

# Reflections on Odishan History Culture and Archaeology

*(A Felicitation Volume in honour of Dr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty)*

*Editors:*

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Dr. Rudra Prasad Behera  
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**Reflections on Odishan History, Culture and Archaeology**, a felicitation volume dedicated in the honour of **Dr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty**, is a significant attempt to the study Odisha's hidden historical past. The work explores multiple dimensions in the field of history including prehistoric archaeology, maritime history, iconographic analysis, monumental studies, cultural antiquities, and socio-economic angles. It features research articles that span Odisha's Ancient, Medieval, and Modern periods, with the articles on prehistory grounded in scientific exploration and observation. Many of the contributions are based on original sources, with a particular focus on the region's historical sites. The volume is further enriched with a diverse array of data, plates, and records, making it an invaluable resource that sheds light on historical research in Odisha.

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Culture and Archaeology**

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## The Jaina Remains of Jajpur-Keonjhar Road

*Arabinda Bose*

### Introduction

Odisha in her ancient and early medieval period witnessed the development of Jainism and other religious faith. L.N. Sahu in his work discussed the Jaina art and architecture and features of the Jaina images (Mohanty 2023:218). D.Mitra has dealt specifically with Udaygiri and Khandagiri caves and examined some of the Jaina images noticed in Odisha (Mohanty 2023:218). R.P.Mohapatra in his two monumental works namely Udaygiri and Khandagiri caves and Jaina monuments of Odisha studied some Jaina sites and images seen in Odisha (Mohanty 2023:218). He has made an elaborate study of the Jaina Art and Architecture, Iconography and Monuments. A.C. Sahoo in his book Jaina Religion and Art analyzed the history of Jaina religion and art from the earliest time to 12<sup>th</sup> AD. H.C. Das in his work Jaina art of Odisha made an elaborate study of Jain art and architecture. K.S. Behera and Donaldson refer to the Jaina sites of Odisha and examined the iconography reforestation of *Tirthakaras* so far as the extent remains go belongs to the post Gupta period. Most of the images of *Tirthakaras* and their *Sasandevīs* discovered from different parts of Odisha may be assigned to a period between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> C.A.D (Behera 1983:41). It can be printed out that in the early medieval period the worship of Jaina images had become popular and a developed iconography was already in vogue (Behera 1983:41). The present work is a modest attempt to make an in depth study of the Jaina religion, art and iconography of the Jaina Images noticed in Anandapur region of Keonjhar and its adjoining areas.

The history of Jainism in Odisha after the fall of Kharvela till the 7<sup>th</sup> C.A.D. is obscure. The Jaina antiquities of different parts of Odisha indicate that Jainism is known from the inscription of Lalatendu Kesari, the Navmuni and Barabhuji caves of Udaygiri and Khandagiri excavated in the reign of Udyotakesari (1040-65AD) (Acharya 1947). The ancient Jaina texts emphasize the historicity of Parsavanatha and associate him with many places in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha



and Bengal (Sahoo 1994:89). The Jaina *Kshetrasamasa* relates the preaching of Parsavanatha in Tamralipi and Kopakataka (Kupari in Balasore). Parsavanatha's relation with Kalinga was attested by the existence of maximum number of his images belonging to different periods. The *Harivamsa Purana* mentions the preaching of Mahavira on the Kumari Parvata. The Hatigumpha inscription mentions about the development of Jainism in the 1<sup>st</sup> C.BC. The Asanpat inscription of Satrubhanja informs us that the king donated fabulous wealth to the Vikshus, Charkas, Parivrajakas, nirghanthas etc. According to Banambar Acharya the Baula range of hills in the Anandapur sub-division of Keonjhar district having numerous sculptures of Jaina *Tirthakarsa* and *sasandevīs* was a great center of *Yogichara* school of Jainism (Sahoo 1994:89). The Jaina *nirghantas* stayed in the monistic institution down below the Podasingdi hill. The Banapur copper plate grants Dharmaraja manabhita (7<sup>th</sup> C.AD) of the Sailadhabaking records a grant of the village Madhuvakata in the Kangoda kingdom to Probhadaachandra, a Jaina Acharya for maintenance of worship of a Jaina devi (Sahoo 1994:89). This indicates that Jainism in the 7<sup>th</sup> C.A.D was in a flourishing condition.

Keonjhar district was one of the Garjat states of Odisha. Jajpur district is situated in the south of Keonjhar. A branch of Bhanjas ruled over Keonjhar which may be identified with the kingdom of Zahore referred to in the history of Tibet. It is probable that in the subsequent times the kingdom was divided into two parts that are Kenduzahore and Kantazahore, known in later times as Keonjhar and Kantajhar respectively (Sahoo 1994:89). The followers of Jaina religion must have been exhibiting this region in large numbers. So that they had been referred at Kanchanpura in north Odisha, which was one of the metropolises of Kalinga was a great center for commerce and trade carrying free trade with Ceylon. The Pali literature mentions about land route that passed through Bodhagaya to Kalinga (Sahoo 1994:89). In all probability the followers of Jainism, particularly those of Parsavanatha, had utilized this tract of land to traverse into the Kalinga and its country. The south-western part of West Bengal i.e. the present districts of Midnapur and Bankura, this witnessed some important happenings pertaining to the Jaina religion. The proximity of this region of northern Odisha and the connecting land route suggest that the Jaina monks had been taken southern course of journey through this region and entered into Odisha (Rath 1997:612). According to the *Uttaradhyana Sutra* Parsavanatha came to Odisha and preached to king Karakandu and his subjects. As per the tradition, Parsavanatha, visited Kopakataka and broke his fast in the house of Dhanya. This place later came to be known as Dhanyakataka, identified with modern Kanjuri in Balasore district. (Behera and Donaldson 1998:52).

