



Goddess Bata-Mangala Temple at Batamangala, Puri

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Introduction

The temple of Goddess Bata-Mangala is one of the important Sakta shrines of Srikshetra in Odisha. This temple is located about 5 kms to the north east of the Jagannatha temple on the right side of the main road, which lies from Puri to Bhubaneswar. It is a small temple dedicated to goddess of auspicious locally called as Bata Mangala. Generally, pilgrims come to Puri and go from Puri offer prayer to the goddess for Her blessing. According to mythological episode, once Brahma came to Srikshetra to construct the temple of Lord Vishnu, at that time, he was diverted on his way and then goddess Mangala led him to the proper way to Srikshetra. From that day Goddess Mangala has been engaged to show path to the devotees to Srikshetra(Puri).¹ Hence, She is called Marga Devi, the Goddess that protects the road into Puri.² Subsequently, this place came to be popularly known as 'Bata



Mangala'. The temple of Goddess Bata-Mangala is famous in Odisha for its religious sanctity and historicity. The present article attempts to highlight the detailed art and architecture of the temple of Bata-Mangala with religious importance.

Art and Architecture of the Temple:-

The temple of Bata-Mangala consists of two structures such as Vimana and Jagamohana. This temple is built in sand stones and bricks. It faces to west.

A. Vimana:-

The Vimana of the temple is a small *pidha deula* and its height is about 15 feet from the ground.³ The base of the structure is approximately a square of 8 feet. The *bada* of the Vimana is devoid of decorative ornamentations. There is no Parsvadevata image found in the central niche of the *bada*. So the side deities of the temple are completely absent in central niches.

The *bada* of the Vimana is surmounted by the pyramidal



superstructure, which consists of three *pidhas* and each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* in all sides.

The *mastaka* of the Vimana consists of *beki*, *ghanta* above which there is another *beki*, *amalaka sila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (chakra) and *dhvaja*.

The sanctum preserves the image of Goddess Mangala as the presiding deity of the temple. The four armed image of Devi Mangala has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal of 2 feet high. Her upper right hand holds conch, the upper left hand possesses trident and the lower two hands display *abhaya* and *varada* mudra respectively. The slab of Devi Mangala is about 2 feet in height and it is made of black-chlorite. The inner walls of the sanctum are completely plain. The temple seems to be very ancient as the *garbhagriha* is several feet below the road level.⁴

The sanctum has one doorway towards the Jagamohana. The doorjamb of the sanctum is surmounted by the *makara* headed arch. The *navagrahas* are carved on the architrave above the doorway lintel and they are all in *yogasana* posture with usual attributes in their hands. There is an image of Ganesa carved on the above the *navagraha* slab. The doorway of the sanctum is about 4½ feet in height. The figures of Vyaghra Mukhi and Simha Mukhi are installed on both sides of the doorway. They are acting as the *dvarapalikas* of the temple. The frontside outer wall of the Vimana is covered with marbles. The Vimana is thickly plastered with lime mortar.

B. Jagamohana or Mukhasala:-

The Jagamohana of the temple is a modern flat roof *deula* and its height is about 12 feet. This structure is built in 1980's. The base of the Jagamohana is approximately a square of 30

feet. The three side outer walls of the Jagamohana are completely plain. Lion, the conventional mount of goddess Mangala is noticed in the floor of the Jagamohana. The niches of the northern side inner wall of the Jagamohana contain images of Dasamahavidyas. These images are made of black-chlorite and installed in a row as the additional deities of that shrine. They are such as Kali, Tara, Bhairavi, Bhubanesvari, Chhinna Masta, Sodasi, Dhumavati, Bagala, Matangi and Kamala. The iconographic features of the above Dasamahavidya images are being mentioned as follows:

Kali: - The four armed image of goddess Kali stands on the prostrate body of Lord Siva, Who lies upon the single petalled lotus pedestal. She displays a pot of blood in upper right hand, *varada mudra* in lower right hand, *khadga* in upper left hand and cutting head in left lower hand respectively. The backside head of the image is decorated with trefoil arch. Here Devi is wearing a garland of beads (small cutting head designs) in Her body.

Tara: - The four armed image of Tara has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She holds *khadga* in left upper hand, flower in left lower hand, *agni dhupa* in upper right hand and the lower right hand is completely broken. Here Devi is sitting on the carpet of tiger skin and she wears a necklace in Her neck.

