

Indian Style of Temple Architecture with Special Reference to Lord Jagannatha Temple of Sonepur in Western Odisha

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Abstract

Sonepur town is famous for its historic antiquities and religious sanctuaries in Western Odisha. It is a place of considerable antiquarian interest, which attracts the scholars of the Odishan temple art. This town possesses a good number of temples of various sects of Hinduism. Among the extant temples of Sonepur town, the Jagannatha temple is considered as a notable Vaishnava shrine of that locality. The Jagannatha temple of Sonepur represents the pidha type of the Kalinga Style of temple architecture of Odisha in Eastern India. The temple of Jagannatha comprises of vimana, jagamohana and natamandapa. The vimana and jagamohana of the temple were possibly erected in the same period but the natamandapa has been built in the 20th century A.D. Here the vimana and the jagamohana of Lord Jagannatha temple represent the pidha type of the Odishan temple architecture with some regional variations. Besides the images of the Jagannath Trinity, brass images of various deities like Gaja-Lakshmi, Radha-Krishna, Sarasvati, Hanumana, Rama-Lakshmana, Parvati, Vimala, Narasimha, Narayana, Parshurama, Gopala Krishna, Anthua-Gopala, Lokanatha Mahadeva, Kartikeya, Jaya and Vijaya figures and Salagrama silas are also found to be worshipped of on the simhasana of the sanctum. Besides the three main structures, some additional shrines of Surya, Vimala, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Lokanatha, Ganesha, Radha-Krishna, Hanumana, Foot-prints of Lord Vishnu, etc. are also found to be erected inside the Jagannatha temple premises. The aim of this article is to focus on the artistic features and architectural pattern of the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur of Odisha in Eastern India.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Odisha is known as the land of Hindu temples in Eastern India. Sonepur town is famous in western Odisha for its historic antiquities and religious sanctuaries. It is considered by people of Odisha as 'Mandira Malini Sonepur'. Indian *Shilpashastras* recognize 3 major styles of temples such as *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Veshara* (*Ishana Shiva Gurudeva Paddhati* and other Texts). Odishan temples architecture is suitably named as *Kalinga Style* after its ancient name 'Kalinga'. In this connection, the

Amruteshvara temple inscription of Holala of Karnataka records that the *Kalinga style* of temples is existed with other three major styles viz. *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Veshara* as fourth category temple style of India (*M. E. Report*, 1914-15, p.90 and Kramisch, 1946, pp.286-295). The Odishan temples architecture evolved a new architectural pattern, created a new set of architectural nomenclature for the constituent units of the structure. Odishan temples displayed a most distinctive regional style which was acknowledged, even before the advent of

Muhammadans, by the artists of India as *Kalinga School of art* (Banerji, 1930-31, p.335). The temples of Odisha have been divided into four categories such as *rekha*, *pidha*, *khakhara* and *Gauriya* types respectively (Bose, 1931, p.78). All the extant temples of Sonepur possess the *Kalinga style* of temple architecture of Odisha, which is the offshoot of the *Nagara Style* temple architecture of North and Central India (Mohapatra, 2007, p.25). Odishan temple style possesses a distinct terminology viz the *Kalinga style*, and was included in the other types of temples, *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Veshara* raising their number to four (Panigrahi, 1985, p.371). The Odishan temples are noteworthy for the profusion of sculptures. Here, Stella Kramrisch aptly remarks that “Architecture in Odishan temples is but sculptures on a gigantic scale” (Kramrisch, Vol.1, 1946, p.218). The *Kalinga Style* of temple architecture is divided into four types such as *rekha*, *pidha* (*bhadra*), *khakhara* and *Gauriya* (Bose, 1931, p.78). Lord Jagannatha temple of Sonepur represents the *pidha* type of the *Kalinga Style* temple architecture of Odisha in Eastern India. In Odishan temple architecture, each temple type / order and its individual part has been given a distinctive name (Mohapatra, 1982, p.14). Practically, Odishan temples practice the most compacted and standardized architectural set in India (Fergusson, 1875, p.414). In fact, the Odishan temples are remarkable for the profusion of sculptures. In this connection, Stella Kramrisch aptly comments that “Architecture in Odishan temples is but sculptures on a gigantic scale” (Kramrisch, Vol.1, 1946, p.218). Over thousand years of continuous art activity earned Odisha a global recognition particularly in temple art. Observing the Odishan temple art, M.M. Ganguly remarks that “Odishan art has maintained its native purity marvelously being nurtured and reared on the very soil, where it grew without any extraneous aid” (Ganguly, 1912, p.226). He also admires “the super architectural skill of the Odishan architects in positioning the massive stone blocks and placing huge iron beams at such high altitude (Ganguly, 1912, p.1). For the preservation of

