

Ramesvara Group of Temples at Boudh

Ramesh Meher

Introduction :

Orissa is a Land of temples and it is also believed to be the Epicentre of panchapasana of Hinduism. All through the ages Orissa has retained a cultural identity much more prominent than her geographical situations and political establishment. The political stability by periodic order and economic vitality through a larger part of history were responsible for the growth of culture. The enormous wealth of the country led to the development of art and architecture. The importance given to image worship in India and belief in personal God led

to the erection of temples. The Temple is an abode of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Etymologically, the word temple is derived from the Latin word *Templum*, which means an open or consecrated space or a building inaugurated by an augur. It is generally conceived that a building used for the worship of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. In its primitive sense, this word corresponds to a place marked off as sacred to a God, in which the house of God may be erected. In its usage, it is rather employed in a restricted sense to denote various religious affiliations except Christianity and Islam¹.

According to the Brahminical concept the temple is not merely a place of devotion, but also an object of devotion like an image and the invisible spirit. Hence the temple is visualized as the human body, with architectural connotations². It is true that temple in some form must have originated as soon as the image worship came into vogue. When God was universally visualized in human form, such an anthropomorphic form required a habitation or a shelter and this probably resulted in a structural shrine.³ The Indian Silpasastra recognizes three main types of temples known as the *Nagara*,

the *Dravida* and the *Vesara*⁴. All the available texts are agreed on the point that the *Nagara style* was prevalent in the region between the Himalayas and the Vindhya. The *Dravida* country is well known and the texts rightly confine the *Dravida* style to that part of the country lying between the river Krishna and the cape of *Kanyakumari*. The *Nagara* and *Dravida* style can thus be explained with reference to Northern India and the *Dravida* country respectively, and the characteristic form and feature of each easily determined. The term *Vesara*, however, is not free from vagueness. Some of the texts ascribe the *Vesara* style to the country between the Vindhya and the river Krishna. This separate style of temple architecture may be recognized a style known to the archaeologists as the "*Chalukyan style*". The *Vesara* or *Chalukyan* style, however, is a hybrid one, borrowing elements and feature both from the *Nagara* and the *Dravida*. The *Nagara style* developed in North India and the *Dravida* style in South India. But the indigenous scholars have classified the entire temple architecture of India into four types such as the *Nagara*, the *Dravida*, the

Vesara and the Kalinga. Some eminent scholars like R.D. Banerjee, R.P. Das and K.C. Panigrahi have accepted the temples of Orissa as a subclass in the category of Indo- Aryan *Nagara style* temples of Central and North India⁵. In the Dravida style the *sikhara* (spire) of the temple is marked by a succession of gradually receding storeys. The *Nagara style* of temple architecture is characterized by curvilinear *sikharas*. The *Kalinga style* temples architecture of Orissa appears to have been a product of the *Nagara style* temple architecture of North India. But it has also some distinctive characteristics of its own. This *Kalinga style* architecture shows that even in the pre-Muslim period the predominant temple style of Orissa came to be recognized as distinct one.

The Kalinga country, in its stages of art and cultural growth assiduously preserved to transcribe its own artistic environment, which we find reflected in the entire gamut of its temple creation, which in the sequel, have become the cynosure of attracts and examination of the world of scholars, artists, artisans and the intellectual elite.⁶ The treatment of the temple art of

Kalinga is in order to revivify its manifold graces of the past, its changing affiliation in religious cults and trends, its underlying fidelity to a co-ordinated life style, depicting dance, music, devotion, sensualism, esoterics, and all that human kind envisions in its persistent quest after the meaning of life.

With the growth and development of Brahminical religious in Orissa, the structural shrines grew throughout the land. Though differing in dimensions and details, they possess common features and thus we may agree with Ferguson that Orissan temples form one of the most compact and homogeneous architectural groups in India.⁷ Orissa has a rich and unique heritage of art tradition beginning from the sophisticated ornate temple architecture and sculpture to folk art in different forms. The study of architectural tradition in Orissa is fascinating subject in view of the fact that the monuments associated with it have survived to a greater extent through the ravages of time. The temples of Orissa survived near about one-thousand years through the vicissitudes of time affording a varied and interesting study to the students of History and Architecture in particular.

A survey of the extant temples of Orissa reveals that there was brisk architectural activity from about the 6th, 7th centuries AD to the 11th Century AD, the Orissa temple style became complete and established its distinct feature, which were to shape the pattern for later temple building activities. The style reached its climax about the middle of the thirteenth Century AD. It is also difficult to trace its origin whether the temples that were erected in Orissa followed an independent pattern from the very beginning or were related to the Gupta type of temples. Though we cannot be certain about the origin of Orissan temple architecture, in course of its evolution, it developed certain individual features of its own. Because of these distinctive features, Orissan temples form a class by themselves and the many manifestations of this school of temple architecture in Orissa can conveniently be labelled as Kalinga style after the territory where the temples are found. An inscription on the capital of a pillar in the mukha mandapa of the Amritesvara temple at Holal (Bellary district of Karnâataka state) mentions the Kalinga type (along with the *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Vesara*) as one of the four categories of

temples in India⁸. Most of the scholars have accepted the temples of Orissa as a subclass in the category of Indo-Aryan *Nagara* style of temples. According to Manasâra the Northern or Indo-Aryan style of architecture covers the whole area occupied by the Aryans usually designated as “Hindustâna”, the North of Tapi and Mahanadi rivers.⁹ R.C. Majumdar has also referred that the region from the Orissan coast on the east to Kashmir on the west, the whole of North India was studded with temples of Indo Aryan style.¹⁰ Most of the Orissan temple were built from the 7th Century AD to the 16th Century AD when Orissa was successively ruled by five principal dynasties. They are Sailodbhavas of Kongoda mondala, Bhaumakara of Tosali/Utkala, Somavamsis and Gajapatis. Thus Orissan temples, one of the most distinct variations of the *Nagara* style of temple construction is particularly rewarding in that there exists a continuous series of monuments spanning nearly a thousand years of architectural activity. The Orissan provincial temple style is distinctive and enticing to the students of Indian History and Temple Art in particular.