## **Jaina sites and Monuments of Jajpur-Keonjhar Road**

### **Brahmanidevi Temple, Naguan, Talagarh**

The village Naguan of Talagarh Panchayat is situated 8KM away from V.N.(Auto) college of Jajpur Road. A modern temple enshrined a Jaina *Sasanadevi* image made of black chlorite situated in front of Brahmanidevi high school of Naguan village. An inscribed stone tablet can be seen which informs us that this temple was built by Sriman Raja Balabhadra Narayana Bhanja Deo Bahadur of Keonjhar in 1927. It has been noticed that seven number of *Chaumukhas* are situated in the temple premises. The presiding deity of Brahmanidevi temple at Naguan is Jaina sasandevi Padmavati (fig.1). The temple is situated in Talagarh Panchayat of Naguan village. The images of Padmavati are traceable in the Navamuni – Gumpha Barabhiji Gumpha Khandagiri hill, Kenduli and at Nandapur in Koraput district. All the images are carved in *lalitasana* pose on double petalled



lotus below but the Talagarh image is standing on a double petaled lotus. A canopy of seven hooded snake appears over her head. Her iconography is very similar to images of Manasa of the Brahmanical pantheon (Mohapatra 1984:235). It is most likely that the connection between Jaina Padmavati and Brahmanical Manasa originates from the Jaina legends.

The Talagarh image of Padmavati is a two-armed image standing on a double petalled lotus. It measures 4ft . 4 inches x 2ft . 2 inches. Her left hand is broken which holds a full blown lotus flower. The right hand is in *varadamudra*. The deity is flanked by two attendants carrying pots. A canopy of five hooded snake is seen over the head of the attendants. The back slab of the deity is carved in an ornate way. The top of the back slab bears the flying *vidyahanas*.

A small *pidha* temple inside the compound contains the image of a Manasa(fig.2). A canopy of five hooded snake is seen over her head. The image is coated with red colour. Her two hands are broken. A serpent is marked on the pedestal. On the basis of which the image can be identified with manasa.

We can notice a broken Jaina *tirthakara* image in *Kayotasarga pose* in front of the Chandrasekhara Siva temple of Naguan village. The Gramadevati shrine locally known as Bisiri Devi located in the farmfield, also contained some images of different pattern like an image of Marichi, a broken Buddha image, a four armed image of Parvati, an image of Ambika.

### Nuagarh Village

The Nuagarh village is 1 K.M. away from Jajpur Road Adarsha Police Station towards Ragadi village. It also possesses several laterite votive temples(fig.3) infested with thick bushes. There is only one narrow path up this site by which a single person can go at a time.

### Sainkul

The village Sainkul is situated 27 K.M. from Vyasanagar municipality and 1 K.M. away from Patitapabana College of Ghasipura block of Keonjhar. It is seen that a *tirthakara* image (4<sup>l</sup>x3<sup>l</sup>) is situated in front of the Gangeswar Siva temple of this village. The image is completely eroded due to weathering. The pedestal is buried under the ground so that the *lanchana* is not visible. A *tirthakara* image of Risabanatha (2<sup>l</sup>.6<sup>l</sup> x 1<sup>l</sup>.8<sup>l</sup>) seated in *padmasana* pose and a Jaina *Chaumukha*(1<sup>l</sup>x3<sup>l</sup>) are also preserved inside the temple. The village also possesses two Parsavanatha images(fig.4) worshiped by the villagers as Ananta Narayana. Seven hooded canopy over their heads are visible. These two images are made up of chlorite.

### Ghasipura Police Station

An archeological shed in front of Ghasipura Police Station preserved many loose sculptures of Jaina images like Parsavanatha and Ambika. Except the one seated image of Parsavanatha, which is made up of chlorite(fig.5), the other Jaina images are made up of sandstone.

The deep concentration of Jaina relics at Jajpur Keonjhar Road are no way less than their findings elsewhere in Odisha. Abundant Jaina relics reported from Naguan village of Jajpur, Sainkula, Podasingdi and Haladiha of Anandapur subdivision inform us that these places are once been centers of learning and cultures. The Padmavati image of Talagarh village of Naguan Panchayat can be taken as a typical independent one as it is a standing image. The other Padmavati image found in the Kenduli, Navamuni Barabhaiji caves and Nandapur are seated images. The



presence of laterite blocks(fig.6) of different sizes with rectangular niches are found near the Brahmanidevi temple which is a centre of Jainism, Buddhism and Brahmanism suggests us that these niches are used to enshrined the deties. The remains of Jaina antiquities are still to be found in Jajpur – Keonjhar Road.

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Fig.1: Padmavati,  
Brahmanidevi Temple



Fig.2: Manasa,  
Brahmanidevi Temple



Fig.3: Votive Temple, Nuagarh



Fig.4: Parsavanatha, Sainkul



Fig.5: Parsavanatha, Ghasipura



Fig.6: Votive Temples, Naguan