culture, the native rulers of Odisha had constructed a large number of temples of different sects of the Hinduism.

With the passage of time, for the spread of Vaishnavism, the famous temple of Lord Jagannatha was constructed at Puri during the 12th century A.D. Thereafter, Vaishnavite temples are also found to be erected in the different parts of Odisha. Vaishnavism might have existed in Odisha from the very early medieval period. The early medieval period is a turning point in the religious history of Odisha. Vaishnavism lost its royal patronage and its place was occupied by Shaivism. With the rise of Sri Ramanuja Acharya once again Vaishnavism gained royal patronage. After the conquest of Utkala territory by Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva, there began the golden age in the history of Vaishnavism in Odisha. Thus, a good number of Vaishnavite temples were found to be constructed for the popularity Vaishnavism in whole part of Odisha.

The Jagannatha temple of Sonepur is the major Vaishnava shrine of the western part of Odisha in Eastern India. It is located nearby the broken Royal Palace at the town of Sonepur (Suvarnapur), which bears the same name of the district Headquarters (Mohapatra, 2010, p.106). The present town of Sonepur was known in ancient times as Suvarnapura (Golden town) when it served as the capital of *Dakshina-Kosala* under the Somavamsis and Telgu Chodas (Senapati & Sahu, 1968, p.46. and Sahu, Mishra & Sahu, 1981, pp. 155-167). The *Sonepur Charter* of Kumara Somesvara Deva, the Telgu Choda King reveals that *Kosaladesa* at that time was also known as *Paschima Lanka* and its capital was Suvarnapur. The town of Sonepur is frequently referred to as *Paschima Lanka* (Senapati & Sahu, 1968, p.35). Sonepur town is located picturesquely on the convergence of the rivers Mahanadi and Tel and it is about 30 miles to the north-east of Balangir (Mohapatra, Vol. II, 1986, p.230, Sahu, 1997, p.77 and Bhatt, Vol.9, 2000, p.774). Sonepur is famous for its historic antiquities in the western part of Odisha. It is a place of considerable antiquarian

interest, which attracts the scholars of the Odishan temple art. This town contains as many as 108 temples, most of which were built by the Chauhan rulers (Donaldson, 1985/86, p.734, see Mohapatra, Vol.2, 1986, p.230 And Guru, 1999, p.34). Among the extant temples of the town, the Jagannatha temple is considered as a notable Vaishnava shrine of that locality. The present article attempts to focus on the artistic designs and architectural pattern along with the religious significance of the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur of Western Odisha.

II. METHODOLOGY

Primary as well as secondary source materials are utilized in the writing of the present article. The primary data have been collected through Gazetteers, Texts, unpublished thesis, the practical observation, public opinion, hearsay accounts and interview methods during the period of experimental field survey made by the author. The collected data with regard to the art, architecture and religious significance of Lord Jagannatha temple of Sonepur is mainly based on practical observations and a few works of the earlier scholars. The secondary data relating to the present article are Books, Journals, Periodicals, Antiquities, Records, Reports, etc. The data collected from both the primary and secondary sources are scrutinised and utilised in the present article.

III. DISCUSSION AND RESULT ANALYSIS

3. Lord Jagannatha Temple of Sonepur

In fact, the temple of Lord Jagannatha of Sonepur town is considered as the most important Vaishnava shrine of the Western Odisha. The temple of Jagannatha comprises of *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. It is made of sand stones. This temple faces to east. Architectural style of the temple is not so significant like other notable temples of Odisha. All the three structures of the temple have been plastered with lime and modern cement.



