

# Art and Architecture of Sovanesvara Temple of Nuagaon of Odisha in India

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## Abstract:

The artistic design of the Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon is one of the fascinating traits of the Hindu temple art of Odisha in Eastern India. Methodologically, both the primary and secondary sources have been used to evaluate the art and architecture of the Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon. The temple of Sovanesvara represents fine specimen of the Kalinga style architecture of Eastern India. This temple is notable for its majestic size, gigantic strength, decency and dignity. In fact, Sovanesvara temple is an important historical monument of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. Both from the artistic and historical points of view, the Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon are very interesting study for scholars of history and archaeology.

**Keywords:** Sovanesvara, temple, art, architecture, Nuagaon, Odisha, India

## INTRODUCTION

Odisha is famous in India as a land of temples and it is also said as the centre of *panchadevaprasana* of Hinduism. The state of Odisha has retained a distinct cultural identity than her geographical location in Eastern India. The Odishan temples form one of the most compact and homogeneous architectural groups in India (Fergusson, 1875, p.414). The temple architecture in Odisha can conveniently be labeled as *Kalinga* style after the territory where the temples are found (Behera, 1993, p. 1). The Indian *Silpasatras* mention the three main styles of temples such as the *Nagara*, the *Dravida* and *Vesara* respectively (Ganapati Shastri, ed.1921 and others). All the available architectural texts suggest that the *Nagara* style was prevalent in the region between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas. The *Dravidastyle* is noticed the region lying between the river Krishna and cape Kanyakumari. The *Vesara* style is confined to the region between the Vindhyas

and the river Krishna. The *Kalingastyle* of architecture of Odisha appears to have been a product of the *Nagarastyle* temple architecture of North India. Some of the senior scholars have accepted the temple style of Odisha as a subclass in the category of *Nagarastyle* temples of North and Central India (Banerjee, 1931, p. 335, Das, 1995, pp. 30-46 and Panigrahi, 1961, p. 52). The *Kalingastyle* temple architecture displays that even in the Pre-Muslim period, the predominant temple style of Odisha came to be recognized as a distinct one (Behera, 1993, p.2). The temple of Sovanesvara of Nuagaon represents the *Kalinga style* architecture of Odisha in Eastern India. It is located at the village Nuagaon near Niali at a distance of 50 kms from Bhubaneswar on the left bank of river Prachi (Ray, 1975 p.11). According to *BhubanaPradipa*, a treatise on temple architecture, the temples of Odisha have been classified into three types such as *rekha*, *pidha* (*bhadra*) and *khakhara* (Bose, 1932, p.78). Here the

Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon exhibits both the *rekhaandpidha* types of the *Kalinga Style* of architecture of Odisha. This temple is generally considered by local devotees as one of the “DvadasaSambhus” on the bank of river Prachi (Panda, 1969, pp. 76-81). The site of the temple is locally famous as *Muktitirtha*, *Arkatirtha*, *Sangamanatirtha*, etc. (Behera & Dhal eds. 1992, p. ix). For the spread of Saivism in Prachi valley, one of the good architectural undertakings during the Ganga period was the construction of the Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon. This temple is remarkable for its majestic size, massive vehemence, nobility and dignity. The present Sovanesvara temple is a renovated temple, which is under the protection of the State Archaeology Department of Odisha. The present article aims to focus on artistic features and architectural pattern of the Sovanesvara temple basing on field study.

Really, Sovanesvara temple is one of the important historical monuments of the Prachi Valley in Odisha, because the eastern side outer *badawall* of the *jagamohana* of the temple contains an inscription of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The inscription records that the temple was built by a Nagavamsi king named Sri Baidyanatha, most likely a vassal king of the Ganga rulers (Rajguru, 1961, pp. 338-347 and Mishra, 1984, p. 57). The poet Udayana Acharya who composed this epigraph was also the composer of the commemorative inscription attached to the Meghesvara temple of Bhubaneswar built by Svapnesvara Deva, the brother-in-law of the Ganga king Rajraj-II A.D. 1170-1194 A.D. (Mohapatra, 1986, pp. 68-69). Udayana Acharya, the composer of this inscription appear to be a contemporary of Jayadeva, the author of famous *Gita-Govinda* (Mohapatra, 1986, pp. 68-69).