There are several terms used for the temple in Orissa. Among the popular words used are Devayatana, Mandira, Prasada, Devalaya, Devakula etc.¹¹ On the basis of Vastusastra, it is found that Prasada is the most common word used to indicate a temple in North Indian context. But in Orissa, the nomenclature Mandira, which is widely prevalent now a day, was altogether absent during the ancient period.¹² The builder of temples in Orissa, however, had several canonical texts to guide them in the planning and execution of a temple. Some of these texts, which have come to limelight are Bhubana-pradipa, Bhubanapravesa, Silpapothe, Silpasastra, Upanisada, Silpa Ratnakosa, Padma Kesara, Deula Mapagu Nagara etc. indicating the standard achieved by the ancestors of builders in the field of temple architecture of Orissa.¹³

The practice of building houses for Gods and Goddesses is very old in Orissa. According to Hatigumpha inscription, Mahameghavahana Kharavela repaired Savadevayatanas i.e. all devayantanas or houses of God. This postulates the existence of several

Brahminical shrines long before Kharavela's accession to the throne in the 1st Century B.C.¹⁴. Those shrines decayed and thus required renovation, which was promptly attended to by Kharavela, a ruler of very liberal outlook. In very early period, such a shrine might have been made of wood, thatch and bamboo, but in later phase it soon became a sanctum of stone. It is most unfortunate that all the earlier temples are perished by nature. Being the products of the tentative efforts of the craftsmen, those temples did not possess the inherent strength to resist the fury of nature. This experience must have led the craftsmen to invent the technique of imparting stability to the temples under all circumstances in later period.

According to Bhubana Pradipa, a treatise on temple architecture, the temples of Orissa have been classified into three orders viz; *Rekha*, *Pidha* and *Khakhara*.¹⁵ The temples thus evolved in Orissa consists of the sanctum and the porch or frontal hall, the two forming component parts of one architectural scheme. The *Sanctum* (called *Vimana*) can be divided into three types viz *Rekha*, *Pidha* and *Khakhara* orders. Similarly the frontal hall

or *Mukhasala* is either a flat roofed rectangular hall with the roof arranged in *Pidhas* i.e. tiers. So the later is called *Pidha deulas*. From the artistic point of view, the district of Boudh is one of the important Centres of the Kalinga school of Art in the central part of Orissa. The extant temple of this region reveals the good specimen of the *Rekha* and *Pidha* types of temple. The *Khakhara* order temple is not found in that place.

Boudh is one of the centrally located districts of Orissa. Its boundaries in the north extend up to Sonepur and Angul districts in the south to Phulbani district, in the west to Balangir and Sonepur districts and in the east to Nayagarh district.¹⁶ The strategic location of Boudh led her to play an significant role in the evolution of Orissa and her culture. Being located on the bank of Mahanadi, Boudh offered a suitable land to various political powers to display their efficiency in the field of politics and cultural activities. The reason was that, Mahanadi River occupies the premier position among the rivers of Orissa. It provides the richest deltaic area with maximum density of population. It served as the central line of communication and was used



for trade and other socio-economic movement, which added a greater advantage to the state located on its bank. It was quite natural that the imperialistic policy of the *Somavamsis* and *Bhaumakaras* who had established their kingdom at the bank of the upper course and lower course of Mahanadi respectively tried to capture this fertile land located on the middle course of the river, in order to strengthen their power and position. As a result the major portion of the political and the cultural history of Boudh was regulated by two most powerful dynasties of Orissa, i.e. the *Somavamsis* and the *Bhaumakaras* at different times. On the other hand, a close study of the epigraphs found from Boudh and its suburb reveals that ultimately the *Somavamsis* occupied this sub- region of Orissa.

There are three star shaped temples standing in a triangular construction within the complex of modern *Ramesvar temple* at Boudh town. All of these temples are constructed with indigenous traditions. They are *Bhubanesvara*, *Kapilesvara* and *Sidhesvara*¹⁷. These are the wonderful temples built of red sand stone, profusely carved and star shaped in plan. The general form of these temples is like three identical temples each standing on a raised platform (*Pista*). These temples bear the name of *Bhubanesvara*, *Swapnesvara*, and *Paschima Somanatha*¹⁸. Each of them had a cell and an attached small portico. The triangular placing of these temples within the courtyard is quite unusual. They definitely do not represent three of the four corner shrines of a one-time *panchayatana* temple in which the main shrine has been obliterated. However the

star like plan results as a pilaster, decorated with *kanyâ* scroll and *kirtimukha* with garlands. The triple temples are arranged on three corners of a rectangle, the first two facing east and the other to west. Two temples are standing at the Southern and Northern ends of the base line of the imaginary triangle, known respectively as Bhubaneswara and Swapneswara facing east. The temple at the apex of the triangle is Kapileswara, which faces west. The ruins of a fourth temple discovered near them suggest that they were possibly subsidiary shrines though nothing of a central shrine survives except for several images which are too large for the extant temples¹⁹. On the other hand except the difference in direction, these three temples are otherwise identical in respect of their plan, elevation and embellishment. Each and every one of them is dedicated to Lord Siva and in each shrine a *Linga* is installed. The temples have an eight pointed stellate plan formed by two intersecting square measuring 11 feet each.²⁰ The shrines have a small projecting portico and the silhouette of their *gandi* curves sharply near the top in contrast to the gradual curvature typical on earlier Orissan temples.

Though small in scale the temples are richly decorated.

Architectural features of the Temples

The Group of Rameswara temples consists of one structure i.e. Vimana and other part of temple are not obtainable. The Vimana of these temples are *Rekha Deula* and divided into four parts such as *Pista*, *Bada*, *Gandi*, *Mastaka*.

Pista

Pista is prepared of red sandstone; all of the three temples are sited on a *pista* of 50 inch high, being approach by a flight of steps. Very little of the decoration of the *pista* survives as the facing stones have mostly been broken off. However enough remains suggest that it was rich ornamented, as images of two riders leaping on the opposite direction and a *kirtimukha* placed between them can be observed on various faces of the *pista* though highly abraded. It assumes the star ground plan of the temples. The round plan is prepared on the principle of rotating a square round the same exist or by two intersecting squares. As a consequence the wall on each side excepting the front of the

shrine has in its middle a triangular projection. The wall becomes divided into four facets of equal length. The facets have been relieved by offsets at regular intervals. In front of the temple, the one-dimensional projection of the porch with an octagonal pillar at either side substitutes for the triangular projection. D.R. Das observes that the *pista* is composed of a number of horizontally aligned mouldings. Though extremely damaged *khura*, *kumbha*, *kani* and *Vasanta* can be recognized among them²¹.