The *vimana* and *jagamohana* of the temple were possibly built in the same period but the *natamandapa* has been built in the first half of the twentieth century. The *vimana* and the *jagamohana* of Lord Jagannatha temple of Sonepur represent the *pirha / pidha* type of the Odishan temple architecture (Bose, 1931, p.185). Besides the three main structures of the temple, some additional shrines are also found erected inside the temple premises. All the extant structures as well as sculptures of the temple complex are being mentioned below:

The *vimana* is of the *pidha* type *deula* and it is approximately 28 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2010, p.107). The structure of the *vimana* has three vertical divisions such as *bada* (Borner and Rath Sarma, 1966, p. 142), *gandi* and *mastaka*. The *bada* measures 19 feet 4 inches on the eastern and western sides and 20 feet 8 inches on the northern and southern sides respectively. All the component parts of the *bada* are bereft of decorative elements except the images of *parsvadevatas*. The three sides central niches of the *bada* of the *vimana* accommodated the images of Varaha, Narasimha and Trivikrama or Vamana. Varaha is the southern side *parsvadevata* of the temple. The image of Varaha is engraved in standing pose on the twofold podium. He wears a garland of wooden flowers in his body. He holds *chakra* in the upper right hand, the hand of goddess Prithvi in the lower right hand and *sankha* in the lower left hand. His upraised left arm bears the image of goddess Prithvi, which is depicted in *yogasana* posture. The scene indicates that the deity Varaha is hoisting goddess Prithvi up to his left upraised arm by rescuing her from the water of deep Ocean. Full blown lotus flowers with stalks are carved on the upper part of the slab. A lotus flower with stalk is also found depicted on the left of the

slab. The figure of Prithvi is engraved in standing posture on the right of the pedestal. The sand stone image of Varaha measures 21½ X 15 inches (Mohapatra, 2010, pp.107-108). The deity Varaha is recently painted by the local artist. The deity Narasimha is the western side *parsvadevata* of the temple. The image of Narasimha is engraved in standing pose on the podium, which is designed in three sections. The deity Narasimha wears a garland of beads, which lies up to his knees. He holds *chakra* and *sankha* in the upper two hands. The lower two hands of the deity are involved in taking out the intestines of Hiranya Kashyapu, the demon (Mohapatra, 2010, p.107). A diminutive Garuda figure and a male figure are carved in standing posture on either side of the deity. The standing figure of Garuda is a peculiar thing of that slab. Because almost all the Garuda figures in the Vaishnavite images of the temples of coastal Odisha are depicted in kneeling posture. But here it can be said that the regional idea has been applied by the local artist. The sand stone image of Narasimha measures 22½ X 15½ inches (Mohapatra, 2010, pp.107-108). The image Narasimha is recently painted with different colours by the local artist. Trivikrama or Vamana is the northern side *parsvadevata* of the temple. The image of Vamana is engraved in standing pose on the double petalled lotus podium. He wears a garland of wooden flowers in his body and it lies up to his knees. The right leg of deity uplifts to heaven and it touches the image of Lord Brahma while the left leg is firmly set on the pedestal. He displays *chakra* (Behera, 1982, p.44) in upraised right hand, conch in *uppara* left hand, *gada* (mace) in *tala* right hand and *padma* in lower left hand respectively. There is a *Balidana* scene depicted beneath the uplifted leg of deity. Here king Bali swears before Lord Vamana to give an auspicious gift to him. At that moment Sukracharya has raised his hands up with dismay. This scene is very attractive to visitors. The sand stone image of Trivikrama measures 15½ X 22½ inches (Mohapatra, 2010, pp.107-108). The image Trivikrama is also painted with colours by the local artist. All these

three *parsvadevatas* were possibly made during the period when the temple was constructed (Mohapatra, 2010, p.108). The *tala garvika* of each side is completely plain while the upper *garvika* is decorated with three horizontal mouldings in successive order.

