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TEMPLE ART OF ODISHA: A STUDY OF THE DIVINE AND SEMI-DIVINE HUMAN FIGURES

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ABSTRACT

Divine beings are sacred, holy, or godly, and therefore transcend human boundaries. They have ultimate power, authority, and control. Divine beings are worshipped as gods and goddesses. The depiction of divine being is canonical, and breaking the law is banal. Semi-divine refers to something or someone who possesses a partial or mixed divine essence. In mythology, semi-divine refers to demigods or heroes who are the offspring of gods or gifted individuals. Semi-divine images play an important role in communicating spiritual and philosophical ideas in Odishan temple art. Images of demigods, heroes, and mythical figures, such as Yaksa, Kinnara, Gandharva, Apsara, Naga/Nagi, and Gana, are considered semi-divine. Semi-dines are revered as the guardians and protectors of the temple and its believers from risks. These figures are frequently used as decorative motifs, covering the temples' walls and pillars to enhance their aesthetic appeal. The temples' holy and semi-divine icons serve as visual representations of spiritual and philosophical ideas, inspiring devotion, contemplation, and artistic expression. Understanding these notions will help one better understand the symbols, motifs, and tales found in diverse creative works. Such images are frequently incorporate regional artistic styles, materials, and techniques, demonstrating the breadth of Indian art and culture.

Keywords: Temple, Art, Odishan, Divine, Semi-Divine

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1. INTRODUCTION

The three most important Indian temple styles are Nagara, Vesra, and Dravida. The Nagara temple exemplifies the earliest architectural style. The Nagara style, an innovation during the imperial Gupta period, became the diagnostic attribute for the Odishan style of temple construction [1]. The architectural school's manifestation is also known as the Kalingan style, which is named after a historical territorial unit in Odisha. An inscription from 1235 CE uncovered on the front hall of the Amritesvara temple in Holal, Bellary, Karnataka, supports Kalinga as one of India's principal temple styles [2]. However, the Kalingan and Nagara orders include curved spires and square layouts with projecting angles. Thus, the Kalingan order should be regarded as a subset of the Nagara style [3].

Odisha witnessed a continuous human effort in the field of temple construction for around 700 years, beginning around the 6th century CE and ending around the 13th century CE, and has revealed common features. Its development may be traced via three major, separate stages: the formative phase (7th to 9th century CE), the transitional phase (10th century CE), and the mature phase (11th to 13th century CE). The tremendous religious and cultural resurgence that

began with the political period of Sailodbhavas, accelerated under the Bhaumakaras and Somavamsis, and peaked during the Ganga period left the Kalinga school of temple art in full swing. Odisha's temple art shows a distinct evolutionary history from Parasuramesvara to the Lingaraj temples in Bhubaneswar, culminating in the massive Sun Temple at Konark. However, the activities continued even during the Suryavamsi-Gajapati period, however on a very limited and subsistence basis.

The increased interest in the study of Odishan temple art may strengthen the availability of architectural guidance such as the Bhubanapradipa [4] and Silpa Prakasa [5]. The different components of the Odishan temples are called using local terminology and are connected to the human body, indicating that the temple was designed as a miniature replica of Prajapati [6]. Bhubanapradipa specifies three different types of Odishan temples: rekha, pidha, and khakhara. Another gaudiya type also mentioned. When joined, the rekha and pidha form a coherent architectural system. The rekha architectural style is distinguished by a sanctum with a curved spire, as well as a pidha-deul, or jagamohana, or porch with stepped pyramidal roof. However, within a fully mature temple, two further buildings, nata-manira and bhoga-mandapa, were added in front of the jagamohana along the same axis. In earlier temples, the jagamohana was initially missed but was eventually added in front of the temple along the same axis. The khakhara order is defined by its semi-cylindrical vaulted roof, which is most likely originated from the early chaitya halls [7], it resembles a modified survival of the primitive hut with a cylindrical roof [8].

