

Interpreting Early Medieval Sculptures of Magadh

A Case Study from Kṛmilā Adhisthāna

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The study of early medieval eastern India hinges on the debate relating to the concept of Indian feudalism. The entire discourse becomes crucial in the sense that most informed writings on the area have joined issue with this concept. The paradigm of Indian feudalism has become so dominant in contemporary Indian historiography that successive writers seek either to reinforce or challenge it. As far as the early medieval politico-economic formation is concerned, the entirety of eastern India was a cultural region in the making during this period, and this shift in centrality from the core area of the middle Gaṅgā valley to the erstwhile peripheries does have a relationship with the structure of feudalism that took shape at the time. The current historiography has failed to focus on eastern India as a cultural unit or economic entity, the only exception being the study of art and characterization of the Eastern School of Architecture/Sculpture. While doing so, again, the sub-regional variations of styles in the making of sculptures, their socio-economic and political implications were either ignored or not taken into consideration by historians.

The discovery of a large number of sculptures of different deities in Magadh, one of the sub-regions of early medieval eastern India, has great potential to provide data pertaining to contemporary political, socio-economic, and religious aspects of this region. Except for their stylistic interpretation, no other aspects of their production have been studied in detail. Historians influenced by sub-national or regional bias have interpreted this style as generally being influenced by the style of different regions, ignoring local or regional contributions and specifications. Although it is well known that the art and architectural activity of this region has a long historicity, the obvious question arises: how is it that, all of a sudden in the early medieval period, sculpture-making of this region was influenced by the styles of other regions? Sculptures of this region have their own specifications from the inception of this art tradition. However, there are changes and alterations from time to time in the style and material used in making the sculptures from this region.

Generally, the sculptures have a *gomukha*-shaped body, knees marked with crescents, silver inlaid eyes, elongated legs, and bands of flesh below the breasts. The back slabs are pointed, flat, semi-circular, or rounded up. The halos are represented with oval-shaped beads, some placed on square thrones, others containing a band of *cakras*, with depictions of stupas shown on one or both sides of the halo or arch. There is a variation of arches: low shaped with *kīrtimukhas* in the centre and a trilobed arch. The pedestals are *ekaratha*, *dviratha*, double-tiered, and lotus flower types. The crowns are projected fan-shaped flaps, flying fillets, etc.¹ Most of the sculptures of this period from this region are made of granite, mica, or grey stone, and the source of these materials was not very far and remained inaccessible to the people and artists of this region. Recent studies of iconographic details also suggest regional and local influence.² The local influence of art and architecture is a well-known fact, but factors

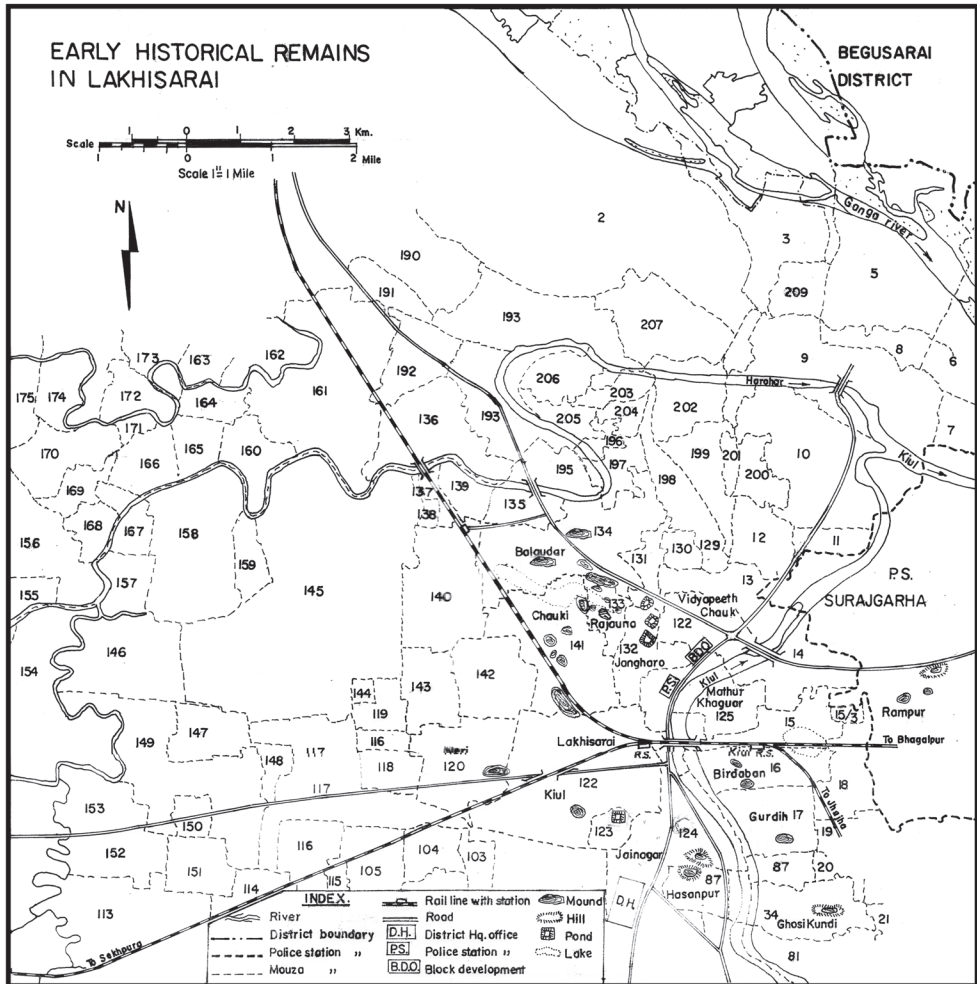
responsible for these regional variations were certainly influenced by contemporary socio-economic, religious, and political conditions.

