

ORISSA AND HER REMAINS—
ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL.
(DISTRICT PURI.)

Handwritten:
A. S. S.
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(WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE J. G. WOODROFFE.)

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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CHAPTER III.

CAVE TEMPLES.

Since the introduction of the tooth-relic into Orissa, we notice three following periods of architectural growth.

- (1). The Buddhist and Jain period.
- (2). The Saiva period.
- (3). The Vaishnava and Saurya peiod.

The Buddhist and Jain period is characterised by cave temples. The Buddhist influence is noticed from the 5th cent. B. C., down to the 5th or 6th cent. A. D., the Saiva from the 5th or 6th cent. A. D., to the 12th cent. A. D., and the Vaishnava from the 12th cent. A. D., downwards.

The history of the caves is wrapt up in obscurity, and the historians have made many useless attempts to lift the veil from this dim and forgotten past.

The group of caves of this part of India has no very intimate connection with those of the western part. The genesis and history of these caves are so very obscure that one is sure to be led astray in solving the difficult problem of their chronology. Happily for us, the inscription in the *Hati Gümpha* throws a great flood of light on this dark and murky corner of Orissan history. The latest date that we may at all

probable date for the inscription."* They add that "with his (of Asoka) reign the fashion of chiselling cells out of the living rock commenced, and was continued with continually increasing magnificence, and elaboration for nearly 100 years after his time".†

It is stated in the 16th line of this inscription that the king "caused to be constructed subterranean chambers, caves containing a temple and pillars". From this we deduce that there are caves in the locality as old as the *Hati Gümpha*, although it cannot be ascertained accurately which of the neighbouring caves are so meant; we can also safely conclude that there must have been older caves dated prior to "those containing a chaitya temple and pillars."

Among the Khandagiri caves the *Satghara* or *Satbakhra*, *Navamüni*, and *Ananta* are the most important. The first two bear evident traces of Jain influence, the latter, of *Baüddha*. The *Satbakhra* cave had a pillared verandah projecting in front with seven intercolumniations which do not exist now. It consists of two caves separated by a thin wall; they are otherwise called the *Trisula*, or *Bärbhüji* caves. The *Satghara* cave is noted for the figures of Jain Tirthankaras with their characteristic symbols or *läncchhanas* sculptured on the antechamber walls of the southern portion. I give below the

* Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples of India* p. 67.

† *Ibid*, p. 68.

broken ; it is probably a deer. This is a figure of *Santinath* the 16th Tirthankar.

(17) It is a *Dhyani* figure ; top figures are those of scroll ; the face of the symbol is broken ; it is probably a sheep ; the figure is that of *Künthanath*, the 17th Tirthankar.

(18) Similar to (15) ; the symbol is a fish. The figure cannot be identified, and perhaps is imaginary as no Tirthankar has the fish as his symbol.

(19) It is a *Dhyani* figure ; top figures are lotuses ; the symbol is a vase or water jar, and hence it represents *Mallinath*, the 17th Tirthankar.

(20) This is a *Dhyani* figure similar to (15) ; the symbol is an imaginary plant, and hence it represents *Naminath*, the 21st Tirthankar.

(21) A *Dhyani* figure similar to (15) ; the symbol is a tortoise, and hence it represents *Münisübratanath*, the 20th Tirthankar.

(22) This is a *Dhyani* figure ; top figures are those of nymphs ; the symbol is a conchshell, flanked by peacocks, and hence represents *Neminath*, the 22nd Tirthankar.

(23) This is a nude standing figure ; top figures are lotuses ; two nymphs are represented as holding a pitcher about to pour water over the head of the Tirthankar. The symbol is a rhinoceros. This figure represents *Sreansanath*, the 11th Tirthankar.

I cannot pass on to the next temple without expressing the sense of doubt naturally raised in my mind regarding the identity of the temple of Bhaskaresvara. I have accidentally come across the following lines in the Brahma Puranam regarding Bhaskaresvara.

Identity of the temple.

“तस्मिन् क्षेत्रवरे लिङ्गं भास्करेश्वर सङ्गितं
पश्यति ये तु तं देवं स्नात्वाकुण्डे महेश्वरं
आदित्ये नाञ्जितं पूर्वं देवदेवं त्रिलोचनं
सर्वपाप विनिर्मुक्ता विमानवरमास्थिताः ॥”

77th Sloka, 41st Chapter.

In the above lines it is enjoined that the *Lingam* of Bhaskaresvara, or the Lord of the solar god, is to be worshipped after bathing in the *kiinda* or spring near at hand ; but there is no *kiinda* in the vicinity of the temple ; moreover, it is locally called by the name of Meghesvara. The reason why it is so called is inexplicable ; such reversal of nomenclature of the temples very close to each other is rarely expected from local traditions which are unerring in these respects ; moreover, the name has some significance. Meghesvara means, the Lord of the clouds ; the *lingam* being a huge one may appropriately be styled the god of the clouds floating high up in the air.

The temple of Meghesvara, or the Lord of the clouds, has

not been noticed by Dr. Mitra ; it is a few hundred feet to the east of the temple of Bhaskaresvara. This temple is noted for an inscription which has been published in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol VI.

**Meghesvara
Temple.**

It faces the west unlike the usual type of temples, and consists of the *vimāna* and *Jagamohana* standing on a spacious paved quadrangle enclosed by a compound wall of laterite capped by a plain coping. There are signs to indicate that there was probably a wooden Bhogamandapa in front ; the stone structure was not probably built. There is a small pillar in front of the Jagamohana called the *Vrishā Stambha*, or the bull pillar ; the *brisha* or bull surmounting the pillar is lying scattered in a neglected state on the south side of the compound. The compound has a big tank to its north mentioned in the inscription to be referred to later on. The compound wall shows recesses by reason of its being doubled over. The dimensions of the quadrangle are given below.

The maximum inside length (north to south)	...	70'- 2"
The minimum ,, ,, ,,	...	63'- 7"
The maximum ,, ,, (east to west)	...	161'- 5"
The minimum ,, ,, ,,	...	156'- 6"

The *Vimāna* and the *Jagamohana* have no plinth ; they start from the pavement or *tala pattana*. The *bāda* of the *vimāna* which is a *saptaratha dewl* is 15'-10" high ; both the upper

described, the *Vimana*, of *Bogdâkandâ*, both coarse and fine-grained. The Nava-graha architrave over the doorway of the sanctum is partially exposed to view. The western face of the *Vimana*, now hidden, is complete in all its details, that of the *Jagamohana* is not so ; this is due to its being hastily finished.

The sculpture of *Meghesvara* is very elegant and cannot be charged with the defect of over-decorated ugliness. The **The Sculpture of Meghesvara.** statuettes in the recesses are very nice and stand in graceful poses. Their expressions are very natural. The *dâli* figures contain animal insets ; this is a peculiarity of its sculpture. The zoology of the temple sculpture is rich and varied. Among others the following animals are seen represented :—rhinoceros, stag, monkey, peacock. The sides of the pilasters show various scenes from animal life. The sculpture representing foliage and floriage is rather poor ; beaded tassels are very sparing. Another peculiarity of this temple is that indecent figures are not met with as usual in Orissan temples. As a good specimen of sculpture, the peacock of *Kartika*, the war-god, placed in the central niche of the eastern wall of the *Vimāna* may be referred to.

From an inscription* incised on a slab of stone now stuck on the western compound wall of the temple of *Ananta Vasudeva*, the date of construction of the temple of *Meghesvara*

Epigraphia Indica, Vol. VI. (1900-01), p. 199.