The vertical partition into four portions is a defining characteristic of the three different types of Odishan temples. The architectural parts of the construction include the pista, or platform found in more evolved temples, the bada, or wall component, the gandi, which depicts the body portion, and the mastaka, which represents the finial. Odishan temples are famous for their astylar order, which lacks free-standing pillars. Instead, the design uses engaged pillars or pilasters as an integral component. Therefore, the basic elements of the porch and sanctum are the same, except that the porch or jagamohana has an extra component called the ghanta, a bell-shaped structure that is placed at the mastaka between the amlaka and beki. The entry to the sanctuary is a single, elaborately adorned doorway with no windows. However, in the example of Jagamohana, which had three windowed entrances in older temples and one entry in early temples.

Offset projections divide the exterior plans of the rekha and pidha deuls. These rekha temple projections, called pagas or rathas, run vertically up the building while the inner chamber stays the same. These projections "produce an effctive play of light and shade" [9]. The tri-ratha projection technique was used in the construction of early temples. However, as the tri-ratha develops, it becomes a pancha-ratha, with the central projections being raha, the middle being anartha, and the corner being kanika. Different ornamentation is used to adorn even the anuraha, or spaces, between these projections. In the 12th century CE, the pratiratha was incorporated into the sapta-ratha design. All of these projections created a beautiful appearance for the temple. Several large decorative elements from different periods in the history of temple art were used to decorate at the centre or raha projections.

The motifs and construction of the Odishan temple are closely connected. When speaking about the significance of temple ornamentation, the Silpa Prakash stated that, "without making ornamental work the temple will remain mediocre. That temple, in which every part is covered with decorations, is always called the highest type. The temple which shorn of any decoration is definitely the lowest type" [10]. As Fergusson correctly noted when discussing the artistic prowess of Odishan temple builders, "It is perhaps, not an exaggeration to say that if it would take a sum say a lakh of rupees or pounds to erect such a building as this, Lingaraj temple, Bhubaneswar, it would take three lakhs to carve it as this one is carved" [11]. Kramrish observes, "the coherence of Orissan monumental shape is enriched by its carvings; no where else in India are the walls of the temple as intimately connected with their sculptures. The temple here is a work of monumental sculpture of which the single carvings form the intricate surface" [12]. In addition to enhancing the building's aesthetics, these ornamental elements also function as fortunate symbols that shield the temple from imagined or actual dangers. Actually, none of the carvings are purely ornamental; rather, each one has an image or symbol with a specific meaning symbol [13].

In Odisha, a temple is a unified entity made up of both religious and secular architectural and sculpture elements as well as a range of figurative and abstract ornamentation. The plan and elevation of the temples in Odisha are noteworthy. Odishan temples are unique in that, although the façade is lavishly decorated with cult icons, religious scenes, animal and floral motifs, scrollwork, and designs, as well as a variety of architectonic forms and human figures, including semi-divine imagery, the interior walls remain plain. In the larger decorative scheme, every ornamental motif on the Odishan temple is auspicious and serves to both embellish and safeguard the shrine. Following a similar evolutionary process to

that of construction, the history of the ornamental motifs in the Odishan temple is closely linked to the development of architecture. A careful examination shows that these motifs were originally employed either to create chambers for the positioning of celestial figures or as horizontal or vertical lines, without any attempt to display them independently for the sake of ornamentation. However, the quantity of decorations increased over time; they were systematically incorporated into the structure, which is an important part of the composition. In actuality, following a time of hesitancy, the Odishan artisans were able to create an orderly arrangement of designs on the temple's body.

2. DIVINE FIGURES

In the Odishan temple, the iconography has undergone a discernible evolution, even though it still conforms to canonical and generally recognized norms for the representation of divine persons. The venerated Goddess, along with her entourages, and the heavenly deities Siva and Visnu, are housed within the sanctum of Odishan temples, giving the temple walls vitality. An intricate temple devoted to the worship of Surya, the Sun deity, was a noteworthy example of the great significance of this reverence. It is well known that in many mythical traditions, goddesses often appear as the saktis or consorts of male deities. But in Brahminism, the great Goddess herself has been the most important divinity. In the epics and Puranas, the goddess Durga is depicted as the ferocious embodiment of Kali, the all-devouring goddess. She incorporated several deities from different tribal or village backgrounds, which is why she is given so many different names. Her many facets have also been portrayed in temples, either by etching or installation. Throughout the history of temple art in Odisha, representations of saptamatrikas have been extremely popular. Observing such images, Banerjea writes, “the Orissan artists has skillfully produced one of the most terror-striking image, not a lifeless fetish of uncultured people, but a concrete representation of the esoteric symbolism underlying one aspect of the Tantric faith”[14].