## II. METHODOLOGY

Both the primary and secondary sources have been used in the writing of the present piece of research work. The primary data have been collected from original texts, *Gazetteers*, literatures, inscriptions, reports, practical observations, taking

photographs, hearsay accounts of respondents through the interview methods during the period of experimental field survey, etc. The extensive field survey has been undertaken for the collection of detailed information (data) with regard to the art, architecture, legends, traditions and tentative dates of the temple. For the collection of primary data relating to the current article, the empirical method has been adopted by the present author. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources are critically analyzed and interpreted as per the methodological procedure.

## III. DISCUSSION AND RESULT ANALYSIS

### 3.1. Sovanesvara Temple of Nuagaon

The Sovanesvara temple initially consisted of four structures viz. the *vimana*, the *jagamohana*, the *natamandapa* and the *bhogamandapa*. But the last two structures of the temple are broken in the subsequent period. The pillars of the *natamandapa* and the *bhogamandapa* are *in situ*, which indicate that these two structures were initially the pillared *mandapas*. The temple is constructed in sand stones and it faces to eastern direction.

### 3.2. Vimana

The *vimana* of the temple represents *navaratha* temple (Borner & Ratha Sharma, 1966, p. 157). The *pistha* of both *vimana* and *jagamohana* are same in design and it is mostly buried under the earth. The upper part of the *pistha* is about one foot high and it is visible. The *vimana* (*deula*) is *navaratha* in plan. The *pabhaga* of the *badais* decorated with five conventional mouldings. Vertical bands carved with scroll work are joined at the centre of each *paga*. The *khura* and *kumbha* are completely plain. The *patta* portion of the *pabhaga* is carved with scroll work. The *kani* is decorated with small *tankus* in both the upper and lower parts of it. The *basanta* of the *pabhaga* is relieved with scroll work. The lower *jangha* of the *badai* carved with *khakharamundis*, which contain figures of *asthadikpalas*, *sikshadanascenes*, seated *rusis*, bordered line designs, scroll work and worship of

*Shivalinga* by a Chamunda. The upper part of all the *khakharamundis* of *talajangha* are carved with *chaitya* medallions. Observing the iconography of the *asthadikpalas*, T.E. Donaldson remarks that these *dikpalas* of the lower *jangha* of the *deula* depicted in the niches of the *kanikapagas* as on the Meghesvara temple with each *dikpala* seated in *lalitasana* pose on their respective mounts (Donaldson, 1985/86, p. 432). In the *sikshadana* scene, the main figure is seated on a low couch facing two rows of figures which are bearing gifts with one on all four limbs touching the floor with his head. The seated figure has right hand raised. A herd of cows is decorated in the lower part of the *sikshadan* panel. Observing it, P.K. Ray identifies the scene as a hermitage illustrating the Sunasepha episode from the *Ramayana* (Ray, 1975, p.34).



The intervening recesses of the lower *jangha* are filled with *gajavidalas*, scroll work, etc. There is a seated male figure, possibly *rusi* housed in a niche of the *talajangha* in the southern side. A royal scene is depicted in the western side *talajangha* of the *bada*. A humped bull is depicted in a niche of the *talajangha* in the side. The *talajangha* measures 3 feet 10 inches in height. The *bandhana* of the *bada* is exquisitely carved with scroll work, miniature flower medallions. Vertical bands are noticed at the center of all *pagas* of the *bandhana*. The upper *jangha* of the *bada* is carved with elongated *miniature pidhadeulas*, scroll work, bordered line designs, etc. The *pidhamundi* niches of the upper *jangha* house various deities of the Hinduism. They are *Ardhanarisvara*, *Ajaikapada* Siva, *Surya Devata*, dancing female figures

(*alasakanyas*), four armed Chamunda, standing *rusi* figure, two armed Chamunda, Siva holding *mayamruga*, *Biranci-Narayana* (*Surya*) on the north-east corner wall, *mithuna* figure, Siva-Parvati depicted on the north-west corner wall, seated *rusi* figure depicted on the south-east corner wall, etc. Most of the *alasakanya* figures are not *in situ* though a few of their pedestals are intact. The *baranda* of the *bada* consists of ten horizontal decorative mouldings.

