

Sacred Geography of Chalukya Temples

Niharika S

Abstract

Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal and Mahakuta are situated in Bagalkot district of the state of Karnataka on and near the banks of river Malaprabha. The Malaprabha valley became the settling ground for human habitation from earliest times. This is evident from a number of prehistoric remains that have been discovered. The reason why the Chalukyas of Badami chose this area as their dynastic hold and why they built the various religious monuments in the region appears to have been a mystery until recent times. It is a possibility that the earlier sites of Guledgudda, Bachangudda, Kyaddigeri, Chilapur, Siddhanakolla and Nagral displaying dolmens and megaliths made the adjoining geography sacred which is why when the Chalukyas of Badami came in power, they found these areas ideal from religious point of view for temple construction. This may also mean an evolution of religious beliefs where the Chalukyas might not have believed in religiosity of dolmens and megaliths but surely understood „sacred-ness“ of the landscape. These transformations led to a reinvention of the landscape for the construction of temples often in close proximity to rock shelters and megalithic structures. Sacred landscapes during Chalukya reign were complex religious and memorial spaces. There was a clear association between the religious affiliation of Chalukya rulers and those of pastoralists in the region especially in the second half of their rule. Female deity worship such as that of Saptamatrikas and Lajja-gauri, signifies the introduction of fertility rituals. This incorporation of ritual practices and beliefs indicates a complex political and social relationship that the Chalukyas forged in order to continue their rule. It can be said that the Malaprabha valley was chosen as the core area by the Chalukyas of Badami because of its rich „past-histories“.

Keywords: *Malaprabha, Megaliths, Dolmens, Sacred Landscape, Saptamatrikas, Lajja-gauri*

Introduction

Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal and Mahakuta are situated in Bagalkot district of the state of Karnataka on and near the banks of river Malaprabha. The Malaprabha valley became the settling ground for human habitation from earliest times. This is evident from a number of prehistoric remains that have been discovered here. The reason why the Chalukyas of Badami chose this area as their dynastic hold and why they built the various religious monuments in the region appears to have been a mystery until recent times. It is a possibility that

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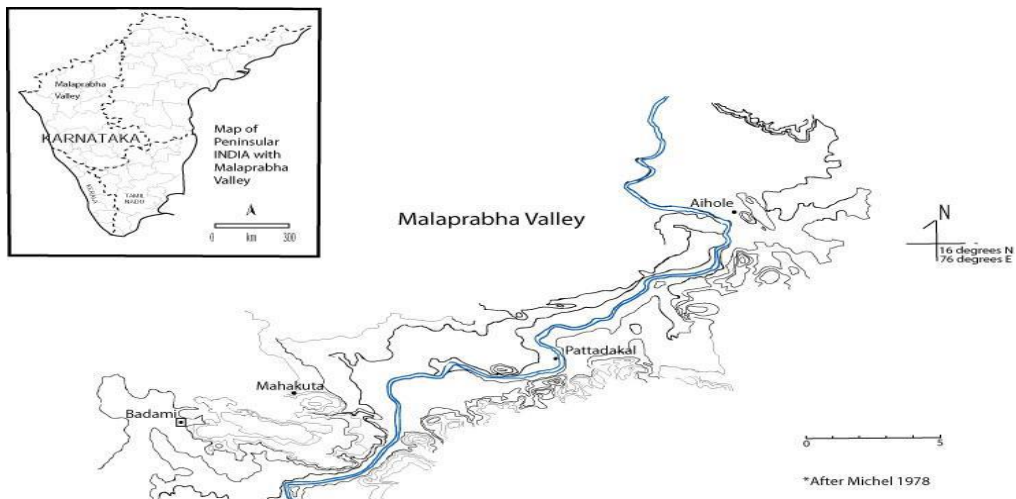


Figure1:- Malaprabha River valley showing the principle early Chalukya centres
(Courtesy: George Michell)

Our past can be understood by exploring the landscape,¹ which enfolds the sacred space. This sacred space is of diverse character which stems from the