Bada

The *bada* is tri-anga types such as *pabhaga* (the lower), *jangha* (middle), and *baranda* (upper).²²

Pabhaga

The *pabhaga* consists of five moulding and measures 25 inches high. The moulding from pedestal up, consists of a *khura*, *kumbha*, *patta*, *Kani* and *vasant*, A *champaka* leaf hanging from the *kumbha* links up with a *chaitya* or *kirita* densing as the *khura* as at Gandharâdi. The top three mouldings are linked together by vertical bars decorated with diminutive standing figures, separated by the thin band

scroll-work forming the flat edge of the Kani. So except for the Kani, which has not yet unspecified its pointed shape, the *pabhaga* thus takes for granted the fully developed plan which will become standard on virtually all, later Orissan temples. A ridge or an overflowing foliage is added on the *kumbha* here in order to produce the consequence of a gate with *pallava*. However, the leaves in the present instance are reduced to a thin leafy band. Kani is not a knife-edge moulding but similar to two *khuras* clasped face to face the *patta* in custody with its true nature is square. The *Vasanta* is a moulding of the inverted *khura* form but in contrast with the lower *khura*, it is rather narrow.

Jangha:

Jangha is 50 inches in height and thus confirms to the standard Orissan plan whereby it is twice the height of the *pabhaga*. Each point in the star shaped plan is 32 inches wide and consists of two multi faceted *Khakhara* mundis and a pilaster. The *Khakhara* mundis (miniature shrines) look like a real temple in necessary information. All of them are complete with *Pabhaga*, *jangha*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The *pabhaga* corresponds

with the same section of the original *deula*. The *jangha* of these miniature shrines accommodates a recessed niche within a rectangular frame currently empty, the niche seems to have one contained a divine figure. Thus the niche of the mundis rests directly on top of the *pabhaga* and without a talagarbhikâ. But the niche has a small *urdhva garbhika* at the top. The vimanikâ crowing the niche consists of multiple horizontal mouldings leading the *gandi* of the miniature shrine to be divided in to five *bhumi barandikas* and crowned by a *Khakhara* mundi. Like in a typical *Khakhara* shrine, its *mastaka* has a *kalasa* between two lions. The lions in the present instance are out of control and mounted by riders. The pilasters forming the tips of the star shaped design seem to be influenced more by Central Indian traditions though in over all design it keeps its Orissan traditions, based essentially on free standing pillars with dwarfs carved on the capital. The pilaster has a base, a shaft and a capital. The base is a *tala-bandhana* or lower string course consisting of multiple mouldings, which continues till the top of the niche on the neighbouring mundis on which a titled S-like pattern is carved. D.R. Das observed the base of

the *purnaghâta* style²³. Above this is a standing female figure carved in high relief, the first example on an Orissan temple, where by the major figure on a *paga* projects out from the surface rather than being covered within a niche. This performance may have difficult to sink niches into pilasters meeting at such sharp angles. These figures actually appear on blocks, which project sharply out from the pilaster in a rather awkward manner, almost like an addition, an aspect, which suggest the experimental natural history of the decorative programme. The remainder of the pilaster, above the figure carved in high relief is decorated with scrollwork and a *kirtimukha* at the top dripping festoons of pearls, a motif also appearing at Gandharâdi. The capital crowing the shaft is decorated with an atlantid dwarf housed in a shallow niche.

The major figures on the walls of the *bada*, those in niche (now all missing) and the figure carved in high relief on the pilasters are thus suggested in the overall decorative programme rather than appearing on the same ground line, an arrangement presaging the development of a two-storied *jangha*.²⁴ Unfortunately some of the

projecting block with the figures in high relief have crudely knocked off from the pilasters and carried away. There are several detached images of deities, including one of Brahma and one of a four armed Natarâja in the *bhujanga* transits pose above Pismire, a rare example of this particular dance mode in Orissan art. There are also images of Ganesha, *châmundâ* and possible Vishnu.

Baranda:

The *baranda* consists of two projecting roll mouldings and a recess or *gandi* above relieved with figures on panels and *jali* decoration.

Gandi Decoration

The silhouette of the *gandi* bends inward sharply at the top near the *beki* to produce an overall elliptical profile for the building. The decoration continues the vertical alignment of the *bada* with three *pagas* on each of the points in the star shaped plan²⁵. The star plan of the temple results in the absence of any *rahas*. The facets between are treated here as *anarthas*. The corner *pagas* are divided into five *bhumis* by *bhumi*-amlas in typical fashion with each *bhumi*

subdivided into four *barandis*. The *barandis* are decorated primarily with *chaitya* or floral motif as an earlier Orissan temple. The *anartha paga* (middle paga) consists of superimposed mouldings continuing up to the Visama. The decoration, as at Gandharâdi, consists of triple *chaitya* medallions with interlacing ribbons connecting each *chaitya* with one above. In contrast to Gandharâdi, however, where, much of the decoration is missing or left incomplete, so that only the framework survives. The decoration on the Boudh temples is extremely ornate and produce an almost lace like incrustation. The jewel like delicacy of this repeating motif, with its intricate ribbon construction signify the vertical or ascending aspect of the *Gandi* and almost obliterates the horizontal division of the *bhumi barandis*. The trend from here on is to replace the earlier decorative motifs based essentially on floral decorative motifs and human figures with more elaborate ornamentations which stress the verticality of the structure, a change in keeping with the increasing desire to erect higher and higher structure. The inside *paga* is divided into uneven *barandis* simulating the corner or Kanika

but with a *pheni* decorated with petals replacing the *bhumi* amla, a design more consistent with traditions in Chattisgarh, as at Kharod and Palari, where the *bhumi* amla is fashioned as a *pheni* with petals rather than a ribbed disc.