One of the important aspects of early Indian sculpture is that it seems to lack the glorification of earthly powers. In early India, sculptural art is largely religious. Representations abound of gods and their mythical actions, of saints and seers, of sacred animals and holy plants. Secular scenes do exist, but they too form part of the decoration of temple walls or doorways. The human sphere, with its activities, is depicted in temples in many ways, as are battle and hunting scenes, ritual and religious discourses, and many other details of life. Depictions of kings and queens are rare in Indian art, nor are major political events such as victories and treaties reproduced in stone imagery. Although the patrons of artists were often kings, ministers, or successful generals, it is generally not their battles that are represented; the battles shown are those of the heroes from the ancient epics of India. Moreover, images of kings, queens, or donors, if available, are usually stylized to the degree of extinguishing individuality. To the modern viewer, therefore, there appears to be an ahistoric and non-political attitude in indigenous Indian art which, true to the alleged spiritual quest for the ultimate unchanging reality, did not bother to preserve in stone the transitory achievements of mortal kings.

Here, it must be remembered that art activity in early India was guided by religious ideas and myths. Veiled allusions and the play on hidden meanings have been greatly appreciated in Indian tradition from the Vedic period. The obvious is considered both crude and superficial. It is said that the gods themselves like what is beyond immediate perception; they hate the obvious. In accordance with this tradition, artists and temple priests possibly found means of implicitly praising kings through the medium of religious art.³

In a recent course of exploration of antiquarian remains in this region, more than a hundred sculptures with early medieval regional features have been collected from Kṛmilā Adhithāna. Kṛmilā, an administrative centre of eastern India, was a *viṣya* (district headquarters) of Śrīnagara *bhukti* (Pāṭaliputra) during the Gupta period.⁴ Mention of Kṛmilā *viṣya* occurs in several inscriptions of early India. In this regard, the Nālandā plate of Samudragupta, the Bihar inscription of the Gupta period, and the Naulagarh inscription is important.⁵ It continued as a political centre of early medieval eastern India under Pāla rule. Evidence of Kṛmilā as a *viṣya* of Śrīnagara *bhukti* is also available in Devapāla's Munger copper plate.⁶ The actual location of this *viṣya* has been identified by D.C. Sircar as the village of Valgudar, near Lakhisarai.⁷ This village is 3 km. west of Lakhisarai, a district headquarter in the modern-day state of Bihar. Lakhisarai lies 125 km. east of Patna on National Highway 80 (Mokamah-Sahebgung). The place is well connected by railways. Lakhisarai is a flag railway junction on the western bank of the river Kiul on the Delhi–Howrah main line. On the western bank of the river is an important railway junction of the East Central Railways, Kiul, which is 1 km. east from Lakhisarai. This is a junction of two lines which goes to Howrah, one via Bhagalpur, and another via Asansol in the east; in the west, one line goes to Patna and another line towards the south connects Gayā. The longitude of city is 86° 06' east and latitude is 25° 10' north.