A seated Siva in a Siva/Parvati panel, Ardhanarisvara, Nataraja, Harihara, Ekapada, Virabhadra, Bhairava, and Lakulisa are just a few of the various representations of Siva found in the early Odishan temples. In all of these depictions, Siva is shown with urdhva linga or erectd phallus (Fig.1). It seems that later temples stopped following this practice. The raha pagas' niches display the parsvadevata, a manifestation of the secondary god. The niches of early Siva temples show Kartikeya on the back or west, and the Siva parivara or family, Ganesha, and either Parvati or Mahisamardini. It is believed that the Pasupata sect of Saivism first appeared in Odisha in the 6th or 7th century CE [15]. Lakulisa was shown in the Saiva temples in Odisha as a result of this religious group's growing popularity. He is depicted prominently in the early temples, although his importance seems to have faded on later temples. In this illustration, Lakulisa is shown seated on a double-petaled lotus in the Yogic pose, carrying his attribute, the lakuta, or staff, on his left shoulder.

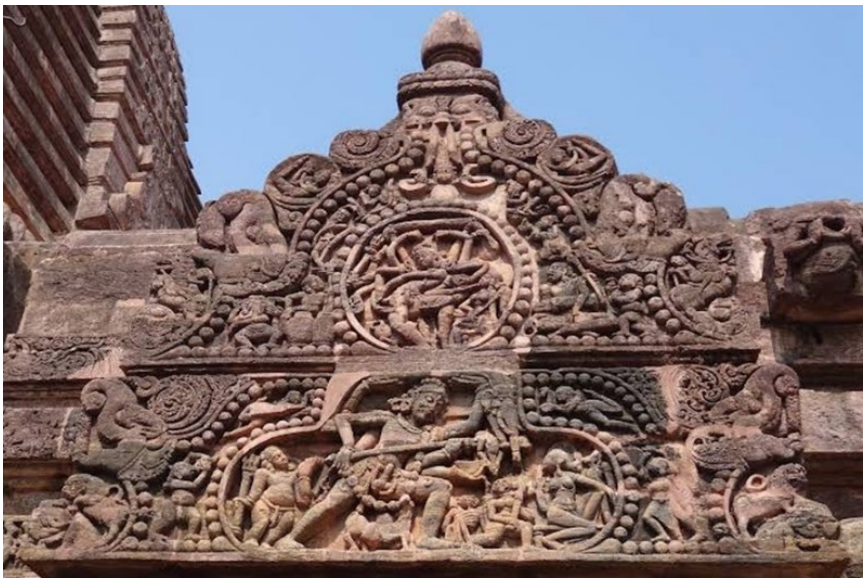

Figure 1 Siva in Urdhva Linga, Madhukesvara Temple. Mukhalingam, Early Grou

Similar to this, sculptures of Varaha, Narasimha, and Trivikrama of Visnu are usually found in Visnu temples, whereas the three separate manifestations of the same god are known as parsvadevatas in Sakta or Surya temples. This iconographic approach permeates every step of the temple construction process in Odisha. Although there were a few cases where they were carved on location after the temple had been constructed, the parsvadevatas were often carved out of separate large slabs of stone and placed into the niches.

There is some little iconographic progression in the parsvadevata illustrations. The images of Ganesha are missing his mouse in the early phases, but it reappears in later temples. Similarly, older representations of Kartikeya show the god carrying simply his peacock, whereas later images include the cock. When it comes to Parvati, older depictions show her clutching a ketaka flower, but later ones show her holding a lotus. An earlier version of the Mahisamardini images had the devil with a human body and a buffalo head on top. However, in later images, the demon is depicted in its full animal form, with a human demon emerging from the creature's severed head.

The other deities of the Brahmanical tradition are still important in religious events, though their functions are less substantial. The conception of Ganga and Yamuna figures in the door jambs is to “purify the devotee of all the earthly taints”[16]. People regarded them as symbols of fertility and wealth. They also have to do with the Indian tradition of providing water to guests before they enter the house. Over time, they became known as the most significant and fortunate figures to be carved into door frames as decorations. The twin images of the deities Ganga on her mount makara and Yamuna on her tortoise flank the entrance to the jagamohana or shrine in all early Odishan temples.