Mastaka:

The *mastaka* of these Vimana consists of an *amlaka*, a *khapuri*, a *kalasa* and a *ayudha*. The last two members, however, are preserved only in the *mastaka* section of the Kapilesvara. It remains unexplained why in a Siva Temple the *ayudha* is a *Chakra*.

Portico

The temples, as indicated are built on a high *pista* consisting of five courses leading up to the sanctum doorway inside the projecting portico. The roof of the portico is held up by two octagonal pillars in front and a projecting pilaster in each side. The pilasters are decorated with a figure carved in high relief above the *pabhaga* and scroll work as of the type found on the *jangha* of the *bada* of the *duel*. The octagonal pillars have a large *kumbha* with an overflowing foliage or a *ghâta pallava* near their base while

the shaft is decorated with scrollwork. Near the top is a frieze of *kirtimukha* with festoons of pearls dripping from their mouths to form looping garlands. All the base of the porch is the door leading to the *garbhagriha*. The doorframe has three bands of scrollwork, which continues across the lintel above. Two Saivite dvârapâlas are housed in arched niches at the base of the jambs. They are four armed and their hair is piled up in a tall *jatamukuta* on top of their head, but most of their details have been weathered away. However *sarpakundala* is also identifiable in the right ear of one of them. They stand in a tribhanga pose and are not provided with attendants. Gajalaxmi shows on the dvâra *Lalâtâ bimba* panel over the doorway. The Goddess being bathed by two elephants is seated in *lalitasana* with the right leg-hanging pendent over her pedestal. She holds a lotus in the left hand and displays *abhayamudrâ* in the right hand. This pose becomes standardized in the later temples and replaces the more rigid *padmâsana* pose popular on earlier Orissan temples.

A lintel keeping its two ends on the two walls between the pillars of the porch and the door case existing as a brow of the latter bears a panel of

nine *grahas*. Among the nine *grahas* Rahu is represented by head only in contrast to the usual motif of a half bust figure, *Ketu* is represented seated with legs crossed or in *Bhumi sparasamudra* in the manner of the other panel representations rather than as a figure with serpent coils as in later temples. *Ketu* lifts both hands up. The objects in the two raised hands of the *Ketu* are indistinct. Sani holds a sword in his right hand while the attribute in his left hand is indistinct. Soma, Mangala, Buddha, Brihaspati and Sukra display in common a pot in the upraised right hand and rosary in the left.

The *veranda* is prevailing by the *sukanâsa*, appears at the base of the triangular projection in front of the *gandi*. The *sukanâsa* is a three sided rectangular section. The face of the *sukanâsa* is *trinatha* of which the *raha* is conceived as a miniature shrine of the *Khakhara* order. The *kanikas* are also created like shrines but without superstructures. Probably image of divinities were once set in these shrines, which are actually niches. These three shrines are made to support a beautifully executed large decorative motif with a highly stylized *chaitya* arch as the

Central design (*bho*). The medallion of the *bho* encloses the superstructure of the *khâkarâ* shrine on the *raha*. It seems that, at the peak of the *bho* was *kirtimukha*. Traces of string and bell on a chain suspended its mouth may still be recognized at this place. The sidewalls of the *sukanâsa* were fashioned like demi-*bhos* mostly damaged these demi-*bhos* used to house figure sculptures, the extant examples are of female figures. *Jatamukata* crown is one of them. If they were of divine nature, the indications are missing.

The *garbhagriha* of the temple is approached from the door across a stepped sill and through a vestibule built in to the thickness of the wall. The vestibule is divided into two storages. The lower store corresponds to the passage through which the *garbhagriha* communicated with the veranda. The upper store is a triangular space produced by the corbelled arch spanning the two sides of the vestibule. This story is separated from the lower one by a ceiling, which in fact is the extension of the door lintel. It constitutes the womb of the *sukanâsa* and serves effectively to reduce weight on the door

lintel. Three stone slabs placed side by side have constituted it.

The *Siva Linga* installed in the temple is stuck into an *arghya* of heither to unknown design. In keeping with plan of the temple, it is also made stellate on the principle of intersecting two squares²⁶ at angles of 45²⁷, for the drainage of ablution water.

Decorative motifs

Theses temples are covered with minute and intricate carving. There are no surviving cult-images in the niches of the temples, suggesting that as at Gandharâdi, the figures must have been carved separately and then placed in the niches in contrast to the Bhauma technique whereby the figures were part of the wall itself. The most dominant figures carved in high relief on the projecting panelled of the pilasters at the points. Though, badly mutilated most of them are depicted in a graceful tri-bhanga pose with one hip pushed out. They were a strand of jewels, which hugs the lower contour of their globular breasts rather than crossing at the waist as in the figures on the Vaitâl Deul. Their girdle generally consists of three chains and a tassel hangs between their legs. The hair is

normally arranged in a large chignon on one side of the head though in one case on female figure standing in a hieratic pose on the lateral side of the vajra *mastaka* panel. Over the portico, the coiffure is piled in a tall *tiara* arrangement as on the *dvârapalas*. Fequently, as on the Muketesvara temple, a meandering vine grows behind the females and forms a canopy with large flowers above her head.

An additional popular figure motif is the *bhararaksaka* decorating the capitals of the corner pilasters. A motif peculiar to the temples of the early Somavamsi period, characteristic of this atlantid figure is the large potbelly and the manner in which the limbs assume a similar shape. Often the fingers are very stiff and resemble foliage emerging from pots. In some cases the erotic nature of the *bhararaksaka* is stressed, as when holding his enlarged *Lingam*²⁸. There are also examples of erotic rituals including *purascarana*, in the *baranda* recess, which stress the tantric nature of the temples. Other erotic motifs include a Maithuna with the female seated on the lap of a male and a *sringarana* scene with a male pointing his *Lingam* at a female figure²⁹. Among the deities

within the recess is an image of Ganesa. Diminutive images carved on the sloping face of the *barandies* of the *gandi* include dancers and *Linga puja*. There are also numerous fragments and detached images scattered within the compound, including Buddhist and Jain images, which most likely belonged to other temples. The most interesting decorative motif is the large *kalasa* with flanking *jagratas*, which surmounts the *Khakhara* moulding crowning the *paga* designs. Similar water jars; though minus the leaping lions also appear on 10th Century temples in eastern Orissa. As suggested, the inspiration for the motif most likely comes from Daksina Kosala though it does not appear there in this exact manner.