The pre-existing morphology of the river Gaṅgā is found around 5 km. north of Valgudar. The earlier scars of the river are still visible at the site.⁸ Moreover, from the dried bed, the white sand of the Gaṅgā is found whenever people dig at the place. The geographical as well as historical significance of the river Gaṅgā is well known; no less important in this respect is the river Haruhar, because it connects the Magadh region and Chotanagpur plateau.

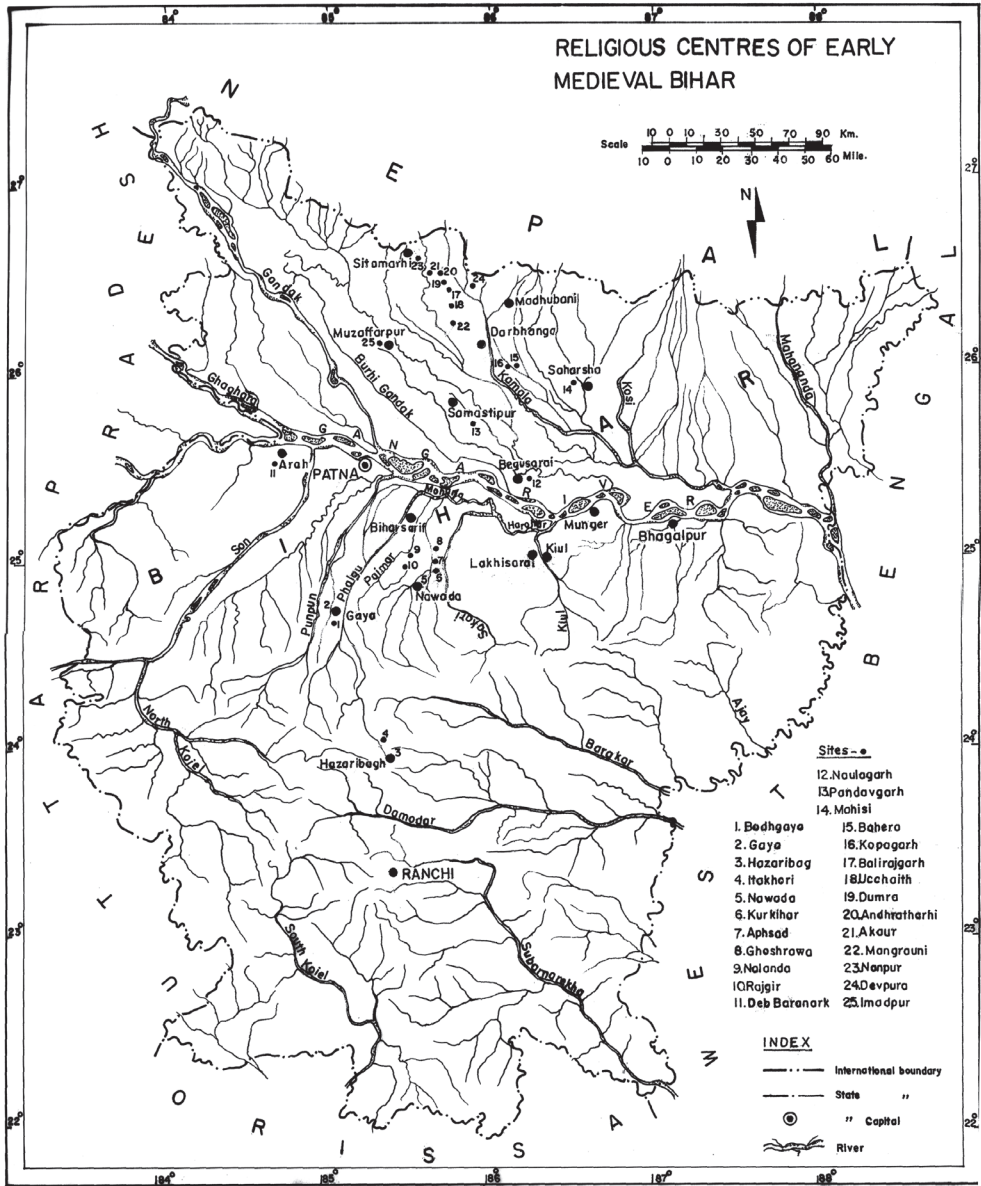


Map 22.1: Early historical remains in Lakhisarai

Source: Map provided by the author

The river Haruhar originates near Nālandā, as one of the branches of the river Falgu (the ancient Nilanjana). Besides the Gaṅgā, both the Haruhar and Kiul are perennial in nature and connected to the early historical sites of south Bihar. As far as the Haruhar is concerned, it connects Lakhisarai with early historical centres Ithkhorī, Bodh Gayā, Gayā, Kurkihār,