The *gandi* is of the pyramidal superstructure (Mohapatra, 1982, p.16), which displays five *pagas* or *rathas*. It contains 3 *pidhas* and each *pidha* is devoid of decorative elements except the *jhapasimha* at the centre of *raha paga* on each side. The intervening recesses between the *pidhas* of *gandi* are bereft of sculptural programmes. The upper part of each side *raha paga* of the lower *pidha* is projected by a *jhapa simha*. The *mastaka* comprises of elements of *neck*, *ghanta*, *neck*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa* (Borner and Rath Sarma, 1966, p.147), *ayudha* (*chakra*) and flag (*dhvaja*).



The sanctum preserves the *Daru* images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra as the presiding deities of the temple. All these three deities are placed on the masonry *simhasana*. The back side of the head of deities is decorated with a huge *prabhamandala*, which is made of modern cement. Besides the images of the Jagannath Trinity, a series of brass images of various deities like Gaja-Lakshmi, Radha-Krishna, Sarasvati, Hanumana, Rama-Lakshmana, Parvati, Vimala, Narasimha, Narayana, Parshurama, Gopala Krishna, Anthua-Gopala, Lokanatha Mahadeva, Kartikeya, Jaya and Vijaya figures and *Salagrama silas* are also found worshipped on the *simhasana* of the sanctum (Mohapatra, 2010, p.108). The inner side walls of the sanctum are covered with glazed tiles.

The sanctum has one doorway towards the *jagamohana* / *mukhashala* (Borner and Ratha Sarma, 1966, p.152). The doorframes are bereft of the decorative embellishments. The Gaja-Lakshmi

image is engraved at the centre of the doorway lintel. She is depicted in *abhiseka* pose. Nine planets are engraved on the architrave. They are depicted in different postures like *yogasana*, *lalitasana*, *vajra paryankasana*, seated on mounts, etc. Iconographic features of the *navagrahas* are completely different from the *navagrahas* depicted on the architraves of the temples of coastal belt of Odisha (Mohapatra, 2010, p.109). Most of the *navagrahas* of Eastern Odisha are carved in *yogasana* posture. Here the regional ideas are found applied by the local sculptors. This peculiarity can be easily identified by any scholar of the art history. Figures of Jaya and Vijaya; the conventional *dvarapalas* of the Vishnu temple are not found on the base of the door frames of the sanctum.

The *jagamohana* of the temple is a *pancha ratha* (Bose, 1931, p.185) *pidha* type of *deula* and it is approximately 20 feet high from the temple surface. The *bada* measures 29 feet on the northern and southern sides and 25 feet 6 inches on the eastern and western sides (Mohapatra, 2010, p.109). The niches of the *bada* of *jagamohana* are housed with erotic figures, amorous couples (*mithuna* figures), standing female figures with *veena*, dancing *nayika* figures, *nayika* figures holding mirror, female figure holding lotus flower, etc. The central niche of the northern side of the *bada* is housed with the image of Varaha. The image of Varaha is engraved in standing pose on the *naga-nagini* figures, which are depicted on the plain pedestal. The upper right hand of the deity displays *chakra*, the upraised left arm bears the figure of goddess Prithvi, which is depicted in *yogasana* posture (Mohapatra, 2010, p.109). The lower right hand holds the fingers of her left upraised arm, which bears goddess Prithvi. The lower left hand is already broken from the elbow portion. The stalk of the lotus flower is depicted rising from the lower part. Full blown lotus flowers are found depicted on the upper part. The sand stone image of Varaha measures 10 X 20 inches(Mohapatra, 2010, p.109). The image Varaha is also painted with different colours.

The *gandi* is of the pyramidal superstructure, which contains two flat shaped *pidhas*. The decorative elements are not found from the surface of the *gandi* except small *jhapasimhas*. The central (*raha*) *paga* of the *gandi* on each side is projected with small *jhapasimha*. The *mastaka* of the *jagamohana* contains the elements of neck, *ghanta*, another neck, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, and *dhvaja* (Donaldson, 1985 & 1986, Vol.III. p.1183).