¹ Landscape is a space of continuous human activity of all kinds. Edward Soja in *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*, Wiley, 2000 sees the relationship between landscape and architecture as a continuum and calls it the ‘built environment’. Landscape can be a human construct. See, Barbara Bender, *Landscape: Politics and*

levels of interactions between sites and the communities living in and around its vicinity. What makes a site sacred is the foremost question. Does places with religious image/s scared? Is it appropriate to call a site sacred only because of the presence of shrines? It is the opinion of some scholars that the religious shrine was central in the Asian landscape and therefore it becomes important to locate it in a social context and to identify the multiple levels at which sacred sites interacted with a diverse range of communities.² However, there are other factors which contribute in making a particular site sacred. One certainly is the religious structures and images which are present in the location. While dealing with the landscape, it becomes relevant to use the textual and inscriptional data as they provide evidence of ritual in a given locale and the religious affiliations of the local people along with the royalty.³ The copper plate charters of the Chalukyas in the western Deccan register grants of lands or villages given to brahmanas for carrying out Vedic sacrifices and rituals or to Jaina establishments for worship and running Dana - salas.⁴ The landscape of the western Deccan was under constant occupation and was reinvented by the communities who lived there.⁵ There is an enormous potential to undertake an explicit investigation of the perception of the past in the past in studies of Indian history.⁶

Perspectives, New York, 1993. Also see, Hemanth Kadambi, "Negotiating Pasts and the Memorialized Present in Ancient India: Chalukyas of Vatapi" in ed., Norman Yoffee, *Negotiating the Past in the Past: Identity, Memory and Landscape in Archaeological Research*, University of Arizona Press, Arizona, 2007, pp. 155-182.

² Ray, H. P. ed., *Sacred Landscape in Asia: Shared Traditions, Multiple Histories*, New Delhi: IIC and Manohar Publications, 2007.

³ *Indian Antiquary*, VI, p. 363; X p. 58. In this inscription, the Chalukyan king Mangalesa is described as Parama Bhagavata, i.e., the great devotee of Vishnu.

⁴ Ramesh, K. V. *Chalukyas of Vatapi*, Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi, p. 165 and Padigar, S. V. *The Durga Temple: An Aditya Temple*, Archaeological Studies, Vol II, University of Mysore, Mysore, 1977, pp. 59-64.

⁵ "Almost all the four sites, Badami, Pattadakal, Aihole and Mahakuta have prehistoric origins and are associated with the sanctity in a regional context." H.P.Ray, "*Creating Religious Identity: Archaeology of Early Temples in Malaprabha Valley*" in H.P.Ray, ed., *Archaeology and Text: The Temple in South Asia*, OUP, 2010, p. 16.

⁶ Sinopoli, Carla. *Echoes of Empire: Vijayanagara and Historical Memory*, Vijayanagara as Historical Memory. In *Archaeologies of Memory*, eds. Ruth M. Van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock, Blackwell, Mass, pp. 17-33.



Figure. 2: The Malaprabha River at the Ramalinga Temple at Aihole (Courtesy: Author)

The making of the Malaprabha valley as sacred and choosing it as the mainstay of temple construction by the Chalukyas in the western Deccan was not a sudden phenomenon. The beginning of settlements at Badami, Aihole and Pattadakal goes back to the Iron Age as can be gleaned from megaliths⁷ and hero stones⁸ found extensively in the Belgaum and Dharwad area. The hero-cult and the philosophy underlying the process of commemoration are deep-rooted both in our ancient literature and history.⁹ These megaliths pre-existed, co-existed and post - existed the temples. Apart from the presence of megaliths, dolmens and hero stones, which can be seen as significant markers of sacred landscape, there was an essential shift in religious support from Vishnu to Shiva and particularly to Pashupata sect.¹⁰ Carol R. Bolon has observed that the

⁷ U.S.Moorti, *Megalithic Culture of South India*, Ganga Kaveri Publishing House, Varanasi, "Forward", 1994.

⁸ A. Sundara, *The Early Chamber Tombs of South India - A Study o the Iron Age Megalithic Monuments of North Karnataka*, University Publishers, Delhi, 1975, p.7.

⁹ S. Settar, G.D. Sontheimer, ed., *Memorial Stones*, Institute of Indian Art, Karnatak University, Dharwad and South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany, Manipal Power Press, Manipal, 1982.

¹⁰ David L. Lorenzen, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas Two Lost Saivite Sects*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 1972; V. Filliozat, *Kalamukha and Pasupata Temple in Dharwad*, The Kuppaswamy Sastri Research Institute, Chennai, 2001.