Ghoṣrama, Rājgir, and Nālandā, and merges into the Gaṅgā at the site of Krīmila. Through the Gaṅgā this centre was connected with ancient Pāṭaliputra and Vārāṇasī in the west, and with Muṅger, Campā, and Tāmralipti. in the east. The river Kiul also is important in this regard, as it is connected to the south-east region of Bihar. The historicity of this river is mentioned in the Buddhist text *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, and in the brāhmaṇical text *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, it is referred to as the Krīmikāla.⁹ The geographical location of the confluence of this river is of great historical significance because on its northern bank is located the early historical site of Naulagarh, in north Bihar. This place might have been used as a river port, as almost all the important rivers of north Bihar converged at Naulagarh. Particularly during the early medieval period in north Bihar, we find numerous black stone sculptures at various early medieval sites, i.e. Dumrā, Akaur, Ucchaith, Mahīśī, Kapileśvara, Balirājgarh, Kopagarh, Āndhra Tharhī, etc. The availability of material in north Bihar for making sculptures in this period is an issue that must be considered. The topography of north Bihar suggests the existence of plain land, and the black stone used for making sculptures was perhaps procured from the Rajmahal region, in south-east Bihar. To carry stone slabs for manufacturing sculptures, riverine routes were certainly used in this period. The significance of both Valgudar and Naulagarh, one on the southern side and the other on the northern of the river Gaṅgā, during the early medieval period, and their connectivity with major rivers of south and north Bihar, leads us to this conclusion.¹⁰ Further, Lakhisarai is also situated between Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, the two religio-educational centres of early medieval Bihar. Another significant aspect regarding the location of this place is that it was situated on the old Pāṭaliputra–Tāmralipti route via Campā (Map 22.2).



Map 22.2: Religious centres of early medieval Bihar

Source: Map provided by the author

In the course of the recent exploration of this area, a large number of sculptures of brahmanical and Buddhist deities have been discovered, some of which are inscribed with inscriptions. A reading of one inscription substantiates the argument of the existence of Kṛmilā Adhithāna at this place. One inscription is inscribed on the image of Buddha (Plate 22.1), made of black stone, where Buddha is seated in Bhūmisparśa mudrā. The upper portion of the image is damaged. The inscription in Sanskrit is found on the pedestal of the statue in two lines. Paleographically, it is dated to the tenth–eleventh century AD. The size of the sculpture is 3'8" x 2'6" and the size of inscription is 26.5" X 2.7", The height of the letters of the inscription is .5". It is not easy to read



Plate 22.1: Buddha image from Rajaona-Chawki with the inscription mentioned above (right side top and bottom)

Source: Photograph by the author

the inscription as it is mutilated; yet, it is fairly clear that it refers to '*Da yadhammaya yavara sata krimilya adhisthana ...* (mutilated)'. The second line is '*... (mutilated) Srimad Rampal pravavdamane vijaya rajya sam*'. This suggests a donation by Yavara for Rāmapāla's victories in Kṛmilā Adhisthāna. The sculpture is found in the village of Rajauna-Chowki, which is hardly 300 m. south of Valgudar.

This inscription provides important information that Rāmpāla recaptured this region during his tenure because earlier an inscription from Valgudar states that this region was an integral part of Dharmapāla's kingdom. Certainly, according to this inscription some time between the reigns of Dharmapāla and Rāmpāla, the Pāla rulers lost control over this area, which was recaptured by Rāmpāla.¹¹