The Vedic pantheon included eight deities known as asta-dikpalas, who are responsible for defending the eight cardinal directions. The presentation of the dikpalas in their proper placements was not uniform in the early temples. However, the developed temples are arranged based on their various orientations, as well as their associated features and mounts. The Rajarani temple in Bhubaneswar is known for hosting the finest dikpalas.

The architrave above the door lintel of temples depicts a sequence of either eight or nine grahas, or planets, who are worshipped as deities. According to Brahmanical sects, the act of propitiating graha is thought to result in the annihilation of evil energies. The graha slabs also follow a historical trend. The panels in the early phase temples depict only eight grahas: Ravi, Soma, Mangala, Budha, Brihaspati, Sukra, and Rahu. During the early stage, graha slabs may be found in all temples, with the exception of the Vaital and Sisiresvara temples at Bhubaneswar. However, in later temples from the 10th century onwards, the number of grahas increased to nine with the addition of Ketu. Despite the fact that Indians were already familiar with the notion of navagraha in the 6th century CE, explaining the appearance of eight grahas in early temples remains difficult. Each graha is connected with distinct traits, energies, and domains. Their movements and positions are thought to influence human matters, such as birth, life, and death. These grahas symbolise the universe's complex and interwoven character, emphasising the Brahmanical view of the cosmos as a complicated web of energy and forces. The Silpa Prakasa offers no information on these grahas.

3. SEMI-DIVINE FIGURES

Semi-divine figures are a common component in temple art. These figures represent a complex blend of human and divine features, frequently possessing supernatural abilities but remaining submissive to the primary deities. Semi-divine beings such as yaksa, kinnara, gandharva, apsara, gana, and naga/nagi are frequently shown as the gods and goddesses' attendants or companions in Odishan temple art. These entities are thought to have amazing skills such as shape-shifting or flight, and they are frequently connected with certain parts of nature, such as fertility or protection. The following are some of the most prominent personalities.

3.1. VIDYADHARAS

The vidyadharas, or wisdom-holders, are referred to as “dwellers of the highest peaks of Himalayas” [17]. People refer to them as upa-devas, which means ‘half-gods’. They are also skilled at magic and work as servants, carrying garlands and throwing flowers. They possess celestial knowledge and appear to float through the air without wings. “These aerial beings bear any shape at will” [18] and possess super-human abilities. In the context of temple construction, the figure that is typically seen in Chalukyan temples is often seen to be attached exclusively to the walls. An early example of vidyadhara in Odishan art can be seen in the Udaygiri Jain cave near Bhubaneswar.

Vidyadharas, who are portrayed as couples, are common in Odishan temples, mostly in the temples of first phase but even in later temples. Such figures decorated with a wide variety of adornments, including as pearl bands, beaded necklaces, and armlets, which are applied all over their bodies. The hairdo is curly, with tightly twisted strands that end in tiny curls that fall down the shoulders and back. The drapery symbolises the movement of vidyadharas in the air by having a narrow piece of fabric surrounding the waist and a smaller piece hanging in midair. It is frequently noted that in the context of early phase temples, they are usually depicted either inside or next to the chaitya motif. Furthermore, these figures may be seen standing out at the entrance portal and the upper portions of the Bada's raha niche jambs. On the long wings of the chaitya medallions that adorn the vajra-mastaka ornamentation (Fig.2). To simulate support for the entablature above, they usually extend their inner arm, and to gain mechanical advantage, they raise their inner leg onto the medallion, while the outer arm usually stays at the hip.

3.2. KINNARAS

One can see the fabled kinnara figures floating in midair. They look like two travelling gay couples who are famous for their musical instrument performances. These kinnaras are distinguished by their bird-like legs and wings, as well as their floriated tail. Their bodies resemble those of humans, and occasionally “horse heads”[19]. The Hellenistic world provided them with its artistic inspiration, “the inclusion of the wings to the human body of Kinnaras was done in the Asiatic west”[20]. Since ancient times, these personalities have been a fascinating and recurrent subject. Kinnaras are seen in early Indian art. Hindus and Buddhists credited such images with musical ability [21]. They are depicted carrying musical instruments and "singing the praise of gods"[22] in most of the images. The temples in the early Chalukyan art at Aihole have exquisite representations of these figures. The kinnara figures are surrounded by lotus bands, and their bodies splash into plant life [23]. The gandharvas and kinnaras form a celestial group in Kubera's paradise.