Chalukya ruler incorporated Pashupata and Kalamukha Shiva rituals which included fertility rites especially seen at places like Siddhanakolla and Mahakuta.¹¹ It was by the construction of the rock-cut and structural temples that the Chalukya rulers aimed to legitimize their presence not only by absolute control over social and religious matters, but by a process of incorporating local religious elements within a new order that they subscribed to and practiced on the landscape. Thus, the sacred landscape of the Chalukyas in the western Deccan included within its fold the megaliths and the sponsorship of trans – regional trends. It appears that the Malaprabha valley was chosen as the core area by the Chalukyas of Badami because of the rich ‘past histories’ of significant places.¹²

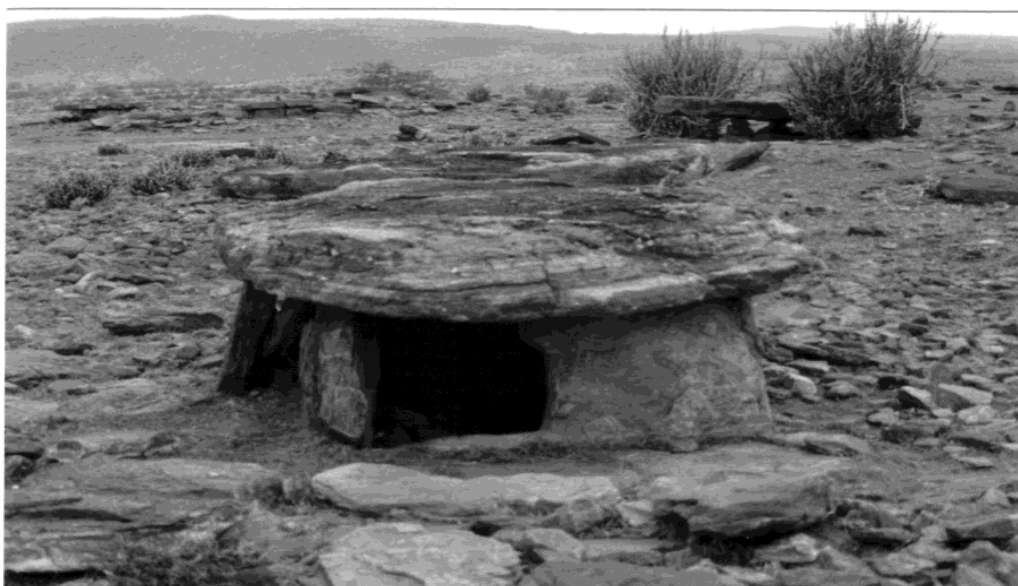


Figure: - 3: “Port hole” dolmen at Aihole (Courtesy: AIIS, Gurgaon)

Megaliths and the Chalukyas: With its natural advantages of river and surrounded cliffs, the Malaprabha valley became the settling ground for human habitation from earliest times. This is evident from a number of prehistoric

¹¹ Carol R. Bolon, *Forms of the Goddess Lajja Gauri in Indian Art*, Pennsylvania University Press, Pennsylvania, 1992, p. 25.

¹² By significant places, I mean the places/sites which have yielded large number of Dolmens and Hero stones. See, S. Settar, ‘Memorial Stones in South India’ in S. Settar, G.D. Sontheimer, ed., *Memorial Stones*, Institute of Indian Art, Karnatak University, Dharwad and South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany, Manipal Power Press, Manipal, 1982, pp. 183-197.

remains¹³ that have been discovered. These take the form of lithic burials known as dolmens. A dolmen is a specific kind of stone slab construction which has at least three standing stone slabs that enclose a space with another stone slab on top of them forming a “cap-stone”. There are many types of dolmens, mostly all dated to the Iron-age in South India.¹⁴ Megalithic dolmens studied elsewhere in the Iron age context suggest an association of these monuments with commemorative activities.¹⁵ In addition, a recent systematic archaeological documentation and investigation of one of the largest Iron-Age megalithic complexes at Hire Benkal in Karnataka, demonstrates that megalithic dolmens participated in meaningful ways in the daily lives of the people who “created” them while also being ritually significant as mortuary places.¹⁶ Aihole’s megaliths were also commemorative monuments¹⁷ and their location in proximity with Chalukya memorial temples at Aihole suggests in part their continuing perception as memorials in the last two millennia. The 133 megaliths extend over 21 hectares around and in the vicinity of Aihole.¹⁸ Another dolmen, partly hidden by bushes is found on the Badami-Pattadakal route. The dolmen consists of an approximately 2- metre square chamber with a doorway opening on the front. Traces of brick structures around 300 metres away from the dolmen, datable 3rd-4th centuries CE has been uncovered.¹⁹ The presence of a linga shrine close to the dolmen describes religious symbolism of the landscape running parallel with the local memorial sentiments.