Significance of the stellate plan

Frequently questions are raised about the explanation of the stellate plan and triangular placing of these three temples. Not only that the *garbhagriha* but the *arghapatta* of the *Siva lingas* within have this stellate design. K.C. Panigrahi further emphasizes that the star like shape of the shrines and the Saktis of the *Siva Lingas*

enshrined in them indicate that both the temples and the deities were made in the form of Mandalas or mystic figures with the help of which the Tantrikas wanted to attain their Siddhis³⁰. The Tantric nature of the shrines is furthermore suggested by small images of erotic rituals placed in the *baranda* recess though only a few examples survive³¹. R.D. Banerjee also explains that the triangular placing of the temples at Boudh is of Tantric significance³². Vidya Dehejia agrees with R.D. Banerjee for want of only other explanation.³³ But R.D. Banerjee does not explain why Siva temples should be arranged in such a way as to make an imaginary *yantra*. Further K.C. Panigrahi has said to associate the Boudh temple with the Tantrikas is not believable. The Tantrikas do not make a Mandala or a *yantra* on the principle of intersecting squares.

At Budhi Komna, a small village in the Kalahandi district of Orissa, there is a brick temple³⁴ locally known as the Patalesvara which the department of Orissa State Archaeology has renovated by way of restoration, having stellate ground plan, like the temple at Boudh³⁵. In the Bolangir district, has also the

same ground plan like at Boudh and Budhi Komna. According to the view of K.C. Panigrahi and R.D. Banerjee the stellate plan of the shrines and the Saktis of the *Lingas* and the triangular placing of the temples are due to the Tantric significance, then why there is only one stellate temple each at Budhi Komna and Kansil in the place of three identical temples, out to be placed in a triangular formation. So it may be believed that the arrangement of the Boudh temples in a triangular formation may have any implication other than Tantric. Further the Tantric nature of the shrines might have been indicated by the execution of erotic figures of bigger dimension and prominence, but why there are so small erotic figures at Boudh as observed by Donaldson. On the other hand we cannot imagine the erotic figures as indicatives of the Tantric significance of the temples. There are so many temples at Bhubaneswar, Puri and other parts of Orissa, full of bigger erotic figures, but certainly devoid of any Tantric significance.

On the other hand, it may be of a few significance that all the known example of temples built on a plan of two intersecting squares have been

discovered in Western Orissa. Formally this part of Orissa was included within Kosala, which also comprised Durg, Raipur, Bilaspur and Raigarh districts of M.P. A number of stellate temples have been noticed in that region of M.P.³⁶ with the possible exception of one³⁷. The plans of these temples do not reproduce exactly what has been found in Orissa. In M.P. the central element on each face of the temple is rectangular instead of being triangular. These differences apart, the principles guiding the layout of the temples of Orissa and M.P. are fundamentally similar as such they seem to constitute a group by themselves and represent a Kosalan version of the *Rekha temple style*³⁸. S.K. Saraswati refers to a list of ten kinds of circular temples enumerated by the *samaranjana sutradhara*³⁹. The plans of a few of the temple types are said to have been reached by rotating the square *ksetra* all around or in different direction. S.K. Saraswati finds in this description on obvious allusion to the stellate plan of the temples at Boudh and other places. Krishna Deva who also considers the *samarangana sutradhara* description of some temples of the Circular class as referring to the stellate layout of

the plan⁴⁰ thinks that the way in which the text has treated and extolled these temples makes it clear that the circular temples formed the Metropolitan Malava type. He further believes that the original nucleus of the Amaresvara temple at Onkar Mandhata in the East Nimar District (M.P.) being assignable to the second half of the 10th Century is the earliest of such temples⁴¹. In this temple he recognizes the beginning of the *bhumija* mode of the *Nagara* temple style. It is evident that both S.K.Saraswati and Krishna Deva were unaware of the existence of a plan characterized by oblique projection between the *rahas* in a group of Kosalan temples of a date earlier than the stellate temples at Boudh or Malwa⁴². Therefore it may be understood that this plan, which became a dominant feature of the *bhumija* class of temples⁴³ originated in Kosala and not in Malwa.

From the above discussion it may be that, the star shape of these temples at Boudh is not to meet the ritualistic need of Tantrikas but to confirm to a standardized plan evolved in Kosala. It may also be due to a desire to introduce a novelty that the

arghyas inside these temples were made Star like.

Comparative Study and Date of these temples

Every monuments of temple architecture in Orissa and central India represents a regional demonstration of the *Nagara* temple style and has certain common features, being derived from the same model. The entire temples of Orissa have curvilinear spires and square plans with projected angles of *sikhara* type or of *Rekha* order and it ultimately became the dominant form the temple architecture in Orissa. Now, the earliest temple represents the nature products of that type. But the Orissan temple architecture by reason of its own distinct individualities and long history of evolution soon came to acquire for itself a separate nomenclature i.e. the *Kalinga* style. Prof. R.D. Banerjee has drawn our attention to an inscriptions of the pre-Muslim period in the temple of Amriteswara at Holal in the Ballary district, in which mention has been completed of four classes of temple *Nagara*, *Kalinga*, *Dravida* and *Vesara*.⁴⁴ Prof. Banerjee observation has further been supported by another scholar, Mr.D.P.Ghosh who has exposed certain well-marked

peculiarities distinguishing the Orissan group of temples from the *sikhara* temples of North India, Central Provinces, Rajputnâ, and Gujrat. The Ramesvara group of temples at Boudh, which we have discussed about their architectural features, their decorative motifs as well as the iconography of these images certainly played a significant role in the long evolution of *Kalinga* temples. Each of these temples have the common features of indigenous sub-styles of temple architecture of Central India and Orissa and pave the way for matured *Kalinga* style which is marked perfectly in the *Lingaraj* temple of Bhubaneswar.⁴⁵

There is no paleography or epigraphic sources available for the determination of the dates of these temples of Boudh. However these temples can be co-related on the basis of their architectural features, their decorative motifs, sculptures and iconography of their image to one or other of the monuments of which the chronology is known as analytical study of the dated and datable temples and cumulative results. When applied to study these undated temples as cognates of one or other of the date and datable temples. We may not be able to find out the

exact date of their construction but we can place them to particular period as cognates of the particular temple of which the date is known. Such a chronology, though approximate is borne out by the logic of the evolutionary process experienced by the architectural movement, through different period of Orissan history.