The antiquarian remains of this place are found in an area of around 30 sq km. Evidence of settlements and of religious monuments in continuity are apparent here. A total of thirty-two mounds of various sizes were identified and surveyed in the course of exploration. In between the mounds, a few ponds and three lakes have been identified. At a few places, particularly Valgudar, Jaynagar, and Ghosi-Kundi, brick structures were exposed either due to natural reasons or due to encroachments. The size of bricks at all the places mentioned was the same, i.e. 15" x 10" x 3". These thirty-two mounds are distributed in three clusters. Evidence of antiquities of the early medieval period has been discovered at all three clusters. The clusters are distributed as follows: the first between Neri and Valgudar (Neri being 4 km. south of Valgudar via Rajaona Chowki), the second from Kiul village to Jaynagar with Kawaia in between, and the third encompassing the sites of Ghosikundi, Bichwe, Uren, and Rampur. The beginning point of this cluster is at a distance of 2 km. south-east of the first cluster. In all three clusters, there are plenty of sculptures from Buddhist and brahmanical religions lying in the open field or in private

collections. Some sculptures have been taken to various museums in India and abroad, out of which a few have been studied and published by scholars in national and international journals. There are still more than a hundred sculptures from this region that have not yet been studied. Any survey of this region requires a study of the sculptures in totality, as the sculptures studied earlier were examined in isolation, or scholars selected a few sculptures from a particular site and analysed them either on the basis of style or religious significance. They were not studied from the perspective of political, social, and economic significance. The differences in style identity and period of sculptures in the three clusters were also not taken into account in earlier studies.

The first cluster has more than ten mounds of various sizes and in between there are twelve ponds and three lakes which have been reported by Cunningham.¹² In the recent course of exploration, more than seventy sculptures as well as remains



Plate 22.2: First phase sculptures of Umā Maheśvara of sixth–seventh century (left) and Viṣṇu from the sixth century (right)

Source: Photograph by the author

of stone structures have been discovered. More importantly, the existence of more stone structures and twelve *āmalakas* of *śikharas* have been collected (Plate 22.7).¹³ Analysis of sculptures from this area suggests three phases of artistic activity: sixth–seventh century AD, eighth–eleventh century AD, and twelfth–thirteenth century AD. Artistic activity in this region began in the post-Gupta period and its last phase continued till the post-Pāla period. Some local stylistic characteristics are found in the sculptures of this region. Stylistically, sculptures from the first cluster (among the three previously mentioned) indicate an early iconographic style. In this cluster, we find a majority of brahmanical deities, particularly Śiva, Pārvatī, Umā-Maheśvara, Sūrya, and Viṣṇu, as well as panels of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, etc., although there are Buddhist sculptures as well. This existence of brahmanical sculptures on Buddhist sites and vice versa is a very common phenomena in eastern India. A majority of sculptures from cluster 1 can be analysed as collateral development of both religions, as the structural remains of temples as well as Buddhist monuments are visible here.¹⁴ However, there are clear distinctions between the institutions on both religions on the ground. There are a few more remarkable aspects of the sculptures from this cluster. Majority of sculptures from cluster 1 are made of grey stone, which were probably procured from the region of Gayā. The region was well connected to this site by a riverine route and stone slabs were probably transported here via the rivers. The first phase sculptures from this cluster have slightly squarer stelae rather than round or conical, and are less ornate and without surroundings. These sculptures are a good example of greater evenness of carving depth occurring over the whole sculpture.

In phases 2 and 3, the sculptures are three-dimensionally carved from the surrounding elements, and show complete detachment from the back-slab. Some sculptures of these



Plate 22.3: Second phase sculpture: Buddha

Source: Photograph by the author

two phases have round and conical stelae; they have more accentuated postures, more crisply defined facial features, and more exaggerated body proportions. In this regard, the Mahiṣāsoramardini sculpture is significant as it highlights the distinct artistic features that make these figurines extraordinary in comparison to others. These are, namely, their three-dimensional carving, fully detached from the back-slab, the presence of round or conical stelae, their

accentuated postures, sharply defined facial features, and exaggerated body proportions (Plate 22.4). Stylistically, it can be dated to the thirteenth–fourteenth century AD.

Cluster 2 spans Kiul to Jaynagar with Kawaia in between. The starting point of this cluster is 2 km. south-east of the first cluster. Here, Beglar and Cunningham had conducted a preliminary survey and published the report while the most recent work on this cluster has been by Samaddar.¹⁵ From this cluster the earlier explorers have reported Buddhist and brahmanical sculptures as well as the ruins of a fort. Here, we find two parallel ridges of a rocky hill. Between this is a valley in which Cunningham has reported the existence of a town. He also noticed two parallel mounds, which according to him were the ruins of houses on a long street or bazaar.¹⁶ At present, the area between hills is occupied by a village, Jaynagar, which was formed not more than 200 years ago.