The three sides of the central niches of the *bada* of *vimana* are housed with the *parsvadevatas* of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The image Ganesha is engraved in standing posture. The pedestal of the image is decorated with kneeling devotees, sacrificial *yupas* in both sides and lotus bud with stalk. A figure of mouse, the conventional mount of deity is also designed in the left of pedestal. Diminutive attendant figure holding jack fruit is carved on both sides of the deity. The behind of the head of Ganesha is ornamented with trefoil arch; woman figure at the base and the *kirtimukha* motif at the top. *Vidyadhara* and *apsara* figures holding garlands, musical instruments, *chamaras* are depicted on both side upper angles of the slab. The image Ganesha shows broken tusk in higher right hand, rosary in lower right arm, a pot of *ladus* in upper left hand and a *kuthara* (hatchet) in lower left hand. Ganesha is ornately bejewelled with his *yajnaopavita* and anklets being formed by serpents. There is a *nisagarvaka* (shrine) of the *pidha* order erected in front of the Ganesha image. It is an open *nisagarvaka* and has usual elements of the *gandi* and *mastaka* of the Odishan *pidhadeula*. Kartikeya is the *parsvadevata* of the western side. He holds an indistinct object in higher right hand and *varada mudra* with a small lotus mark in lower right hand. The upper left hand holds the rooster cock and the lower left hand possesses the rooster cock. Devasena is lifting the legs of the rooster cock. Peacock is found carved on the pedestal. There is a small attendant figure holding a staff depicted on the right of the pedestal near the peacock. Diminutive male



and female figures are depicted in the *pidhamundi* niches. The *gajavidalaf* figure is carved at the centre of both sides of the slab. The trefoil arch crowned by the *kirtimukha* motif design is found behind of the head of Kartikeya. Small images of Ganesha and Parvati are flanked on either side base of the trefoil arch. *Vidyadhara* and *apsara* figures holding garland, *camara* and musical instruments are depicted on top corners of the stone slab. The stone image of Kartikeya measures 54 inches in height and 28 inches in width respectively. There is a similar *nisa* temple of the *pidha* order built in front of the Kartikeya image. The *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha and Kartikeya are notable for their fine workmanship. The northern side *parsvadevata* is Devi Parvati. The four armed image of Parvati is carved in standing posture. The bottom part of the pedestal is decorated with female devotees, who are depicted in kneeling posture. The figure of lion is found to be carved in the right of the pedestal. *Vairabhi* figure is carved on the opposite side of the lion figure. The upper right hand holds an indistinct object, the lower right hand displays rosary, the upper left hand possesses *nagapasa* and the lower left hand holds the stalk of a full blown lotus flower. The image Parvati is made of chlorite stone. Female attendant figure is found depicted on both sides of Devi Parvati. *Chauri* bearer figure is carved on the centre of each side of the slab. The trefoil arch is decorated in rear of the head of Parvati. Diminutive figures of Kartikeya and Ganesha are flanked on either side base of the arch. Here Devi Parvati is housed in the *pidhamundi* niche, which is projected out of the *badawall*. There is also a *nisa* shrine of *pidha* order erected in front of Devi Parvati. The *rahapaga* of *badais* designed as truncated *pidhamundi* as on the Meghesvara temple of Bhubaneswar (Donaldson, 1985/86, p. 430).

The curvilinear superstructure is surmounted on the *bada* of *vimana*. The original designs of the *gandi* remain absent. The base of the central *rahapaga* of each side of the *gandi* is decorated with a large *angasikhara*. There is a niche, above the central *angasikhara*, which houses a

figure of peacock of the modern cement work. *Gajakranta* motif is projected at the centre of the *rahapaga* on each side. The *anurahapaga* of the *gandi* is completely plain. *Angasikharas* are decorated on the top of the *gajakranta* motif of the central (*raha*) *paga* in successive order. The *anurathapaga* is relieved with four elongated *angasikharas* in successive order one above another. The *parirathapaga* of the *gandi* is bereft of decorative elements. The *kanikapaga* of the *gandi* is divided into 9 storeys, which demarcate by *bhumiamalas*. *Dopichha* lion figure is projected on the top of the north-east corner only. But other three top corners of the *gandi* are completely plain having no lion figures. *Beki Vairabhas* are noticed in the four principal directions of the *beki*.