The stellate plans of the three Siva temples of Boudh represent a pure Kosalan version of the *rekha temple style*⁴⁶. Among such stellate temple of South kosala, it has been observed that temple at Kharad and Pallari are the earliest one. Buddhi Komna, Kansil and Dhobini temples, are a step further to Kharad and Pallari, whereas Boudh has the most modified, developed and latest temples among them⁴⁷. It is more fully adapted to the Orissan architectural tradition and exhibits a further elaboration of the decorative programme evolved at Gandharâdi. On the other hand, a comparative style of its features with the dated temples of Eastern Orissa can clearly point out the time of its construction. While the temples of Boudh, which has a stellate plan having seven Konarkas on the body can not be easily compared with the Kalinga

temples of Bhubaneswar in architectural elevation but it possesses a super affinity towards the decorative motifs, sculptural programme and iconographic peculiarities of other Orissan temples.

The number of *pabhaga* moulding used to change in long evolution of Orissan temples. Boudh is a step forward to Gandharâdi, having five horizontal mouldings at *pabhaga*. A new moulding is added here in between *patta* and *Vasanta* i.e. *Kani*. As a result of which there is now *khura*, *kumbha*, *patta*, *kani* and *vasanta* or *pabhaga* at Boudh. But *kani* has not yet got its point shape, rather the edge is flat. A *champak leaf* from the *Kumbha* links up with a *chaitya* on the *muhanti* of its *khura* as at Gandharadi. The top three moulding are linked together by vertical bars decorated with diminutive standing figures separated by this band of Scroll work. This arrangement of five mouldings became prevalent at Bhubaneswar from the temple of 10th Century A.D.⁴⁸ Among those temples most popular are Gauri and Mukteswar of 10th century A.D. Brahmeswar and Rajarani of 11th Century A.D. *Lingaraj* and other temples of 12th and 13th Century A.D.

Boudh provides a close similarity though not absolute with the *pabhaga mouldings* of mukteswar. On the Gouri temple the *Kanika* has four mouldings, but the *anartha* has five mouldings where a *talagarbhika* is inserted unlike Boudh. There are no vertical bars or *champak leaf* and it is less ornamentally decorated than Boudh. While this arrangement of four mouldings on the *Kanika* and five on the twin *piers* of the *anartha* is repeated on the Muktesvara but like Boudh there is no *talagarbhika* inserted beneath the *anartha* niche, merely a shallow indentation. The moulding on the *anartha* is ornamentally decorated than on Gauri with the *champak leaf* added to the *Kumbha* as is possessed by Boudh. Though the temples of 11th and 12th Century possess the five moulding of *pabhaga* uniformly on *kanika* and *anartha*, *talagarbhika* are eliminated from the *anartha*, but by this time *kanika* has already achieved its perfect pointed shape. There is no vertical bar linking these upper three moulding as at Boudh but there is a very small figure motif. Generally, erotic carved at the base of the coming *Pidha* in the centre of *patta* and *Vasanta*. The *kirita* design on the *khura* is now

transformed into a small *vajramundi* with the niche, housing various figures, motifs and the crowning *vajramastaka* linked to the *champaka leaf* above. Therefore the decorative plan for the *pabhaga* achieves its nature form on the temples dated from 11th Century A.D. So, considering *pabhaga* is the most valuable source to date an undated temple. Boudh should be placed in 10th Century as cognate member of Mukteswar and its group. By reason of the unique stellate plan of Boudh, it cannot be compared with other Orissan temple in respect of *paga* division on the *bada*. However, the vertical alignment of the *bada* can be discussed with three *pagas* on each side of the points in the star shaped plan. We may discuss the other decorative and sculptural motifs as possessed by *jangha* at Boudh and can compare them with other dated Orissan temples.

Each point in the star fashioned plain is 32 inches wide and consists of two multifaceted elongated *khakhara mundi* and a pilaster, with small *urdhwagarbhikas* above the niches, as at Ganeswarpur, Gouri temple, Mukteswara and other 9th and 10th century

temples, where the elongated *khakhara mundis* were used as the *paga* division are completely eliminated from the *bada* of the temple of 11th, 12th centuries. The *bada* of those post 10th centuries' temples became *panchanga* with two storied *Jangha* with a *bandhana* within lower and upper *jangha*. As we mark, nothing of the criteria of the *bada* of post 10th century temple is seen on these Siva temples of Boudh, it seems irrelevant to place it among those later temples of Rajarani, Lingaraj, Brahmeswar etc.

The *Vimanika* crowning the niches of the elongated *Khakharamundi* consists of multiple horizontal mouldings leading to the *gandi* of the miniature shrine to be divided in to five *bhumibarandikas* and crowned by a *Khakhara mundi*. A similar fashion is developed on the *anuratha* of the *bada* at Mukteswar and Ganeswarapur. Due to the increased height of Mukteswar, there are in its *vimanikā*, the smaller *khakhara* shrine crowned by a *kalasa* flanked by a lion on either *bhumi barandikas* side similar to the *bada* of Gauri temple of 10th Century A.D. where the *anartha* is crowned by *kalasa*

and *jagrata* below the *baranda* mouldings. The pilaster, forming the tip of the star shaped design, where two slaps meet to form an angular projection has a base, a shift and a capital. The base is decorated with lower string course, consisting of multiple mouldings on the shift a female figure is carved in high relief. The remainder of the pilaster, above the figure carved in relief is decorated with scroll work and a *kirtimukha* at the top dripping festoon of pearls. The capital crowning the shaft is decorated with an attentive dwarf housed in a shallow niche. The *kanika* pilaster of the Panchayatana temple at Ganeswar (dedicated to Visnu) is decorated in the exact manner at Boudh, but the standing female figure in the shaft is encashed within a niche. These attain dwarfs are also soon on the upper *raha* niche at Mukteswara. Above all the decoration of the *bada* at Boudh combined the characters that of Mukteswar, Gauri and Ganeswarpur temples dated to 10th Century A.D. Vidya Dehija rightly placed them in one group belonging to the culmination phase of Orissan temples. The notable feature of these temple is that with the transformation of the *paga* from a *vajramundii* to

Khakhara mundi is thus complete now the *jagratas* with *kalasa* in between *crowns* the *khākharā mundi* in the place of a *vajramastaka*.