Inner side walls of the *jagamohana* are recently covered with glazed tiles. There is a Garuda pillar noticed at the centre of the floor of *jagamohana*. The Garuda pillar is about 4 feet high from the floor of the *jagamohana*. The *jagamohana* has two doorways; one on the eastern side and another on the southern side respectively. An image of six-armed Durga is found on the left side of the main (eastern) doorway of the *jagamohana*. It is made of sand stone, which is eroded by nature. The image of Goddess Durga is engraved in standing pose on the podium. Lion figure is noticed on the right of the podium. Attributes in the hands of goddess Durga are not clearly visible. A male figure is engraved in standing pose on the left of the podium. One of the hands of goddess Durga holds the neck of this male figure. Perhaps, the male figure may be an *asura*(demon). Here the decapitated body of *asura* and severed or cutting buffalo head are not found depicted by the sculptor (Mohapatra, 2010, p.110). So it can be easily presumed by scholars that the regional idea has been introduced by the local artist in it. This variation in the artistic pattern was due to the conception of peculiar ideas, which are slightly different from the iconographic features of the Durga images of the coastal belt of Odisha. The stone image of goddess Durga measures 16 X 25 inches (Mohapatra, 2010, p.110). On the basis of the iconographic features, the Durga image can be dated to the 18th century A.D.

The *natamandapa* is of the modern flat roof structure and it is about 16 feet high from the temple surface. This *mandapa* has been built by Maharaja Sri Biramitrodaya Singh Deo on dated *Sana* 1935 (

Mohapatra, 2010, p.110). Outer walls of the *natamanadapa* are relieved with the *Dasavatara* figures of Lord Vishnu such as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parshurama, Rama, Balarama, Budhha and Kalki. These figures are housed in the *pidha mundi* niches and all are depicted in lime mortar.

3.1. Additional Shrines

Besides the above three structures some additional shrines are also noticed inside the temple complex. These shrines are of Surya, Vimala, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Lokanatha, Ganesha, Radha-Krishna, Hanumana, Foot-prints of Lord Vishnu, etc. (Mohapatra, 2010, p.110). All the additional shrines of the temple complex are being described as follows:

The shrine of god Surya is located at the south-east corner of the temple complex. It faces to west. The additional shrine of Surya Devata is a small *pidha* type *deula* and it is around 16 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2010, pp.110-111). The *pistha* of the shrine is fixed with figures of seven horses, which are depicted dragging the chariot shaped structure of Surya Devata. A bust of Aruna, the charioteer of Sun god is found housed in a niche of the lower part of the eastern side outer *bada* wall of that shrine. The image of Surya Devata is found to be worshipped in the sanctum of the shrine. The two armed image of Surya Devata is carved in *padmasana* posture on the lotus petalled design pedestal. He holds lotus bud in his two hands. A diminutive female attendant, possibly Usha is portrayed on the left of the podium (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111). She holds a lotus bud in her right hand and her left arm is broken from the elbow portion. The sand stone image of Surya Devata measures 24 X 25 inches (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111).

The shrine of Goddess Vimala is located at the south-west corner of the temple complex. It faces to east. This shrine is a small *pidha* order structure. The image of Goddess Vimala is found to be worshipped in the sanctum of the shrine. It is engraved in standing pose on the plain pedestal. Goddess Vimala

exhibits *pasa (nagapasa)* in the upper right hand, *varada mudra* in *tala* right hand, *ankusa* in *uppara* left hand and a small *kalasa* in *tala* (lower) left hand respectively. She wears a garland of beads in her body. The granite stone image of Goddess Vimala measures 9 X 15½ inches (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111). A small lion figure is inserted in the pedestal of goddess Vimala. The lion figure is considered as the *vahana* of Goddess Vimala. The structure of the shrine of Goddess Vimala has usual component parts of the Odishan *pidha deula*.