¹³ R. Chandrasekhara Reddy, *Heroes, Cults and Memorials Andhra Pradesh, 300 AD -1600 AD*, New Era Publications, Madras, 1994; S. Settar, G.D. Sontheimer, ed., *Memorial Stones*, Institute of Indian Art, Karnatak University, Dharwad and South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany, Manipl Power Press, Manipal, 1982.

¹⁴ U.S. Moorti, *Megalithic Culture of South India*, Ganga Kaveri Publishing House, Varanasi, 1994; A. Sundara, *The Early Chamber Tombs of South India - A Study of the Iron Age Megalithic Monuments of North Karnataka*, University Publishers, Delhi, 1975.

¹⁵ Moorti, pp. 1-10; Sundara, pp. 3-12.

¹⁶ Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of H.E.H. The Nizam’s Dominion, Hyderabad, 1935-36, pp. 28-31.

¹⁷ Sundara, p 31.

¹⁸ Moorti, *ibid*, p. 114.

¹⁹ George Michell, *Badami, Aihole , Pattadakal*, Deccan Heritage Foundation, London, 2011, p. 138.



Figure 4: Ravanaphadi cave, Aihole (Courtesy: Author)

An important piece of evidence to clarify the nature of the link between megaliths and the subsequent cave and temple constructions at Aihole is the architectural similarity between the megalithic capstone placement and the construction of the ceiling of Ravanaphadi cave at Aihole. According to Carol R. Bolon the construction of the Ravanaphadi cave suggest a preference for a dolmen-like character for sacred spaces and an association with the after-life in particular, inspired directly from those megalithic dolmens.²⁰ The megaliths at Aihole may pre-date Chalukya rule in the area. They may also have been constructed during and after early Chalukya times making Radcliffe's observation valid. K.V. Ramesh has suggested that the Ravanaphadi cave may be a memorial for a Chalukya ruler, Mangalesa.²¹ Thus, during this period of temple construction it is quite likely that Aihole was a more restrained memorial landscape than the overall religious and commercial landscape as seen in later periods. However, there was a significant relationship between the placement of Chalukya constructions of this period and the megalithic dolmens. The megalithic funerary stone monuments existed alongside Chalukya temple that probably commemorated the death of a religious person. Further, the excavation of a Siva cave at Aihole, possibly a memorial to Chalukya ruler and whose roof is architecturally similar to the capstone of a memorial megalithic monument at Aihole, suggests that Chalukya rulers may have consciously

²⁰ Carol Radcliffe Bolon, *Early Chalukya Sculpture*, PhD Dissertation, Department of Fine Arts, New York University, New York, 1981, p. 307-8.

²¹ K.V. Ramesh, *The Chalukyas of Vatapi*, Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984, p. 72.

modelled some of their constructions to reflect not just local architectural preference but also their ideology. The presence of two different traditions of the megalithic architecture at Aihole makes the site important. Both port-hold chambers and passage chambers are found in Kyaddigeri and Chilapur, the adjacent villages to Aihole.²² In Pattadakal too, a group of about 20 megaliths near the left bank of the river Malaprabha has been discovered. It is interesting to note that these sites, Aihole, Pattadakal and Badami, which were initially, took up for megalithic burials later came to be known for their structural and rock-cut caves.

