



UMA-MAHESHWAR AND SAPTAMATRIKA TEMPLE ART & SCULPTURE OF DHABLESWAR MANDIR AT BELKHANDI IN KALAHANDI OF ODISHA

Arts

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ABSTRACT

Belkhandi Uma Maheswar temple is situated in Kalahandi district on the confluence of the river Tel and Uttai. It seems that the temple was built between 6th to 11th century and seems to have been built by Somabanshi king. The height of the temple is 80 feet, length is 33 and width is 18 feet. The outer wall of the temple has carved idols of Kartikeya on the west, Devi Parbhathi on the north and Shri Ganesh on the south. Every where there is a Shakti Peetha near the Shiva temple, similarly here also there is a Chandi temple on the south-east side in front of the Dhableswar temple huge stones have been used built this temple. Holes have been made in the stones and copper rods have been inserted to join them. This is an example of the fine craftsmanship of that time.

KEYWORDS

UMA-maheshwar, Parvati Saptamatrika, Dhableswar, Shakti, Vahanas

In 1946, a philosophical excavation was conducted in Kalahandi by historian Kedar Nath Mahapatra on behalf of the administration. From that excavation many statues were unearthed, among them Uma Maheshwar and Saptamatrika and many broken sculptures were found. From the Saptmaatrika found in Belkhandi, it is clear that Tantra Vidya was prevalent during the time of Somvanshi kings. There are similarities between the Saptamatrika of Jajpur and Puri district with the Saptamatrika statues found in Belkhandi. The people who earlier lived near the Tel River and Mahanadi started Shakti worship. According to historians, the worship of Stambheshwari and Saptamatrika was started in this temple for the worship of Mataparbati. Due to the flood in the river, many sculptures were washed away into the river. There is a museum in Bhawanipatna, named Manikyapuri, the statues found in Belkhandi were preserved there. Among all the statues, the fragmented statues of Uma-Maheshwar and Saptmaatrika are attractive and most important. There are 3 statues of Uma Maheshwar in the Manikyapuri Museum. According to historians, one of the statues is from the 9th-10th century and the other 2 statue are from the 7th to 8th centuries. The most eye-catching thing is the Urdhalingesvara sculpture depicting the Vajroli Tantra.

Uma-Maheswar symbolized the union of divine couple Shiva and Parvati. Shiva is depicted in male form manifested as Purusha, while Parvati as the goddess is depicted as female nature Prakruti. This Devin union of Purusha and Prakruti gives birth to the Sristhi or universe. Shiva and Parvati are often represented sitting face to face (the sammukha mudra). They can also be seen in various postures connoting love and desire such as embracing each other in the Alingana pose. Shiva in some representations touches and caresses Parvati's breasts (the Kuca-sparsa pose) or holds her in his lap (Atikarohana form). The images are usually shown seated over a throne, and their respective Vahanas (vehicles), Shiva's bull, and Parvati's lion, are shown crouched beneath the throne, with the pendant legs of each deity kept above their respective Vahanas. The sculptures are richly decorated, and the couple are shown wearing heavy jewellery, intricately weaved garments, etc. In the South Indian version of the images, Parvati's lion is often substituted with an alligator, associated with an earlier incarnation of the goddess.

The sculpture of Uma Maheshwar which we found near Belkhandi seems to have been made between the 6th and 8th centuries. Fortunately, we got the idol in good condition. The Shiva tantric masters alias yogis of Mattamayura tantric Saivism discovered yogi spiritual practice of rechanneling sexual energy. Which was named as 'Vajroli' later. In Vajroli Mudra the muscles of the male organ and lower urinary tract are contracted, redirecting sexual energy upwards. It is learn from the people nearby that the Urdhalingeswar statue of belkhandi is from the tantric period so idol must have been installed for Tantra Sadhana. In this statue their respective vehicle Nandi and Lion can also be seen and both of their legs are on the top of their vehicles. The Nandi is looking up while lion is looking down. More emphasis has been given to Umamaheshwar in this statue. In the idol not only Uma-maheswar but many gods and goddesses can be seen as Parswadeva-devi, it shown emphasis to a spiritual environment.

Uma maheswar are depicting Shantam Rasha which symbolises peace. In this idol, lord shiva has four hands, in one hand he is holding a Damru, in the other hand he is holding a Trishul, with one hand he is blessing and the other hand is on Parvati's breast. Uma Maheshwara is sitting on a lotus in this statue.

The statues of Sapta Matrikas kept in the Manikyapuri Museum are broken statues. These statues must have been installed for Tantra Sadhana at the temple. According to Shaktism Saptmaatrika is the seven forms of Parvati which she assumed to fight with demons and killing all of them. According to other scholars they are Shiva goddess they are also connected with the warrior God Kartikeya. Sapta Matrikas have received seven types of energy from seven Gods They are associated with these gods as their energies (Shaktis). Brahmani emerged from Brahma, Vaishnavi from Vishnu, Maheshvari from Shiva, Indrani from Indra, Kaumari from Kartikeya, Varahi from Varaha and Chamunda from Chandi. And additionals are Narasimhi from Narasimha and Vinayaki from Ganesha.