*Beki*, *amalakasila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (trident) and *dhvaja* are the basic elements of *mastaka* of the *vimana*.

A large sized *Shaktipitha* is found to be worshipped at the centre of the sanctum-sanctorum as presiding deity. The temple priest says that it is a *Patalaphuta Mahadeva*. Here the *Shivalinga* is not visible. The *Shaktipitha* has a large whole. The *Shivalinga* of the sanctum is differently called as *Purnesvara*, *Brahmesvara* and *Sovanesvara* (Behera & Dhal, eds. 1992, p. ix).

A big sized *naga* of the modern period is found installed on the *Shaktipitha* of the sanctum-sanctorum. The back wall niche of the sanctum contains the images of Chandrashekhara and Uma. Due to restriction, the iconographies of these two images could not be documented by the present author. The *Shaktipitha* is surmounted by a wooden *kanakamandapa*, which is supported by circular pillars. Masonry steps of the descending order are arranged for entry into the interior of the sanctum.

The doorframe of each side of the sanctum is carved with three sections in vertical order. These are decorated with scroll work, creepers with the frolicking boys and lotus flowers in successive order. The bottom part of the doorframe contains a *khakhara mundi* on each side. Figures of

Nandi and Bhrungi are found carved in either side *khakhara mundi* niche of the door frame. The upper part of the doorframe is decorated with *apsara* figures holding musical instruments in their hands. The centre of the doorway lintel is carved with an image of Gaja-Lakshmi, which is housed in the *pidhamundi* niche. Here Devi Gaja-Lakshmi is depicted in *abhisheka* pose. *Navagraha* figures are carved in *yogasana* pose at the architrave of the doorway. All planets are engraved in the *pidhamundi* niches.

### **Sandhisthala**

The *sandhisthalais* found erected between the *vimana* and the *jagamohana*. The *badawall* of the *sandhisthala* measures 43 inches in width and it is decorated with a *pabhaga* duplicating that of the *vimana* (Donaldson, 1985/86, p.432). The lower storey of the *sandhisthala* wall is decorated with a *jagrata* motif. The upper storey of the *sandhisthala* wall is relieved with a Bhairava type guardian figure with legs crossed and his arms placed in front of his chest resting on a weapon. The above *jagrata* motif is an important decorative element on the *sandhisthala* walls of the most of later temples of Odisha.

### **3.3. Jagamohana**

The *jagamohana* is a *pancharathapidhadeula* and its height is about 35 feet. At many places, original sculptures of *jagamohana* have disappeared. The *pistha* is buried in the northern side while the southern side appears 8 niches of high. The *bada* of *jagamohana* measures 37 feet on the northern and southern sides and 35 feet 10 inches on the eastern-western sides respectively. The *bada* of the *jagamohana* has five component parts viz. *pabhaga*, *talajangha*, *bandhana*, upper *jangha* and *baranda*. The *pabhaga* contains the conventional mouldings like *khura*, *kumbha*, *patta*, *kani* and *basanta*. Vertical bands carved with scroll work are joined at the centre of all *pagas*. The *pabhaga* of the *bada* is decorated with elongated *khakharamundis*, *naga-nagin* pilasters and scroll work. The *pabhaga* of the *bada* measures 3 feet 5 inches in height. The *talajangha* of the *bada* is

decorated with *khakharamundis* and elongated *khakharamundis*. The *khakharamundis* of the *talajangha* house the *astadikpalas*, Surya-Narayana, *chauri* bearers, female figures in different poses, king seated on a couch, *sikshadana* scene, female figure holding *kalasa*, *sikshadana* scene of a *rusi*, standing *rusi* figures, worship of *Shivalinga* by ascetics, erotic scenes, Ganesha (southern side), female figure with tree branches (*dalamalika*), a female figure possibly queen on a *simhasana*, a figure of *rusi* depicted in *dhyana* pose on the pedestal, etc. The *mastaka* of the *khakharamundis* of the *talajangha* are carved with scroll work. The figures of *gaja-vidalas* and *simhavidalas* are found carved in intervening recesses between the *pagas* of *talajanga*. The *talajangha* measures 2 feet 11 inches in height. The left side eastern *badawall* of the *jagamohana* contains an inscription of the Ganga period. Being an inscription incised on the outer *badawall* of the *jagamohana*, the temple is considerable of historical importance. The inscription with opening verses in praise of Lord Siva refers to the village Niali Sasana and performance of *Debadasi* dance in the *natamandapa* of this temple (Mohapatra, 1986, p.69). This inscription is possibly the earliest known inscription that explicitly states that *devadasi* performed in the *natamandapa*. The inscription mentions Nialisasana famous in Utkal where the vassals of the Ganga emperors of Odisha were ruling (Ray, 1975, p.11).