The inscriptions of the Chalukyas tell us that they followed the dominant Brahmanical faith and adopted its religious and symbolic icons. However, there is evidence that local religious identities played a significant role. As far as the Chalukyas of Badami are concerned, it appears that local religious forms,²³ practiced by non-elites constrained and shaped the new religious and state symbols that the Chalukyas constructed during their time in power. The Chalukyas of Badami claimed themselves to be successors to the Ikshvaku-Cutu-Kadamba cult and cultural traditions, and declared themselves as the sons of goddess Hariti, as the sons reared by the Saptamatrkas and as the devotees of Kartikeya.²⁴

The Chalukya temples cannot be seen as intrusion of a foreign or external element in the landscape, but it has to be understood evolution of the sacred landscape through the intertwining of the local elements with the northern traditions.²⁵ The mid-first millennium CE saw transformations in both northern and southern religious traditions. Vedic Brahmanism continued but now gained an exclusive status restricted to elite brahmanas while newer religious forms began to be elaborated starting around the 5th century CE in what is generally referred to as puranic Hinduism or Classical Hinduism.²⁶ Jainism and Buddhism, which had existed for nearly a millennium before this time

²² A. Sundara, *ibid*, p.31.

²³ Katherine Anne Harper points out that “many aspects of Matrika worship derive from aboriginal levels of Indian society and religion as well as from the Vedic.” Katherine Anne Harper, *seven Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation The Iconography of the Saptamatrkas*, Edwin Mollen Press, New York, 1989, p. 25.

²⁴ S. Settar, “Roots, Relations and Relevance: The Chalukyan Backdrop” in “In Praise of Aihole, Badami, Mahakuta and Pattadakal” Marg Publication, Bombay, 1979, pp. 9-31.

²⁵ Discussion with my PhD advisor, Dr. R. Mahalakshmi.

²⁶ Romila Thapar, “Ethics, religion and Social Protest in the First Millennium BC in North India”, in *Ancient Indian Social History*, 1978, pp. 40-41.

continued but now competed with Hinduism, which grew over time through the process of incorporating various local religious traditions²⁷. Temple constructions mirrored these transformations in religious traditions and came to incorporate elaborate religious imagery that steadily crystallized into a standard iconographic program across the subcontinent.²⁸ In south India stone temple construction took off under the patronage of Chalukya of Badami and the Pallava dynasties and continued to flourish till the period of the Vijayanagara empire in the sixteenth century CE²⁹ and the successor Nayaka states in Karnataka.³⁰ It is through the interactions between Buddhism, Jainism with Brahmanical distinctiveness that stimulated material and visual forms affecting art, architecture, political economy, literature and divergent trends in languages and scripts in the western Deccan and south India.³¹

Saptamatrikas, and Lajja-Gauri in Chalukyan Art: A number of Saptamātṛkā³² and Lajja-Gauri³³ sculptures are portrayed widely in the iconographical layout of the Shaiva caves and structural temples of the western Deccan. Michael W. Meister³⁴ in his article attempts to analyze the power relation between Shakta and Shaiva cults within the context of the evolution of Matrika images by taking into consideration the various regional traditions in sculpture. According to Katherine Anne Harper, the Saptamatrikas are ambivalent manifestations of

²⁷ Romila Thapar, *Cultural Transaction and Early India: Tradition and Patronage*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, pp. 28-32.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ George Michell, *Architecture and the Art of Southern India: Vijayanagar and the Successor States, 1350-1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 155-219; Anila Verghese, *Religious Traditions at Vijayanagara as Revealed Through its Monuments*, Manohar and American Institute of Indian Studies, New Delhi, 1995, 23-25.

³⁰ Crispin Branfoot, "Approaching the Temple in Nayaka – period Madurai: The Kutal Aakar Temple," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol 60, No. 2, 2000, Zurich/Germany, pp. 197-221.

³¹ Thapar, 1994, *ibid*, pp. 31-32.

³² Shivaji K. Panikkar, *Saptramatrika Worship and Sculptures*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 1997; Katherine Anne Harper, *Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation, The Iconography of the Saptamatrkas*, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1989.

³³ Carol R. Bolon, *Forms of the Goddess Lajja Gauri in Indian Art*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 1992.

³⁴ Michael W. Meister, "Regional Variations in Matrka Conventions", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XLVII, New York University, pp. 233-246.