Plate 22.4: Third phase sculptures: (a) Ganesa (left) and (b) Mahisasurmardini (right) from Rajaona Chowki

Source: Author

On both ridges, running east–west, the remains of historical monuments still exist. On the northern hill, the remains of a stupa built of brick, and on the southern hill, remains of brick and stone structures are found. Cunningham identified these remains as belonging to a 160' square monastery. One cave with stairs, which goes inside the hill, was discovered on the southern hill. The remains of a Śiva temple on the northern hill have also been reported by Buchanan.¹⁷ Presently, the remains of the Śiva temple are difficult to identify because no Saivite sculpture or temple remains is available. To the north of the hills, along the bank of the Kiul, Cunningham refers to the extensive remains of an ancient town, extending nearly 4 mi. in length. Buchanan gives the extent as 3 mi., with the hills occupying the centre, with the area to the north, for about a mile, being covered with mounds of bricks. All around the hills are numerous tanks, which, according to local tradition should number seventy-two, but Cunningham was able to identify only eighteen.¹⁸ A few image inscriptions also have been reported from the area. An eye copy of one inscription is published.¹⁹ Here, it is stated that during the 35th regional year of Gauḍa king Pālapāla, a woman from Campā donated to the Śramaṇasaṅghanam. The name of the donor woman is probably Utakben Bhattarika, and she installed a sculpture of Pūrṇeśvarī at this place. Another inscription mentions the 19th regnal year of Madanapāla on a Buddha image.²⁰

In Kiul, Cunningham noticed a small tank and the foundation of a Buddhist temple with several Buddhist sculptures lying near a ruined site. To the west of the village, he noticed another tank called Sansar Pokhar, which still exists day. To the south, hardly 50 m. away, is Kawaia. This place, as described by Cunningham, is also situated on an extensive mound littered with old bricks and broken images of Buddhist as well as brahmanical deities.²¹

At present, the entire area is encroached upon and has become part of the modern town of Lakhisarai. During exploration, only a few sculptures could be found apart from one stone seat of 6' x 4' size and 1.5" thick, lying in a house in a nearby village, Hasanpur. One very interesting 6' x 5' iron gate has been located in the same village, which was brought down from the hills by the local people. Two images of Kālabhairava made of black stone were found measuring 3.6" x 1.5". Four images of female deities of various sizes, ranging from 4' x 2.5' to 2.5' x 1.5', sitting on a lotus and a lion, are depicted underneath the image. In all these examples, the deity is carrying a child in her lap. In one instance, a female deity carries a child in the left lap, while Gaṇeśa is depicted on the right side. Interestingly, the crown of the deity shows the influence of South-East Asian art. This influence is visible in a few more sculptures from this place. Sculptures from cluster 2 are stylistically different from those at cluster 1. The former are more or less similar to the sculptures found in East Bengal and preserved at the Dacca Museum. All the sculptures are examples of fine ornamentation and artistic expression on stone.²² This certainly leaves scope for further iconographic and stylistic study. All the sculptures discussed are kept in the private collections of local people. Sculptures from this cluster are generally carved on black stone, which was probably procured from the Rajmahal area and was transported to this place along the river Gaṅgā. The sculptures were likely locally manufactured because we have plenty of evidence of incomplete sculptures and other architectural components lying near the mounds.

Two female sculptures, identified as the local deity Pūrṇeśvarī,²³ have been found in cluster 2, with inscriptions incised on the pedestal. One of these is now displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. On this sculpture, the



Plate 22.5: (a) Female deity Puṇḍrīśvarī (left) discovered near Chaliya Stupa. It is presently kept in a private collection at Balika Vidyapeeth, Lakhisarai; (b) Kālabhairava (centre); (c) supposedly female goddess (Pārvatī) with child in the lap (right).

Source: Photograph by the author.

name of the deity, Pūṇḍrīśvarī (Plate 22.4) is mentioned.²⁴ Another identical sculpture, in local custody, illustrates the high quality of artistic activity in this region. The sculptures of female deities apart from Pūṇḍrīśvarī are also kept in a local temple. Sculptures of brahmanical deities found here, such as Kālabhairava and Siṃhavāhinī Durgā (Plate 22.4) are significant. They have sharply carved features, profuse jewelry, and a firm abdomen. The stelae are conical and ornate with surroundings. The sculptures are more accentuated in their postures, and show more crisply defined facial features and exaggerated body proportions. Prominent *kīrtimukhas* are especially visible in female figures of the Pāla period.