These creatures also “enchanted by looking at the graceful postures of women” [24]. In the Odishan temples of early phase such figures appear flanking the vajra-mastaka motifs [25]. The nature of kinnaras is to help the human beings. They “preside over the fertility and prosperity” [26] functions.

3.3. YAKSAS

The yaksas are considered to be folk gods [27]. The yaksa imagery identifiable by their pot-bellied appearance and muscular features. In early mediaeval temples, they are shown holding a creeper that grows out of their navels [28]. They act as the guardian of the mineral resources [29] and considered as the “supernatural beings that are benevolent and ineffective” [30]. They usually show up on the lintels, door jambs, or vajra-mastaka design (See Fig.2) of early phase Odishan temples.

3.4. GANDHARVAS AND APSARAS

One common element seen in both Gupta and post-Gupta art styles is the incorporation of celestial gandharvas and apsaras, who act as performers for the gods [31]. The apsaras, also called nymphs, perform heavenly dances on the temple grounds, displaying their skills to honour its splendour. They are accompanied by their male counterparts, the gandharvas, who have come down from heaven and are highly skilled in all sixty-four performing arts. The importance of gandharvas and apsaras as fertility-related deities is emphasised in the Satapatha Brahmana [32]. The gandharvas are linked to Soma, the sacred elixir of life, which they assiduously guard.

It is said that the apsaras and gandharvas have limitless sexual potential and are especially attracted to women [33]. They take the foetus and use love, booze, and video games to manipulate the person's psyche [34]. The gandharvas are skilled musicians and vocalists who impart musical knowledge in later mythology [35]. They are associated with the gods' musicians, the kinnaras, kampurusas, and caranas. Because they have both good and bad luck emblems, gandharvas and apsaras are considered lucky in temple art. In early Odishan temples, they are typically associated with the vajra-mastaka pattern of raha paga (See Fig.2).

Figure 2 Vajramastaka design, Parasuramesvara temple, Bhubaneswar

3.5. FIGURES FROM MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES

The temple walls tell stories that are both religiously significant and universally fascinating. They are regarded as orthodox because they demonstrate how the Brahmins appropriated folktales and exploited them to propagate moral and religious lessons.

In the early phase temples, religious representations in storytelling genres are very prevalent. These tales can be seen along the vertical surface of the jagamohna's sloping roof, inside the baranda recess and on the lintels above the doorways or niches. Apart from the Saivites and Vaishnavites, the other representations feature scenes from the ancient Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Rama's adept shooting of seven trees, the fierce battle between Bali and Sugriva, the poignant conversations between Rama and Sugriva, Rama's final act of killing the golden deer, the heartbreaking abduction of Sita, and the building of the Setu-Bandha are just a few of the Ramayana's well-known scenes. Notable scenes from the Mahabharata that are depicted in the early phase temples include the fight between Kirata and Arjuna, the argument between Kirata (Siva) and Arjuna over the boar, and Arjuna's purchase of the Pasupata weapon from Siva. The conception of Kartikeya as it is presented in the Kumarasambhava, the Matsya-Purana, and other pertinent literary sources is also depicted in a separate panel that is presently kept in the Odisha State Museum [36]. In this illustration, the seed of Siva, the highest god, is given to Agni, the god of fire.

The narrative characters are characterised by domesticity, self-control, humility, and innocence, as well as a pronounced appreciation for the craft of storytelling. Because of their small size and dynamic stances, the reliefs have a flattened look. In many cases, for example, when wielding a sword or shooting an arrow, the figures appear to levitate or move elegantly in the air. In order to improve visual comprehension, these stances are purposefully exaggerated. The depiction of epic events underwent a significant change in the middle of the 10th century CE, as they progressively lost favour and were replaced by images that better reflected the interests and actions of the governing or ruling class.