The shrine of Goddess Lakshmi is located at the south-west of the *vimana* of the temple. It is a small *pidha* order structure and faces to east. The shrine of Goddess Lakshmi is built in the 2nd half of the twentieth century (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111). The image of Goddess Lakshmi is found to be worshipped in the sanctum of the shrine. The two armed image of Goddess Lakshmi is engraved in *abhiseka* pose (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111). It is made of marble of the twentieth century. There is a modern flat roof structured *jagamohana* built in front of the main shrine of Goddess Lakshmi.

The shrine of Goddess Sarasvati is located at the west-north place of the *vimana* of the temple complex. It faces to east. This shrine is a *pidha* order structure and it is around 16 feet in height from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111). The shrine of Sarasvati comprises of *vimana* and *jagamohana*. Both the structures are erected on the same *pistha* or platform of 1 foot high. The *vimana* of the shrine has usual components of the Odishan *pidha deula*. There is a flat roof structure made in front of the *vimana* as its *jagamohana*.

The shrine of Lord Lokanatha is located at the north-west place of the temple premises. It faces to east. This shrine is of the *pidha deula* and its height around 22 feet from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2010, p.111). The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* of the shrine are accommodated with the mages of Varaha, Kartikeya and Ganesha. Varaha is the northern side *parsvadevata* of the shrine. The image of Varaha is engraved in standing pose on the

plain podium. He holds rosary in the right hand and a staff or *danda* in the left hand. Here the image Varaha is a peculiar thing introduced by the local architect and it is housed in the central niche of the *bada* instead of Parvati image. Generally, the image of Devi Parvati is housed as the *parsvadevata* of the northern side in most of the Siva temples of Odisha. But here we can find the Varaha image, which is not usual side deity of the Siva temples of Eastern Odisha. So it is a regional idea, which has not been mentioned in any of the architectural texts of the Odishan temples (Mohapatra, 2010, p.112). Kartikeya is the western side *parsvadevata* of the shrine. The four handed image of Kartikeya is engraved in standing pose on the podium. He holds trident in the upper hand, *kuthara* (hatchet) in *tala* right hand, *mayamriga* in *uppara* left hand and *dambaru* in the *tala* left hand respectively. Peacock is noticed on the left of the podium. The attribute like rooster cock is not found in any of his hands. Most of the Kartikeya images of the coastal belt of Odisha have the rooster cock as the usual attribute in one of hands. But here the local sculptor has depicted the attributes like *mayamriga*, *kuthara* and *dambaru* instead of the rooster cock. So it can be said that the image Kartikeya has been made by the regional ideas of the local sculptors. Ganesha is the southern side *parsvadevata* of the shrine. The four handed image of Ganesha is engraved in standing posture on the pedestal. He holds *pasa* in *uppara* left hand and *ankusa* in *uppara* right hand. The *tala* two hands of the deity are completely broken by nature. Mouse is noticed on the right of the podium. A *rishi* figure is depicted on the opposite side of mouse on the pedestal. This *rishi* figure is an additional decorative element of the slab of deity. It is not found in any Ganesha image of the coastal belt of Odisha in Eastern India (Mohapatra, 2010, p.112).

The *gandi* of the *vimana* is built like the *gandi* of the South Indian temples. It is slightly different from the *gandi* of the *pidha* temples of Odisha. Here the architect has not followed the architectural texts of Odisha and introduced some independent ideas at the time of construction. The *jagamohana* of the shrine

is a *pidha* order structure and it contains the unusual components of the Odishan *pidha deula*. The sanctum preserves the *Sivalingam* as the presiding deity of the shrine. This *Sivalingam* is dedicated to Lord Lokanatha Siva.

The shrine of Ganesha is located at the northern side of the *jagamohana* of the temple premises. It faces to south. This shrine is a very small *pidha* order structure and the image of Ganesha is found to be worshipped as its deity. The image of Ganesha is engraved in standing pose on the podium. It is made of granite stone. He displays *naga* (snake) in the upper right hand, rosary in the lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in the upper hand and *kuthara* (hatchet) in the lower left hand respectively. He wears a *sarpayanjopavita* in his body. Mouse figure is noticed on the right of the podium. The image Ganesha measures 14 X 22 inches (Mohapatra, 2010, p.113). The image Ganesha is not older than 150 years before the present.