With a luminous golden body and four gracious faces, this goddess embodies divine beauty. She graciously holds the Sula in her back left hand and the Aksha Maala in her front left, while her front right hand offers blessings in the Abhaya pose and her front left hand bestows mercy in the Varada pose. Seated serenely upon a vibrant red lotus, she embodies elegance. The lotus also serves as her emblem, proudly displayed on her banner. Adorned in a radiant orange-yellow garment, her majestic presence is further enhanced by the exquisite adornments on her head. Sheltered beneath the soothing canopy of a tree, her tranquil ambience is a sight to behold. This is the revered description of her divine presence, as depicted in sacred texts. Devi Maheshwari is characterized by her serene white complexion and four elegant arms. Two hands are posed in the Abhaya and Varada mudras, while the other two hands carry the sutra, damaru, sula, and ghanta. Her mount is the bull. As described in the Vishnu Dharmotra, she has five faces, three eyes, and wears a crescent moon on her crown. Kumari, the female embodiment of Lord Subrahmanya, is depicted with a vibrant yellow complexion.

She possesses four hands, holding S akti, Dhvaja, Danda, Dhanush, Bana, Ghanta, Padma, Patra and Parasu while her remaining two hands are posed in the Abhaya and Varada mudras. Her mount, like that of Kumara, is the peacock, which also serves as the emblem on her banner. According to legend, she is bound with a serpent or rides under an Ashoka tree, symbolizing victory.

Vaishnavi's majestic form is characterized by her lovely face, beautiful breasts, and dark complexion. Her enchanting eyes sparkle with divine beauty. She adorns a vibrant yellow garment and her hands are adorned with exquisite ornaments reminiscent of Vishnu's majesty. Her banner proudly displays the emblem of her power. Seated beneath a tree, as described in the Devipurana, Vaishnavi is often depicted with a serene forehead, carrying the Sudarshana Chakra and wearing the revered Vishnu garland, the Vanamali.

The goddess is characterized by her boar-like face and storm cloud-

Parswa deva devi can shows to worshipping the couple. In the statue

colored complexion, giving her a dark hue. A garland on her head and coral ornaments completes her attire. She wears the Kundala and Keyura, and sits beneath a tree. The elephant is both her Vahana and the emblem on her banner. As described in the Vishnu Dharmotra, a big belly is a notable attribute.

Indirani's majestic form is characterized by three eyes and four arms. Her upper hands graciously hold the Vajra and Shakti while her lower hands are posed in the Abhaya and Varada mudras. The goddess radiates elegance, with a vibrant red complexion and a majestic Kirita Mukuta adorning her head. Her body is resplendent in red, and she is lavishly ornamented. The elephant proudly serves as her emblem, featured on her banner. Her abode is situated under the Kalpa tree. According to the Devi Purana, Indrani carries the Ankusha and Vajra, and is described as having two eyes, differing from the Vishnu Dharmatra's depiction of her with a thousand eyes. Furthermore, the latter text describes her as holding a lotus in one of her hands. With four powerful arms and three wise eyes, the goddess shines in a vibrant red hue. Her lush, thick hair flows upwards, smooth and bristle-free. One hand wields a skull, while another holds a sword, and her remaining hands convey reassurance and benevolence through the Abhaya and Varada Mudras. Draped in a skull garland, echoing Shiva's iconic style, she sits majestically. Clad in a tiger skin, the goddess resides under a fig tree. Her seat is eerily described as the dead body of a human being. Her countenance is fierce, featuring powerful tusks, and her body is disturbingly gaunt. With ten hands and hollow eyes, her belly seems vacant. She grasps multiple items in her hands; Musala, Kavacha, Bana, Ankusha, Khadga, Khetaka, Dhanush, Danda and Parsu. The Saptmaatrika of Belkhandi has four arms except Chamunda Devi. The upper two hands of these goddesses are holding weapons for war while in their left hands they are holding children and in their right hands they are giving blessings. This form of Saptmatika in which she is carrying weapons as well as children is one of the most beautiful forms of the Goddess. Which symbolize both war and mother hood. When a woman becomes a mother, she becomes complete, she gets strength and power, only then she can utilize her full potential. In order to worship the seven powers of those seven goddesses and to get the energy of those seven powers with the help of Tantras, Saptmaatrika must have been settled in Belkhandi. There is information that there will be a hexagonal site or a circular site in front of the Dhableswar temple, in which Saptamatrika would have been installed in seven directions.

CONCLUSION

To conclude we can say that the Dhableswar temple was built here during the reign of the Samvanshi kings. During the excavation, Uma Maheshwar, Saptamatrika and many Divine god and goddess were found here. The presence of Saptmaatrikas shows that Tantra Sadhna was practised here. The Uma Maheshwara Urdha Linga idol adds more importance to this historical place. With the presence of Goddess Chamundi along with Shiva, Shakti has been created with Shiva. When illuminated, the areas surrounding Matrigan and Saktigan reveal Belkhandi as a sacred Peetha of Shiva and Shakti. If more excavation and research is done here with the help of the administration, and then we may come to know about more historical sculpture from this holy place.

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