The sculptures representing the same period and style, and the sculpture of Pūṇḍrīśvarī, as well as of Durgā, are four-armed, with a seated male child on the lower left thigh

with the lower left arm embracing the child. The feet of the sculpture of Durgā typically rests on the back of the lion; her upper two hands hold a mirror and sword, while the lower right hand is rendered in *varada mudrā* holding a fruit. This is the type that has been identified as the 'mother aspect of *Durgā Siṃhavāhinī*'.²⁵ The child in her lap has been identified as Kārttikeya. However, for the lion mount and the objects held in the upper two hands, this figure is iconographically identical with the Buddhist ones from the same site. Making a distinction between Buddhist and brahmanical deities, thus, would have been impossible without inscriptions. Only inscriptions differentiated their identity. These sculptures provide evidence for a shared culture that bridged religion or, to state it differently, that religion at this time in India demonstrated distinctions in individual identity or even in the identity of individuals.²⁶

The third cluster is situated roughly 500 m. east on the eastern bank of the river Kiul. The cluster starts from Ghosi-Kundi village (Plate 22.5) and extends to Kiul station, 3 km. north. On the hilltop of Ghosi-Kundi, on the western bank of the river Kiul, a brick structure of 110 m. diameter is exposed. This structure, perhaps, is the remains of a stupa. The size of the bricks used here is 37.5 x 25 x 7.5 cm. The exposed remains of a circular structure on the hill and the size of bricks require a thorough study.

Another important place in this cluster is the village of Birdavan, which is 1.5 km. south of Kiul station and on the eastern bank of the river Kiul. Cunningham noticed a mound 30 ft. high on the bank of the river, known as *gadh* or Birdavan. From this place, he refers to a stupa as well as a few Buddhist sculptures made of steatite. An important discovery made here was the 2,700 seals made of lac. Buddhist figures and an eleventh-century inscription was inscribed on the seals. Cunningham sank a shaft in the centre of this mound and discovered at a depth of 1.80 m.



Plate 22.6: Remains of the stupa on Ghosi-Kundi Hill

Source: Photograph by the author

the remains of a small chamber containing a steatite relic casket, shaped like a stupa, and a headless image of ascetic Buddha, also made of steatite. Inside the casket were a golden box with a bone piece, a broken silver box, and a green glass bead. He also exposed traces of an arched brick chamber in the eastern portion of the mound. All three mounds mentioned by Cunningham still exist. However, a school has been constructed recently on one mound. A few of the Buddha statues are now in the custody of local people.

Another place of importance in this cluster is the village of Rampur, roughly at a distance of 4 km. from Birdavan. In between these villages, there are several ponds and one lake. Adjacent to Rampur is the village of Garhi, from where a broken inscription inscribed on a Buddha image has been found. A recent survey at Rampur has yielded a few broken images of Buddha and brahmanical deities. It is difficult to take measurements accurately due to Rampur's location,

but during a survey three large mounds, two ring wells, and images of a few brahmanical deities (now in a private collection) were found. A few pieces of broken stone bricks of the early medieval period have also been identified from this place. One image of Hanumān and one of Durgā (Plate



Plate 22.7: Durgā from Rampur

Source: Photograph by the author

22.6), now in a private collection, are among the important findings from Rampur. The sculpture of Durgā can again be dated, on the basis of style, to around the seventh–eighth century AD; stylistically, this sculpture is similar to the ones found in the region of Nālandā. In this sculpture, Durgā is seated on a lion and has eight hands, out of which six are broken. Thus, it is not clear what she is carrying in those hands. Only two hands, one with a sword and another with a *cakra*, remain intact. The stele is squarer and plain without much ornamentation. This, again, is different from the sculptures of the cluster 2 and these kinds of images are available in phase 1 of cluster 1.