The shrine of Radha-Krishna is located at the north-east place of the temple premises. This is a small shrine and it is approximately 10 feet high from the surface of the temple complex. It faces to west. The shrine preserves the images of Radha and Krishna as the presiding deities of it. Both the images are installed in standing pose. Lord Krishna holds a flute in his two hands. Radha Devi is standing on the left side of Lord Krishna. These two deities are about 2 feet in height and both the images are of the modern work.

There is a small shrine dedicated to Mahavir Hanumana noticed on the north-east corner of the *jagamohana*. The shrine of Mahavir Hanumana is of the *pidha* order structure. The two armed image of Mahavir Hanumana is carved in kneeling posture. Both the hands of Mahavir Hanumana are joined at the centre of the chest in *anjali mudra*. Here the image of Mahavir Hanumana is slightly different from the Mahavir images of the coastal belt of Odisha. The body of Mahavir Hanumana is slim unlike other Mahavir images of Odisha. The local sculptor has applied the new ideas in the making of

this image in the form of human figure. The granite stone image of Mahavir measures 12 X 17½ inches (Mohapatra, 2010, p.113). The image has been made in the twentieth century.

There is a small shrine, which preserves the Footprints of Lord Vishnu. It is located at the north east corner of the *jagamohana* of the temple.

There is an old Banyan tree noticed at the eastern part of the temple complex. The local tradition says that Lord Jagannatha was initially worshipped under this tree. So the Banyan tree is older than the present temple of Lord Jagannatha of that site. The presence of the old Banyan tree indicates the ancientness of that site. Some loose sculptures are found preserved under the Banyan tree. These sculptures are Lord Gopinatha, broken Narasimha, a series of diminutive unidentified deities, etc. (Mohapatra, 2010, p.113). The image of Lord Gopinatha is engraved in *lalitasana* pose on the podium. He holds flute in his two hands. The sand stone image of Gopinatha measures 16 X 20 inches (Mohapatra, 2010, p.113). Considering the iconographic features, the image of Gopinatha can be dated to the 18th century A.D. (Mohapatra, 2010, p.113).

There is an Aruna pillar noticed at the north-east corner of the temple complex. A diminutive figure of Aruna is installed on the top of the pillar and it is housed in a *pidha mundi*. This pillar has been built in 1968 A.D. (Mohapatra, 2010, p.114).

The temple complex of Lord Jagannatha is surrounded by a boundary wall of burnt bricks. It is approximately 10 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2010, p.114). There are four entrance porches (gateways) noticed on the four cardinal directions of the temple complex.

3.2. Entrance Porches (Gateways)



The four entrance porches of the temple complex have been built in the same design and height. The *pidha* order structure is erected at the four cardinal gateways of the temple complex. The height of the entrance porch of the northern side is about 22 feet (Mohapatra, 2010, p.114). The structure of the entrance porch (gateway) has *bada*, pyramidal spire and *mastaka* (Bose, 1931, p.183). Out of the four entrance porches, the northern one is being used as the main gateway of the temple complex. This porch has usual components of the Odishan *pidha deula*. *Daru* image of Lord Patita Pavana is found worshipped in a niche of the western side inner wall of the main entrance porch of the northern side (Mohapatra, 2010, p.114). Figures of Jaya and Vijaya are found housed in either side niche of the gateway wall of the main entrance porch. They hold as usual attributes in their hands. Standing female figure is portrayed in each side above the Jaya and Vijaya figures of the main gateway. Lion on prostrate elephant is installed on the both sides of the northern gateway. These (animal) figures are watching the main gateway of the temple complex (Mohapatra, 2010, p.114). Other three side entrance porches of the temple complex are of the same *pidha* type of structure like the northern one.

