



Sculptures of the Ruined Chandi Temple at Chandital

Ramesh Meher

The temple of Chandital is one of the important Sakta shrines of Boudh district. It is called Siddha pitha as it is believed that the goddess fulfills the wishes of her devotees. The temple is situated in a small village in the Khuntabandha Grampanchayat area of Boudh district.¹ This temple is located at Chandital village which is close to the right bank of the Mahanadi. It is situated at the distance of about 12 kms from Boudh towards Sonepur, and can be reached by the State Highway through a rural road of about 2 kms. The temple is considered as most sacred by the local people. Goddess Chandi, the presiding deity of the temple is regarded as the protectress of that area.

From the architectural point of view, the present temple of Chandital is not important as it is built in the middle of 20th century A.D. But the temple contains sculptures datable to early medieval period. The temple of Chandital is consisted of two structures such as Vimana and Jagamohana. The structure of Vimana collapsed due to heavy rain in August 2000. There is an open flat roofed Mandap recently built in front of the Jagamohana.

Vimana

The *Vimana* of the Candi temple is a *Rekha* deula and its height is about 25 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The structure of the temple is erected on a platform of 1.5 feet high. It has four parts such as Pistha, bada, Gandi, and *Mastaka*.



Chamunda, Chandital

Jagamohana

The *Jagamohana* or *Mukhasala* of the temple has a vaulted roof or semi-cylindrical roof and it is about 10 feet in height from the surface of the temple complex. The outer walls of the *Jagamohana* are completely plain. According to the local people, deities like Chamunda, Uma-Maheswar,

Indrani, Kumari, Brahmi, Maheswari, Barahi, Ganesha and Siva Linga are worshipped inside the *Mukhasala* or *Jagamohana*. Two lions are installed on both sides of *mukhasala* and they are acting as the *dvarapalas* of the temple.

On the basis of the survived image of Chamunda in the *Jagamohana* hall, S.S.Panda has suggested the existence of the image of Saptamatrika amidst loose sculptures of this



temple.² All of these sculptures of the temple are briefly described below.

Indrani

The first image is Indrani, the wife of lord Indra. She is also carved seated in lalita pose on a pedestal with right leg pendant. A figure of elephant is carved below the pedest as her conventional mount. She has two hands, but the right hand is destroyed. She is wearing a kirita mukuta on her head, and bracelet in her left hand. Flying Vidyadharas with garlands in hands are carved in the topmost corners of this slab. It measures 71 cm long and 40 cm wide. It is made of sand stone.

Brahmi

The second image of mother goddess is that of Brahmi, the wife of Brahma. She is carved seated in lalitasana on a pedestal with goose as her vehicle. She has four hands. Her hands are damaged along with attributes hold in them. She is wearing a kirita mukuta on her head. Her vanna hansa (swan) is carved below the pedestal. Flying Vidyadharas with garlands in hands are carved in the topmost corners of this slab. It measures 67 cm long and 36 cm wide. It is made of sand stone.

Kaumari

The third Matrika is Kaumari, the wife of Kumara or Kartikeya, the god of war. She is sitting in the lalita pose on a plain pedestal containing peacock (Mayura), her conventional mount. She had four handed; now all are missing. Her head is also missing. The image is 38 cm long and 30 cm wide. It is made of sand stone.

Uma-Mahesvara

The fourth image of Uma-Maheswara is carved on a stone slab in the sitting posture. Parvati is sitting on the left thigh of Siva. The right leg of Siva is kept on his vahana bull and the left

leg of Parvati is kept on his vahana lion. Both bull and lion are carved on the pedestal. Siva has four hands. The top left hand is shown on the left shoulder of parvati and lower left hand holds a lotus bud. The right top hand is in abhaya mudra. Both Siva and Parvati are wearing mukutas on their heads. Flying Vidyadharas with garlands in hands are carved in the topmost corners of this slab. It measures 66 cm in length and 36 cm in width. It is made of chlorite stone.

Varahi

The fifth matrika is Varahi, the wife of Varaha. She is a fat pot-bellied female with head of boar and seated in lalita pose on a plain pedestal. A buffalo is carved below the pedestal as her vehicle. She has two hands. Her right hand is in abhayamudra while her left hand is holding a baby, who is sitting on her left thigh. The baby is touching her left breast.³ Hairs on her head are arranged in the shape of snake coils radiating in all direction. The size of the image is 76 cm long and 37 cm wide. It is made of chlorite stone.

Chamunda

The sixth image is Chamunda who is shown as sitting on a corpse in the ardhaparyanka posture. She has six hands. A garland of skulls is worn around her waist. Her hair is tied like a jatabhara. She holds a sarpa (long snake) in the upraised left and right hands over her head. In her lowest left hand is a severe human head. Flower motifs are carved on the topmost corner of this slab. This is a unique image of Chamunda.⁴ It measures approximately 69 cm in length and 37 in cm width. It is made of chloride stone.

Mahesvari

The seventh image is Maheswari, wife of Siva. She is carved in standing posture. She has two hands. Her vahana bull is carved on the



Maheswari, Chandital

pedestal.⁵ It (image) is 92 cm in length and 36 cm in width. It is made of sand stone.

Chamunda

Another image of Chamunda is also found in the mandapa. Her hands are broken and her left leg is also destroyed. It measures 58 cm in

length and 28 cm in width. It is made of chlorite stone.

Ganesha

The image of Ganesha is depicted in the maharajalila pose. It is beautifully carved on black stone slab. He has four hands. The lower left hand possesses a battle axe (parasu). His vahana mouse is carved at the bottom of the pedestal. Flying Vidyadharas with garlands in hands are found in the topmost corners of this slab. He wears a mukuta on his head. It measures 79 cm in length and 32 cm in width. It is made of chlorite stone.

Date of the sculptures

Most of the scholars of art history accept that the sculptures of this Chandi temple belonged the Somavamsi period. Local legends ascribe the builder of the shrine to king Chandihara Yayati-II of Somavamsis dynasty who was also the builder of Chandi temple at Belkhandi and Ranipur jharial.⁶ The name Chandihara Yayati-II (A.D. 1025 to 1040 A.D.) suggests that Yayati-II was a devotee of Chandi and Hara, this temple exists nearer to the capital of Yayatinagar i.e. modern Jagati. The original temple of Chandital and the existing sculptures might have been made by

Chandihara, the Somavamsi king. In that case, the date of the temple and sculptures can be 11th century A.D.

Conclusion

It is known from the above discussion that the architectural feature of the temple is not so important like other notable temples of Orissa but the shrine preserves a good number of sculptures of different deities which are of great significance. Most of the images found here are Saptamatrika image. It is not unlikely that the temple might have been of Saptamatrikas. People of the neighboring villages worship these deities with great devotion. Festivals like Makara Sankranti, Pana Sankranti, Dasahara, Sivaratri etc are regularly observed in this temple with much enthusiasm.

References

1. Panda, S.S, "Early Sculptures of the Upper Mahanadi Vally", in *Orissa Review*, November, 2003, pp-53-55, Also see P.K.Singh "Saptamatrikas in the Temple Art of Western Orissa" in P.K.Nayak(ed.) "New Aspects of History and Culture of South Kosala" New Delhi, 2008, p-161
2. Panda, S.S, "Early Sculptures of the upper Mahanadi Valley", in *Orissa Review*, November, 2003, pp-53-55,
3. P.K. Singh", Op.cit. , p-161.
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Panda, S.S. Op.cit.

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Manuscript Conservation Centre,
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