Devi as they embody both qualities, good and bad.³⁵ The Matrikas in art seldom display their destructive characters, although some of the goddesses carry weapons. They are projected as benign mothers most of the time. However, in order to understand the different aspects of Saptamatrikas, it is significant to explore, evolution of the goddesses, their cultic, mythical and theological rationalisations. Fertility can be seen as integral to the female divine in ancient India.³⁶ Harper³⁷ points out that the Chalukyas consistently stated in their inscriptions that they were “nourished by the seven mothers” who are “mothers of the seven worlds”. The Seven Mothers are named as patron deities of the Chalukyas, and are found in prominent position in the Aihole cave³⁸ and in the Bala-Brahma temple at Alampur.³⁹ R. Mahalakshmi argues that the seven sisters were the ‘seven mothers’ of Skanda, or this can also be a generic term used for pre-Aryan, non-brahmanical conjoint mother goddess and/or female ancestor cults.⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that the Chalukyas take pride in calling themselves as worshippers of Kartikeya and claimed Skanda as the bestower of power on them.⁴¹ This argument is supported through inscriptional evidence and depiction of god Kartikeya in most of the temples constructed by the Chalukyas. Thus it can be said that the origin of the Saptamatrikas is intertwined with the Kartikeya tradition.

³⁵ Harper, *ibid*, p. v.

³⁶ Panikkar, *ibid*, p. 5.

³⁷ Harper, *ibid*, pp. 150-152.

³⁸ R.S. Gupte, *The Art and Architecture of Aihole*, Bombay, 1967, pls 129-137, p. 29.

³⁹ Aschwin de Lippe, *Indian Medieval Sculpture*, New York, 1978, pls. 135-137.

⁴⁰ R. Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess Korravai Durga in the Tamil Traditions*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2011, p. 79.

⁴¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol, XXVIII, pp. 12 ff; XIX, pp. 102 ff an XXI, pp. 155 ff.



Figure 5:- Image of Saptamatrikas from Ravanaphadi cave, Aihole (Courtesy: Author)

Despite fewer depictions of the Saptamatrikas in the Chalukya imagery, the inscriptions of this period mention the rulers as being nurtured by them. There were probably specific purposes for which kings of the inscriptions mention them. As Saptamatrikas and Skanda were considered as patrons of war, they were together remembered by the kings in their inscriptions.⁴² It is important to note that multiple sects, including Pashupatas and Shakti cults competed for royal patronage and recognition and co-existed in a diverse social milieu. The Chalukyas however were not the first rulers to adopt Saptamatrika as legitimizing symbols of their reign. They were preceded by the Vakatakas in

⁴² Panikkar, *ibid*, p. 62.

central India and the Kadambas in south central Deccan who both worshipped the Saptamatrika. It is interesting to note that it was during the Chalukya period that there is a blending of fertility rites that have distinct pastoral origins and Brahmanical notions of worship of the female energy principal.

The worship and varied iconographic representations of another fertility goddess - Lajja- Gauri were also prevalent during the reign of the Chalukyas, although their inscriptions are curiously silent on this. Twelve large stone images, almost three to four feet high and carved in relief are located at Badami, Mahakuta, Pattadakal and Aihole.⁴³ Stella Kramrisch to some extent related the form of Lajja Gauri image in the Alampur museum to the descriptive epithets of Aditi Uttanapada found in the Rg Veda.⁴⁴ H. D. Sankalia in 1960, called the Lajja-Gauri image found in Siddhanakolla as “Shy Woman”.⁴⁵ R. C. Dhere⁴⁶ has studied many regional names of the goddess along with their ornaments and meaning. Dhere in his work has provided the cult centres of Lajja-Gauri, the modern regional myths about her, and sociological information about the castes that worship her now and the ways in which she is worshipped. He accepts Kramrisch’s association of the figure with Aditi of the Rg Veda as one among many conceptual sources for the figure.

⁴³ Bolon, Ibid, 1997, p. 24. The images are located at Naganathakolla near Badami, Mahakuta, Chikka Mahakuta, Siddhanakolla near Pattadakal and Bala-Brahma temple at Alampur in Andhra Pradesh.

⁴⁴ Stella Kramrisch, “An Image of Aditi-Uttanapad”, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol, 19, Nos, 3-4, 1956, pp. 259-70; reprinted in Exploring India’s Sacred Art, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller, Philadelphia, , pp. 148-58.

⁴⁵ H.D. Sankalia, “The Nude Goddess or ‘Shameless Woman’ in Western Asia, India, and South Eastern Asia”, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol 23, 1960, Nos.2, pp. 111-23.

⁴⁶ R. C. Dhere, Lajja Gauri, Pune, 1978.



Figure 6:- Lajja Gauri sculpture at the Badami archaeological site museum.