The *bada* at Boudh was full of images of Gods and Goddesses. Unfortunately some of the projecting blocks with the figures have knocked off from the pilaster and carried away. There are several detached images most important to other eastern Orissan temples possess Natarāja and Ganesa. The images of Natarāja of Siva as the Lord of dancers is a frequently occurring *motif* in the temple of Bhubaneswar. Most important among them are Vaital, Sisiresvar, Muktesvara, Rajarani and Pāpanāsini. Numerous images of Ganesa are also seen in Parasurāmeswar, Vaital, Sisireswar, Mohini and Bhāratesvar etc belonging to different periods of history of Orissan temples.

The *gandi* at Boudh is effectively demarcated from the *bada* by the *baranda* and the silhouette though containing only five *bhumis* bends in sharply near the top rather than curving gradually as an early temple. The decoration continues the vertical alignment of the *bada* with three *pagas*

on each side of the points in the star shaped plan. The Kanika or tip of each point has four *barandis* in each the 5 *bhumi*. The *barandis* are decorated primarily with *chaitya* or floral motifs as in earlier temples. Kosalesvara temple at Baidyanath, Ganeswarpur and Mukteswara have the similar pattern of *kanika* division at the *gandi*. With the coming of the 11th Century the *kanika paga* became divided into five *bhumis* having five *bhumibarandikas* in the place of four as in earlier temples. The middle *paga* consists of superimposed moulding continuing up the height of the *gandi* decorated with this scroll motif exquisitely carved so as to produce a lace like incrustation, which accentuates the vertical thrust of the *paga* by obliterating the horizontal division of the *barandis*. The *anartha paga* of Ganeswarpur and Mukteswar is decorated in a similar fashion as on the above side middle *paga* at Boudh. So far as the inside *paga* at Boudh is concerned, which is divided into uneven *barandis* by a *pheni* with *padma pista* in the place of ribbed *amla*. It is more influenced by Chhatisgarh as at Khanod and Pallani than the Orissan tradition. On the front side, just above the porch is a

sukanāsa, which supports a beautifully executed large *bho*. The construction of the *sukanāsa* is dictated here by the necessity of the plan, where the gap between the *gandi* of the shrine and the porch is to be filled. However, as in Boudh, Mukteswar also has the *bho* motifs whereas there is single *bho* motif rests in the front of the shrine at Boudh. There are four *bho* motifs on each of the four side of the *gandi* at Mukteswar. Due to the angler projection at the middle of other three sides at Boudh, it is also impossible to have *bho* motifs on every side as at Mukteswar.

The doorframe inside the porch has three hands of scrollwork, which continues across the lintel above. Donaldson observed that, the number of jambs on either side of the door is generally standardized at three initial experimental phase and from the 10th Century the scroll motifs are likewise standardized⁴⁹. This the door frame at Boudh is based purely on the tradition of Orissan temple of 10th Century A.D. *Gajalaxmi* rests on the *dvāralalāta bimba* panel and rectangular *navagraha slab* above it. As group as at *Kotitirthesvara temple* which belongs to Muktesvara group



and at Mukteswara itself. Laxmi is being bathed by two elephants seated is *lalitâsana*. Which is typical in post-9th Century temples at Bhubaneswar whereas laxmi is found seated in rigid *Padmâsana* in earlier temples.

On the earliest temples there are only eight *grahas* represented *Ketu* being absent and it is not until the 10th Century that the number is increased to nine possibly due to the popularity of the Astottari system of astrological calculation in the early period in which *Ketu* is not included. It is quite likely that Vimsottari system of calculation prescribed by Varahamihira⁵⁰ was introduced into Orissa by Somavamsis. This system incorporates *Ketu* among the *Grahas*. The earliest *Astagraha* slab was attached to the Southern *raha* niche of the

Laksmnesvara temple, now housed in Orissa State Museum; whereas the earliest *navagraha* slab appeared on the temples of Budhikomna and then at Boudh. At Budhikomna, except Rahu all eight-seated *graha* are depicted *ardhaparyanka*, where as they are in *Bhumisparasa mudra* at Boudh as at Mukteswara and Kotitirthesvar of Bhubaneswar belonging to 10th Century A.D. Rahu is reduced to head only as at Mukteswara. *Ketu* is not represented as a serpentine from the waist down but appears in *Bhumi sparsamudra*. It shows that the temples of Boudh was a later construction to Budhikomna and belong to the age of Kottitirthesvara and Mukteswara. Mukteswara is an exact duplicate of Boudh so far the *trisakha* door jam, *Gaja*

laxmi and *Nava graha* panel are concerned.

In general the door frame at Boudh is relatively flat, the jambs being nearly flush with one another rather than progressively stepped as in the architectural traditions and there are no large figures flanking the door on either side, except two Saivite *dvarapalas* housed in arched niches at the base of the jambs. Originally in earlier temples these *dvarapala* used to be housed in small niches but later on it became arched and eventually transformed first into *vajramundi* and then into a *Pidhamundi* in 11th and 12th centuries.

Above all Boudh and Mukteswara possess in common the same subdivisions at the base such as *khura*; *kumbha*, *patta*, *kani* and *Vasanta* with a leaf design in the *kumbha* linked up with a *chaitya* arch above; the same form of rounded corners and the same kind of sunken panel marking the transition between the *bada* and *sikhara*. We also find in them the same form of the nine, not eight as in earlier temples, in which Râhu has been represented by a head, but not be a half-buse figure, the same types of doorkeepers, *Alasakanyâ*, *Kirtimukha*, *chaitya* archs the dwarf with

uplifted hands as if supporting the *Sikhara* and the same form of pouncing lion-riders. The decorations consist of a peculiar type of interlacing scrolls at *Sikhara*. The pitchers carved in alto relive in its *vimâna*, a large *chaitya* arch flanked by the two saivite image holding a chain with a belt at the end dropped into a lotus medallion is to be found in those two places. The miniature images of *lakulisâ* in various *mudrâs* too occur at Boudh and Muktesvara.