The monumental remains are found scattered in three clusters in an area of 30 sq. km., much larger than what Asher²⁷ has suggested with the surrounding periphery of three important centres of the contemporary period. About 10 km. to the south lies Nongarh,²⁸ around 10–11 km. to



Plate 22.8: Structural fragments from Ashokdham

Source: Photograph by the author

the east is Sringeririshi,²⁹ and approximately 12 km. to the north-east is evidence of Nandapur Vitti.³⁰ The material remains unmistakably point toward the existence of a vibrant cultural and perhaps administrative centre in the early medieval period. Huntington, too, has acknowledged the regional variation and peculiarity of making of sculptures. He further suggests 'the transitional nature of aspects of the art of Monghyr District and Aṅga in general, between the schools of Bihar and Bengal.'³¹ Asher in his conclusion has called it a metropolitan city on the basis of images that bear dated inscriptions which are found in close proximity to centres of learning and commerce, where written records and the calendar were especially important.³²

The conclusion made by Asher indicates that the emergence of towns, without being a superstructural manifestation of the techno-economic base, underwent a decisive transformation in their prime feature, a development which was in consonance with the new economic pattern. This apparent feudalization of tradition generated a distinct urban pattern entailing a paradigm not of mutual negation but of urban adjustment in a feudal society. This phase of urbanization in India, with its truncated qualitative and quantitative format, stands in contraposition to the well-developed urban ethos of the second urbanization. The contravening situation is poignantly reflected in the transformed nature of towns in early medieval India. The early medieval towns revolve round two prime functions: religious and political.³³

The early medieval phase of Indian history has been the subject of intense study and research in recent years. However, in these studies, eastern India, more specifically the Bihar region, has received less attention mainly because the region, in comparison to peninsular India of the corresponding period, suffers from a relative paucity of source material. The material remains found in the Lakhisarai

region amply indicate that the situation is not that hopeless and it is possible to obtain a more comprehensive picture if the area is studied thoroughly and if immediate exploration and excavation are carried out by competent agencies in at least a few important sites. When this is done, the region is bound to provide clues to resolve many vital issues in the early medieval historiography of Bihar.

Notes

1. B.N. Misra, *Nalanda (Iconography & Architecture)*, vol. III, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 328–9.
2. Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India, 300-800*, Delhi, 1980, pp. 53–4; Susan L. Huntington, *Pala and Sena Schools of Sculpture*, Leiden, 1984, pp. 123–4.
3. Heinrich von Stietencron, *Hindu Myth Hindu History, Religion, Art and Politics*, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 7–30.
4. *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XVII, 1923, p. 311.
5. Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. XV, 1882, pp. 13–14.
6. R.K. Choudhary, *Select Inscriptions of Bihar*, Patna, 1958, p.39.
7. D.C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, Delhi, 1971, pp. 250–2.
8. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. XV. The map shows the existence of the scar of the river, Plate IV.
9. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, pp. 250–2.
10. A. Kumar, 'Market Centers in Early Medieval Bihar', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 67th session, Calicut, pp. 131–44.
11. Evidence of the local ruling dynasty is also available in various writings i.e. Cunningham in *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. III, has mentioned the local ruling family and identified them as the later Guptas. R.C. Majumdar in *History of Ancient Bengal*, Calcutta, 1971, p. 212, has

mentioned the Kaindi inscription, where the name of ruler Ranaka Samraditya, son of Ranaka Nanda, is mentioned. In the Panchobh copperplate inscription, we also get evidence of Jaynagar Rajya. Hence, there is a possibility of the existence of a local dynasty, which was probably the later Guptas. The genealogy of the later Guptas is mentioned in the Apsad inscription, and according to which this dynasty ruled up to the thirteenth century. Apsad is hardly 30 km. south of this place.

12. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. III, pp. 151–9.
13. Ibid.
14. Samaddar, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, cited in D.R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains of Bihar*, Patna, 1966, pp. 185–6.
15. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. III, pp. 159–60.
16. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains of Bihar*, pp. 185–7.
17. Ibid., p. 187.
18. Choudhary, *Select Inscriptions of Bihar*, p. 93.
19. Ibid., p. 94.
20. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains of Bihar*, p. 209.
21. N.K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1972, p. 63 ff, Plate XXV.
22. F.M. Asher, 'An Image at Lakhisarai and its Implications', *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 59, no. 3–4, 2000, pp. 296–302.
23. Ibid.
24. J.N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi, 1974, pp. 380–1.
25. Asher, 'An Image at Lakhisarai and its Implications', *Artibus Asiae*, pp. 296–302.
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