3.6. NAGA/NAGI

The naga and nagi are “mythical semi-divine being with a human face” [37]. The depictions include a serpent's tail and a cobra's hood that has extended. The naga/nagis are referred to as the "gurdians of the jewels and treasures" [38] and viewed as inhabitant of the underworld. Like other parts of India, Odisha has a long history of worshipping naga and nagi, who are considered to be auspicious. Their relationship to the entrance as an apotropaic device protecting the structure is evident in cave-III on Khandagiri hill near Bhubaneswar. Although there are many examples of these sculptures throughout the history of Odishan temple art, it was only during the transitional phase they gain popularity as the decorative motif aligning with the pilaster.

The naga (male) and nagi (female) are portrayed in Odishan temples in a unique way, combining human and serpent features. They are given a semi-divine status in this portrayal. These figures are found on the higher corners of the lintel above the north raha niche of the Svarnajalesvara temple in Bhubaneswar, despite their little stature. These sculptures were used as the attendants that accompanied the dvarapala in the 8th and 9th centuries CE. In terms of architecture, these features are particularly noticeable on the stambhas, which fill the anuraha recess and frame the entrance portal in the 10th and 11th centuries CE.

The naga coil appears beneath the torso in the Varahi temple at Chaurasi, giving the figure the appearance of upward movement, showcasing its earliest manifestation in the anuraha recess. With their tails wound around the shaft above, the sculptures on the anuraha recess of the Muktesvara temple at Bhubaneswar are arranged in a descending fashion (Fig.3). Each of the motifs, which alternate between male and female traits, has a canopy made up of five snake hoods that are decked with lavish gems.

Aesthetically, the naga/nagis are “the most beautiful and sensuous images created by the Orissan sculptor” [39]. These sculptures are most effective when, “paired with male and female counterparts which together form symbols of fecundity and auspiciousness” [40].

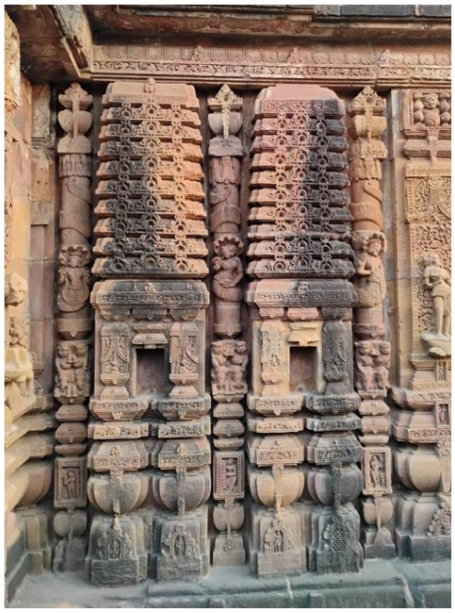

Figure 3 Naga/nagi stambha, Muktesvara temple, Bhubaneswar

3.7. GANA

In addition to being a dwarf-yaksa, the gana figure has characteristic features such as a pot-belly, curly hair, a beard, a moustache, and big eyes. Their adornments include kundalas and beaded necklaces, and their hair is styled in three knots above the head. In the context of the early Chalukya temples at Badami and Aihole, these figures are extremely important. They like to have fun and are sometimes shown as drunk, like in the cave temple II at Badami [41]. It is aptly said that the dwarf is a “freakish creation of nature” [42]. These characters are viewed as demi-gods, and their presence in temples amplifies the impact of the more prominent figures. By the tenth century CE, ganas were incorporated into the raha paga's bho design (Fig.4), a modified form of vajramastaka.

Figure 4 Gana images in the bho design, Muktesvara temple, Bhubaneswar

3.8. BHARA-VAHAKAS

The bhara-vahakas, also known as bhara-raksaka, are similar to the yaksa figures in appearance and carry huge weights. They appear to be supporting a portion of the structure. They have a pot belly and short limbs and legs. They are shown as the Atlantes in diminutive forms [43]. These squatting figures assist in raising or supporting the lintels or architraves of the temple. According to Silpa Prakasa, these images ought to be displayed sitting in pairs in kukkutasana or sitting like a cock [44]. The bhara-vahakas occasionally strike unusual stances, which piques people's interest in their athletic abilities. They are supposed to help and protect the rest of the world [45].

