heads of Buddha, Rock cut images, *Avalokitesvara*, well planned Chaityas, monasteries, votive Stupas artistically sculptured doors are indicative of the rich state of Buddhism in Odisha. All the sculptural representation of the images and the art from Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri are important for the study of Indian sculptures. The sculptures from these places show a preference for tighter modeling and comparatively heavier physiognomy.⁷²

In its long journey from the time of Asoka to the beginning of the Imperial Gangas, Buddhism underwent many changes but the numerous images, most in stone found throughout the state in general and in Lalitagiri – Ratnagiri – Udayagiri in particular make it one of the very few great centers of Buddhism. The study of Buddhist sites particularly the ones on which this dissertation is made is extremely important. In order to study these sites, the images and sculptures, we must have a very clear and elaborate understanding. It is also essential to realize the trend of metamorphosis of the deities in the transitional phase. Besides, from this analysis, we can also fathom to what extent the earlier elements continue to survive in later images even in late Mahayana period when Buddhism was rushing fast into another school of thought, *Vajrayana* or *Tantrayana* philosophy.

Dissension crept into Buddhism immediately after the death of Buddha as a result of which it was divided in the *Vaisali* meet. Those who stuck to the Ethics and Moral disciplines were

⁷¹ Roerich, GN; *the Blue Annals, Asiatic Society Monograph Series, VII*, pt.2, 755.

⁷² Saraswati SK, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, 191.

called *Theravadins* but who trifled with ethics and discipline but stuck to metaphysical doctrines were called *Mahasanghikas*⁷³ the major point of difference was Lokattaravadins belief in the Super Human Character of Buddha. The division did not end here, for schism brought further schism and in the course of a century, there were a number of sects besides some minor sub-sects.

Buddhism in India was fast changing. In the *Hinayana* belief, it was not exactly a religion as understood in common usage of the term, i.e. a system of faith and worship but a religion (monastic state) of a community of recluses specially for the male. The female mendicants had a very low status in the order. The Buddha with much reluctance founded a Sangha for the women who were regarded to be unfit for *Vimutti*. In the Mahayana phase, when the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were accepted as cult objects and when *Vimutti* was declared to be attainable by the (male) house holders by practicing *Paramita* then it became lot more popular. Buddhism thus was converted into a religion of the masses and not only of the ascetics.⁷⁴

The most striking difference between the Mahayana and *Hinayana* perhaps lies in the question of the final goal of any Buddhist, Nirvana, though scholars attribute the difference on ten minor point of discipline.⁷⁵ Both Mahayanists and *Hinayanists* agree that Buddha as *Sakyamuni* was born in the womb of Maya Devi the queen of *Suddhodana*, the king of Kaspilavastu and Maya's dream of a white elephant entering her womb. They also agree that Buddha as Bodhisattva remained in *Tusita* heaven prior to his descent to this earth and Buddha had his birth at *Lumbini*, got his enlightenment under the *Bodhi* tree in *Bodhgaya* and preached his first sermon at *Saranath*. They also agree that Buddha finally entered into Nirvana in *Kushinagar*. Despite all these, both the sects differ on the question of divinity of Buddha. While the *Hinayanists* regard him as the progenitor of Law and call him a Man with extraordinary intellect and a sort of Superman, *Mahayanista* look upon him as a divine being

⁷³ Bhattacharyyam B, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 72.

⁷⁴ Mohapatra, Sagarika, *Buddhist Bronzes of Odisha*, 7.

⁷⁵ Sastri, H; *Baudhadharma(Bengali)*, 14.

coming to the earth for the salvation or deliverance of the human beings tortured by Mara, the evil one.⁷⁶

From this it becomes crystal clear that the religion which was originally misogynistic type and had to yield before the will of the masses to accommodate female divinities

In the Buddhist pantheon for the worship of Mother Goddess which was long practiced rituals among them. It appears that the suppression of female elements in the early phases of Buddhism produced adverse results. Gradually in course of history, the female divinities not only superseded the male Gods but became the source of all mystic energy which it was thought, generated from their union with male. At this stage Buddhism entered into the phase of *Vajrayana* and *Tantrayana*. In a time when Buddhism as a religion was passing through a transitional phase, the growth of *Vajrayana*, *Tantrayana* in the broader Mahayana pantheon found great expressions in Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri. No wonder then, that the founder of Tibetan Buddhism Guru *Padmasambhava* had his learning from here.

Study of Buddhism in general and evolution of the religion in context of its transitional shift from Mahayana to *Vajrayana* cannot be made successfully without the study of Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri in proper perspective. Since this dissertation has a very limited scope to study Buddhism in general and the great centers of Buddhism in particular, many aspects have been left out for a detailed research. However this dissertation will definitely help other scholars to take the research further while the lay followers of Buddhism in this part of the world could know about the rich Buddhist heritage in these great centers comprising of Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri.

⁷⁶ Kern, *Manuals of Buddhism*, 13.

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