Bhairavi: - The four armed image of Devi Bhairavi has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She holds *sankha* in upper right hand, *pasa ankusa* in lower right hand, bow in upper left hand and arrow in left lower hand. She is carved in seated posture on the carpet of tiger skin. The backside of the head of Devi is decorated with flower medallion.



Bhubanesvari: - The four armed image of Devi Bhubanesvari has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She displays trident in upper right hand, *varada mudra* in lower left hand respectively. The background slab of the deity is carved with flower medallion.

Chhinna Masta: - The two armed image of Chhinna Masta has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal, which is carved with a figure of jackle in it. She holds *khadga* in right hand and cutting human head in left hand. Blood is being sprayed from Her cutting neck portion (headless deity). Two female attendant figures are carved in standing posture on both the sides of Devi Chhinna Masta.

Sodasi: - The four armed image of Sodasi has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She displays *jataka* (horoscope) in upper right hand, rosary in left upper hand, *varada mudra* in lower right hand and *abhaya mudra* in lower left hand respectively. The back side of the head of Devi is also decorated with flower medallion.

Dhumavati: - The two armed image of Dhumavati has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. Her right hand displays *abhaya mudra* while the left hand holds a *kula* (winnowing object). The pedestal of the Devi is carved with two wheels.

Bagala:- The two armed image of Bagala has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. Her right hand displays *pasa ankusa* and the left hand has kept on the mouth of an *asura*. She is sitting on the body of an asura. The backside of the head of Devi Bagala is decorated with a big flower medallion.

Matangi:- The four armed image of Matangi has been installed on the double petalled lotus

pedestal. She displays *abhaya mudra* in upper right hand, *varada mudra* in lower right hand, *jataka* (horoscope) in left lower hand. She wears a garland of flowers in Her body.

Kamala:- The four armed image of Kamala has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She holds Padma in upper right hand as well as in left upper hand, the lower right hand displays *abhaya mudra* and the lower left hand exhibits *varada mudra* respectively. The backside of the head of Devi is decorated with a flower medallion.

The western side inner wall of the Jagamohana contains an image of Mahavira Hanumana. The image of Hanumana (Mahavira) is installed on the plain pedestal. His right hand displays *gada* and the left hand holds a huge rock (Gandha Mardana Parvata) respectively.

The doorjambs of the Jagamohana are completely undecorated and it is surmounted by the trefoil *makara* headed arch. Two lions are projected on both sides of the gateway (doorway). The figure of Mahisamardini Durga is depicted on the top of the doorway (gateway). The outer frontside top wall of the Jagamohana is decorated with images of different deities. On the entrance, the top of the leftside wall of the Jagamohana is decorated with Chaturddha *murtis* such as Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana Chakra made of modern cement. They are all housed in the *caitya* shaped arch. There is a fine painting of goddess Lakshmi depicted beneath the Chaturddha *murtis*. A big conch is noticed in the left side of the Chaturddha *murtis*. The right side of the outer top wall of the Jagamohana is also decorated with Dasamahavidya figures of the modern cement works. They are housed in the *chaitya* shaped



arch and also depicted with paintings. All the Dasamahavidya figures possess as usual attributes in their hands. Beneath these figures, there is a painting of Durga seated on lion. She holds trident, lotus flower, sword, chakra etc. in Her hands.

Date of the Temple :

There is no authentic evidence with regard to the exact date of the construction period of the temple of Goddess Bata-Mangala. On the basis of the architectural features, the construction period of the present temple of Bata Mangala can be tentatively assigned to the 16th century A.D.

Conclusion :

Thus, it is known from the above discussion that the temple of Goddess Bata-Mangala is an important Sakta shrine of Srikshetra in Odisha. The architectural pattern of the Bata-Mangala temple has no significance like other notable temples of Odisha but from the religious point of view, the shrine is famous in Odisha. This temple preserves good specimens of the sculptures of both the medieval and modern periods. The iconographic features of all the

Dasamahavidya images enshrined inside the Jagamohana of the temple indicates the workmanship of the Odishan artists of the modern period. All the devotees of the Hindu pantheon offer prayer to Goddess Mangala when they come from Puri and go to Puri for their safe journey. Though the temple of goddess Mangala does not show any novelty in architecture but it occupies a prominent place in the cultural history of Odisha.

References :

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2. R.C. Mishra, Purusottama Kshetra (A Study on Jagannatha Culture), Puri, 2003, p.311.
3. H.H.Bahinipati, "Bata Mangala", in B.Mishra (Ed.), Srikshetrara Deva Devi (Odia), Vol-1, Puri, 2003, p.18.
4. P.K.Devi & R.Acharya, op.cit., p.353.

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