In early temples, the bhara-vahaka may appear on the lintel above raha niches (Fig.5), alternating with jali panels, or in a corner of the baranda recess. However, they are notably popular on buildings from the 10th century and beyond. During this period, they usually show up in the capitals to support the Parsvadevata. By the end of the 11th century, they had been placed on either side of the main portal's nava-graha panel. By the 13th century, they no longer served as a stylistic element.

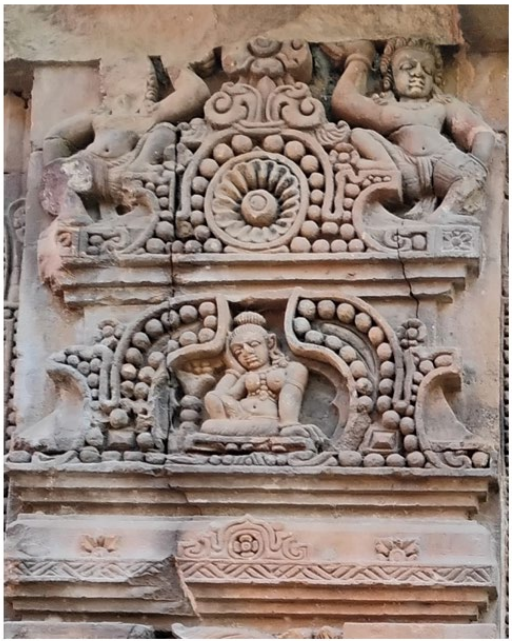

Figure 5 Bhara-vahaka, Parasuramesvara temple, Bhubaneswar

4. CONCLUSION

The depiction of semi-divine figures in Odishan temples serves multiple purposes. They add decorative themes, adorning the walls and pillars of the temples. Moreover, they convey complex spiritual and philosophical ideas, illustrating the interconnectedness of the divine and human realms. By occupying a luminal space between the human and divine, semi-divine figures facilitate communication and worship, enabling devotees to connect with the divine through relatable, human-like intermediaries.

The Odishan temples are a mosaic of rich and varied motifs that demonstrate not only the quality of Odishan sculptors, but also their most creative side. The divine figures are canonica whereas the decorative designs, including semi-divine motifs, are human nature. The decorative motifs of Odishan temples are not unique to the state of Odisha, but their style is definitely typical of the regional craft and art school. Because temples are associated with religious structures, the motifs on their bodies are more innovative and diverse rather than repetitious. The most significant aspect of temple art is the arrangement and placement of decorative elements. In Odishan temple art, each school or political period produced its own distinct set of motifs; they clearly follow a chronological order. However, because they tend to create themes on their own, it is difficult to follow their order without adequate research. Although Odishan sculptors are best known for their portrayals of gods, they have also excelled at carving sculptures of semi-divine and secular topics. The basic goal of a sculptor was to master the raw materials. His artwork demonstrates his total involvement with realistic, ornamental, and architectural embellishments.

The Silpa Prakasa and Bhubanapradipa, classic manuals of Odishan temple art, contain inadequate explanations of decorative motifs and hence cannot be relied upon as thorough guides for the planning and implementation of the designs [46]. Temple commissioners most likely intended a visually lavish and detailed style, leaving the specific execution of such things to the performers. The magnificent Odishan temple walls and superstructures are embellished with a wide range of ornamental designs. The distribution of these items, as well as their composition, can vary, and these two variances are important to the shrine's overall aesthetic. Despite their purely decorative nature, these features and patterns have a religious essence. The sculptor is in charge of all the variants, whereas the engineer is not. The sculptors, who were also architects, shaped architecture in the most imaginative ways.

The decorative components both enhance the temple's appearance and serve an auspicious function. These motifs were intended to protect and enrich the shrine. These themes are comparable to musical compositions employed as a backdrop to enhance the effect of cult imagery. The decorations on various parts of the temple are equally essential to the cult icons. While expressing appreciation to the Almighty, the sculptor concentrated on secular ideas, which functioned as effective filler when a religious theme was not required. Observing these themes, which exist in the temple alongside cult icons, instills a sense of calm in the viewer. Along with epigraphic texts, decorative decorations provide a plethora of information on art and artistry, as well as help date the temple.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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