All the three mouldings of *bandhana* are decorated with different architectural elements. The *pidhamundis* are carved in the upper *jangha* of the *bada*. The niches of the *pidhamundis* are housed with the female counterparts of the *ashöadikpalas*, dancing female figures, erotic scenes, female figure in standing posture with a baby in her waist, seated royal figure on a couch or bed, *rusi* in *yogapattas*, *nayika* figure holding a mirror, female figure in different postures, female figure with *veena*, female figure with tree branches (*dalamalika*), mothers fondling the babies, amorous couples, mounted horses, erotic scene, Lord Siva in meditating posture, seated female figure, king on a

couch, *alasakanyas* in different moods and poses, king and queen depicted on the *simhasana* (in the western side upper *jangha*), etc. The prevailing recesses linking the *pagas* of upper *jangha* are filled with *mithuna* figures and erotic scenes. In the north-east corner niche of the upper *jangha* contain a *rusi* figure, which is depicted begging a child from a female. Here the female (lady) is donating the child to the *rusi* (*sanyasi*). This sculptural panel (scene) is very attractive for visitors as well as scholars.

The *baranda* of the *bada* consists of six horizontal decorative mouldings. It is plastered with modern cement. The *baranda* measures 24½ inches in height (Donaldson, 1985/86, p.431).

The central niche of the *bada* of *jagamohana* in the northern side is fixed with a balustraded window, which contains six undecorated balusters. The *gavakshamandana* of the northern side is bereft of any sculptural panel. The lower *gavaksha* of the northern side is decorated with three *khakharamundis* intervened by *naga-nagin* pillars. The southern side central niche of the *bada* of *jagamohana* has same designed balustraded windows. The *gavakshamandana* of the southern side is also devoid of sculptural scene. Most probably, the sculptural panels of the *gavakshamandas* of both the northern and southern sides are detached in the subsequent period.

The pyramidal superstructure of *jagamohana* is designed with two *potalas*. The *gavaksha* panel at the centre of the upper *pidha* of the lower *potala* is finely projected with rampart lion on each side. The elements of *mastaka* are also found above the *gandi*.

*Adaru* image of Lord Jagannath is found in the south-western corner of the *jagamohana*. Here Lord Jagannath is installed on the base of 1½ ft. high. Dola-Govinda figure made of brass is also found preserved in a brass *khatuli* and it is noticed inside the *jagamohana*. Other deities like Anrthua-Gopala, Lakshmi, Ganesha, etc. are also kept for public worship. The image Hara-Parvati (Uma-Mahesvara) is found worshipped inside the *jagamohana*. A series of miniature *Shivalingas*

within *Shaktipithas* are found preserved inside the *jagamohana*. A good number of *nagas* are also noticed in the floor of *jagamohana*. There is a *Shivalinga* contains a head of Lord Siva. It is considered by the local people as the head of Belalaseana. This *Shivalinga* is made of copper. The *Shivalinga* is very notable for its sanctity. The local people say that any theft (case) of that region is solved by touching this *Shivalinga*. By the name of Lord Siva, almost all the people of that locality say the true fact of the case/theft. So, this *Lingais* conceived by the local people as representative of Lord Sovanesvara Siva. There is a small figure of Garuda installed on the square sized pillar of 5 feet high. Here the figure of Garuda is depicted in kneeling posture with folded hands. It is noticed at the eastern side doorway of the *jagamohana*. There is a bell stand kept in the south-east corner of the *jagamohana*. This bell stand contains near about 80(eight) small bells and it is made in the modern period.