Thus in the overall architectural and decorative programmes of the shrine, porch and door frame, Boudh, though sharing various motifs with Kosalan temple style is uniquely Orissan and has a fair similarity with Muktesvar, Panchayatana, Vishnu temple of Gonesvarapura, Gauri and Kottitirthesvara temples of 10th Century. A. D. So, it deserves to be regarded as a cognate member of Muktesvar group and belongs to this epoch also⁵¹.

Conclusion

It is known from the above discussion that the architectural feature of the temple is important like other notable temples of Orissa. The triple Siva temples of Boudh

possess striking similarities particularly with Muktesvar and other temples of Bhubaneswar belonging to 10th Century A.D., which were constructed under the Somavamsis patronage. It bears the idea that as these three temples are to be found on the original place of Somavamsis, the follower of Saivism. The early Somavamsis rulers might have constructed it in the same 10th Century A.D. as Muktesvar⁵². Though, it might be of two or three decades earlier than the latter. Peoples of this town and the neighbouring village worship these deities with great devotion. Festivals like Makara Sankranti, Pana Sankranti, and Sivaratri etc are regularly observed in this temple complex with much pomp and enthusiasm.

References:

1. T.V. Sairam, *Indian temple forms and foundation*, New Delhi, 1982, pp 18-19.
2. Hayasirsa Pancaratra; quoted in Haribhata Vilâsa; Agnipurana, chapter 61, vs-19-27.
3. Vidya Dehejia, *Early stone Temple of Orissa*, New Delhi, 1979, p.20.
4. *Isana Sivagurudeva paddhati and others*.
5. R.D.Banerjee, *History of Orissa*; vol-II, Calcutta, 1931, p.335.
6. K.V.S. Rajan, *Early Kalinga Art and Architecture*, New Delhi, 1984.
7. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London, 1875, p.414
8. The inscription of the Amritesvara temple at Holala of Karnataka in Madras epigraphica Report, 1914-15, P-90 also sees Stella kramisch. The Hindu Temples, Vol-I, Calcutta, 1946, pp.286-295.
9. S.K. Sarasvati, *Temples of Orissa*, in OHR, Vol-I, N-4, Bhubaneswar, 1935, pp.233, -235.
10. R.C.Majumdar, *Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1952, p.436.
11. Alice Borner & SadaSiva, Ratha Sarma, *Silpaprakas*, Leiden, 1966, p.XXVI...
12. T.P. Bhattacharya, *The canons of India Art (A study on Vasnavidya)*, Calcutta, 1986, p.227.
13. N.K.Bose, *Canons of Orissa Architecture*, Calcutta, 1932, p.5.
14. *Vide Hatigumpha inscription*, line 17.
15. N.K. Bose, *Op.cit.*, p.78.
16. S.C. Bhatt, *The Encyclopadic District Gazetters of India Eastern Zone*, vol-9, New Delhi, 1997, p.567.

17. A., Cunningham (ed), *Archaeological survey of India Report*, vol. Xiii, p.118.
18. P.K. Mishra, *Comprehensive History and Culture of Orissa*, vol-1, p.655.
19. T.E. Donaldson, *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*. Vol-I, Laiden, 1985. p.224.
20. Ibid.
21. D.R. Das, *stellate temple of Orissa, Art and culture*, off print, 1983. p.4.
22. P.K. Mishra, *comprehensive History & culture of Orissa* vol- p-656.
23. D.R. Das, *Op- cit* p.5.
24. T.E. Donaldson. *Op.cit.* p.226.
25. T.E. Donaldson *op.cit.*, p-2007.
26. R.D. Banerjee, *History of Orissa*, vol- II, Calcutta 1931 pp.355-56.
27. D.R. Das *Op. Cit*, p.6.
28. T.E. Donaldson *Op.cit.*, p.228.
29. *Ibd.*
30. K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa & Cuttack*, 1931 p.392.
31. T.E. Donaldson *op. cit*, P-224.
32. *J.B.O.R.S* Vol-XV 1929, P-67 (R.D. Banerjee, *Antiquities of Boudh state*).
33. Vidya Dehejia, *op cit*, p.149.
34. A.N. Tiwari, (ed), *New Dimension of tourism in Orissa*. Bhubaneswar -1976 pp.41-55.
35. S.K. Saraswati, *The History and culture of the Indian people*, Vol-V, p.556.
36. J.G. Williams, (ed) *Kalâdarsana, & New Delhi*, 1981, p.137.
37. *The plain of a ruined temple at Arbhor (Raigarh dist)*, noticed by N.K. Bose, intion temple Designs, & Calcutta, 1981, p.170.
38. *D.R.Das, op.cit., p.10.*
39. S.Ritti and B.R.Gopal, (ed), studies in Indian History and Culture.
40. Pramod Chandra, (ed) *Studies in Indian temple architecture*, New Delhi, 1975, p.95.
41. Pramod Chandra, (ed), *op.cit.*, p.92.
42. J.G.Williams(ed), *op.cit.*, 1981,p.137.
43. Pramod Chandra, (ed), *op.cit.*, p.95
44. R.D. Banerjee, *History of Orissa* vol-II Calcutta, 1931, P335.
45. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu*, Bombay, 1949, p.122.
46. D.R.Das, *stellate temple of Orissa, Art and culture*, 1983, p.10.
47. T.E. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, p.755.
48. T.E. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, p-799.
49. T.E. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, P-850.
50. *O.H.R.J.* vol-XI, (1962), pp.70-71.
51. K.C. Panigrahi. *op.cit.*, p-159
52. K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological remains at Bhubaneswar*, Calcutta, 1961, p-159

Ramesh Meher is the Mender, Rabindra Bhawan, Viswa Bharati, Shanti Niketan, P.O. Bolgarh, Dist.-Birbhum, West Bengal.