According to Bolon, “the goddess Lajja Gauri was especially important to the people ruled by the early Chalukya kings during the last two decades of the seventh century as is apparent from the number, size, and quality of her images made during their time.”⁴⁷ Generally a sub-shrine was built to enshrine Lajja-Gauri in front of temples.⁴⁸ Several of the Chalukya images are still worshipped at sites where temples of the period stand. Two temples of the period, the Lakulisha temple at Siddhanakolla and the Bala-Brahma temple at Alampur, still in worship retain images of the goddess.⁴⁹ They are visited by childless women or couples seeking fertility. It is interesting to note that the temples

⁴⁷ Bolon, *ibid*, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Bolon argues that these may be the earliest surviving instances of the addition of sub shrines to the temple compound in south India, *ibid*, p. 25, 40.

⁴⁹ Bolon, pp. 304-8.

where this goddess was worshipped are isolated, often in the edge of a major centre.⁵⁰

It is through the inscriptions and images of Lajja-Gauri found mostly in the suburbs of the main settlement of the Chalukyas, reveals that initially she may have originated as a tribal or local village deity but was gradually assimilated in the Brahmanical pantheon as Shakti of Siva.⁵¹ Anncharlott Eschmann explains the process of Hinduization of tribal and village deities in Orissa.⁵² She points out that “Hinduism has an extraordinary capacity to incorporate and amalgamate other religion and alien cults” because in Hinduism, Brahman is considered to be within everything.⁵³ Bolon argues that in village communities where tribal groups may live together with population practising Brahmanical ideologies, an aboriginal cult may become a village cult and may eventually become incorporated into a ‘Hindu’ temple.⁵⁴ The factors behind this assimilation are discussed by Herman Kulke⁵⁵ as “such a Hindu temple is distinguished from the village cult by three characteristics: daily performance of puja, recognition by all castes, and more than local importance.” In this context a Hinduized gramadevi,⁵⁶ for example, may have attained sub-regional importance and later may attain importance within a regional area. Eschmann refers to this as the end result of the process she calls “Brahmanization” which might have occurred as a result of royal patronage.⁵⁷ Thus it can be seen as a standard process of gaining loyalty of different village and tribal population in and around the region into the forefront.⁵⁸ This practice ensured loyalty so that

⁵⁰ Kosambi, *ibid*, pp. 91, 95. He suggests an explanation for placement of temples of the goddess outside the village boundary or at a crossroads. Isolation for fertility rituals may be the proper explanation.

⁵¹ D.C. Sircar, ‘Sakti and the Mother Goddess,’ in Sircar, ed., *Studies in the Religious Life of Ancient and Medieval India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971, pp. 94-104, argues that different epithets used for Durga in Sanskrit literature suggests the assimilation from local or tribal religions.

⁵² Eschmann, Kulke and Tripathi, 1978, chapter 4 and 7.

⁵³ *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ Bolon, *ibid*, p 68.

⁵⁵ Eschmann, Kulke and Tripathi, 1978, p.125.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 83.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵⁸ Hernman Kulke, p. 182.

the kingdom will be defended and the king, needing soldiers, may have found it necessary to provide images of Lajja-Gauri in his temples as a way of firstly, ensuring fertility and secondly, a general well being of his subjects (by elevating her to the position of Shiva's consort). This relationship was articulated within sacred and religious spaces in everyday activities.

Sacred landscapes during Chalukya reign were composite religious and memorial spaces. Dolmens were considered sacred and the Chalukyas kept their memory of these features alive, as seen in the architectural style of the caves. The act of erecting dolmens can be seen as marking and altering memories in the Malaprabha landscape. The selection of suitable locales by the Chalukyas and continued building activity in the same landscape as the megaliths, suggests they made a meaningful choice that was self legitimization and that perhaps constituted a reuse of sacred landscape. There was a clear association between the religious affiliation of Chalukya rulers and those of pastoralists in the region especially in the second half of Chalukya rule. Female deity worship such as of Saptamatrika and Lajja-Gauri, not only signifies the introduction of fertility rituals as established initially by Carol R. Bolon but goes beyond and suggests that Chalukya royalty interacted closely with pastoral groups. This incorporation of pastoral ritual practices and beliefs indicates a complex political and social relationship that the Chalukyas forged in order to continue their rule.