3.3. Date of Lord Jagannatha temple

The local tradition of Sonepur says that there was no temple of Lord Jagannatha here before the attack of Kalapahara. When Kalapahara attacked the Jagannatha temple of Puri then the *Daru* images of Jagannatha Trinity of Puri-Srimandira are said to have been kept hidden inside a long cave of the Trikuta hill near the village Kotasamalai, which is located about 15 km from the site of the temple (Mohapatra, 2010, p.114). In this regard *The*

Encyclopaedic District Gazetteers of India records that in order to avoid persecution at the hands of Muslims, the deities of Jagannatha trinity of Puri were kept hidden in a cave of the hill near Kotasamalai village (Bhatt, Vol.9, 2000, p.774). At that time there was no Jagannatha temple at the town of Suvarnapur (Sonepur). In the subsequent period, *Daru* images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra were initially worshipped under the Banyan tree of that temple site. The local people say that at the beginning, a thatched house was built for Lord Jagannatha in that site. Thereafter, one of the Maharajas of Sonepur had constructed the present temple for Lord Jagannatha (Mohapatra, 2010, pp.114-115). The priest of the Jagannatha temple remarks that the present temple is not older than 300 years. R.P. Mohapatra has referred to that the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur was built by a Chauhan ruler of Sonepur after it has been formed into a separate Kingdom by Madana Gopala Singh Deo (Mohapatra, Vol.II, 1986, p.231). In this connection, observing the architectural features of the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur, Prof. P.K. Nayak of Sambalpur University opines that the temple was possibly built in the 18th century A.D. and not older than 250 years before the present. Unfortunately the name of the founder builder of this temple is not known from any historical records as yet. Most probably, the main *deula* and its frontal porch i.e. the *jagamohana* were built by one of the Maharajas of Sonepur (Mohapatra, 2010, p.115). The architectural pattern and iconographic features of the *parsvadevatas* suggest that the time period of the erection of Jagannatha temple of Sonepur may be dated to the first half of the eighteenth century A.D. (Mohapatra, 2010, p.115). The *vimana* and *jagamohana* of the Jagannatha temple were possibly erected in the same period but the *natamandapa* was built by Maharaja Sri Biramitrodaya Singh Deo of Sonepur on dated 1935 *Sana*.

Now, an Endowment Trust Board of the Government of Odisha is managing the temple of Lord Jagannatha of Sonepur.

IV. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur is a notable Vaishnava shrine of western Odisha. The present temple of Lord Jagannatha was certainly built by the *Maharaja* of Sonepur. The *parsvadevata* images belong to the original side deities of the temple. The architectural pattern and iconographic features of the *parsvadevatas* suggest that the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur was possibly constructed in about 250 years before the present. The *vimana* and *jagamohana* of the temple were probably erected in the same period but the *natamandapa* was made under the patronage of Maharaja Sri Biramitrodaya Singh Deo of Sonepur in 1935. All the additional shrines have been erected after the main *deula* of the temple complex. In fact, the site of Jagannatha temple of Sonepur is a coordinating place of Vashnavism, Saivism, Saktism, Saura, Ganapati, etc. Although the temple is dedicated to Lord Jagannatha but it's complex preserves some additional shrines of different deities such as Surya, Vimala, Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Lokanatha Siva, Ganesha, Radha-Krishna, Hanumana and others like the Jagannatha temple complex of Puri. Some of the extant sculptures of Lord Jagannatha temple complex of Sonepur have been built with the regional ideas, which are slightly different from the sculptures of the coastal belt of Odisha. The northern side gateway is used as the main gateway (entrance porch) of Lord Jagannatha temple. It is excellently decorated with various types of sculptures of the modern period. The boundary wall of the temple complex was possibly built during the construction of the main Jagannatha temple by the king of Sonepur. In fact, the architectural features of the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur do not possess the characteristic features of the temple architecture flourished during the *Chauhan* rule in Western Odisha. It was mostly influenced by the *Kalinga style* temple architecture of Odisha. The architectural arrangement and artistic designs of the Jagannatha temple of Sonepur aptly represent the *Kalinga style* temple architecture of Odisha in Eastern India. Considering the religious significance, Lord

Jagannatha temple of Sonepur occupies a unique place in the history of Vaishnavism in Western Odisha.

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