The doorframe of *jagamohanadoorway* is decorated with creepers with lotus flowers. Rahu head is carved at the centre of the doorway lintel. Two circular pillars are erected on both sides of the doorway. Two female figures (*dvarapalikas*) are flanked the base of door frame. Both the structures of *vimana* and *jagamohana* were possibly built in the same period.

### 3.4. *Natamandapa*

The temple inscription records that king Vaidyanatha “built in front of Siva a *mandapa*, which is the abode of pleasure for the eyes (Rajguru, 1961, p. 346. & Behera, 1993, p.62). Most probably, it was initially an open pillared *mandapa*. Now, the roof of the *natamandapa* is not found existed. It is a ten pillared *mandapa*. The earlier (original) pillars of the *mandapa* are found existed till today in perfect condition. The platform of the *natamandapa* is about 1½ feet high. The pillars of the *mandapa* are made of sand stone. Bull, the conventional mount of Lord Sovanesvara Siva is installed at the centre of the floor. The bull figure is now covered by a small *pidhamandapa*. This is

evident in the commemorative inscription where it is recorded that *devadasis* danced in the *natamandapa* of the temple during the time of *Bhoga puja* (Rajguru, 1961, p. 338). So, the *natamandapa* can be assigned to the time period of the main *deula*.

### 3.5. Bhogamandapa

The *bhogamandapa* of the temple is also an open pillared *mandapa*. There are as many as 16 pillars noticed at the floor of the *bhogamandapa*. Perhaps, the roof of the *bhogamandapa* was destroyed by nature in the later period. It is quite possible that temporary roofs, made of bamboo, and thatch, were erected as need demanded. The *mandapa* probably serving various functions in addition to dance festivities and the platform of it measures 53 inches in height (Donaldson, 1985/86, p. 434). The base of the ruined structure of the *bhogamandapa* is a square of about 30 feet. All the pillars of the *bhogamandapa* are made of sand stone. Observing the style and sculptural art of the temple, the poet Udayana has rightly remarked in the inscription that this beautiful temple was the stone house of all arts and the gentle abode of dharma (Das, 1958, p.21 & Rajguru, 1961, p.346). Most probably, all the four structures of the temple were built by King Vaidyanatha.



### 3.6. Sculptures shed

Besides the four structures of the temple, there is a modern flat roof shed erected in the temple premises. It has been built by the Odisha State Archaeology Department in 1971-72 for the preservation of the loose sculptures of that locality (Ray, 1975, p.11).

### 3.7. Additional Shivalingas:

Besides the main *Shivalinga* i.e. the presiding deity, some additional ancient *Shivalingas* bearing the names of Suryesvara, Paschimesvara, Sankaresvara, Dhavalesvara, Garudesvara and Mukundesvara are also reckoned with at this place (Mohapatra, 1986, p.69). An earlier inscription consisting of four lines badly mutilated, is engraved on a *Shivalinga* known as Suryesvara, one of five such *Lingas* within the temple complex, suggesting the existence of earlier shrine of that site (Donaldson, 1985/86, p.429 & Ray, 1975, p.33). Paleographically, this inscription is older than the Sovanesvara temple inscription. According to the local tradition, the Suryesvara *Shivalinga* was established here to mark the penance undertaken by Surya Devata at this place.

Though the temple is dedicated to Lord Sovanesvara Siva but it also preserves some important sculptures of Lord Vishnu, which are worshipped as Lord Madhava. The presence of Vishnu images indicates that the temple was not exclusively a Shaivashrine. The inscription of Sovanesvara temple begins with “*NamahSivayah*” and ends with two wheel marks, which obviously says of its Vaishnavite association. Thus, the inscription of the temple speaks that the temple was dedicated to both Vishnu and Siva (Behera, 1993, pp.62-63). It can be rightly said that the shrine is a co-ordinating place of Saivism and Vaishnavism.

### 3.8. Construction Period of Sovanesvara Temple

The available inscription and extant images of the temple indicate that the Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon was constructed in the Ganga period. G.S. Das is of the view that the temple of Sovanesvara may be placed as almost contemporary with the temple of Madhavananda of Madhava, which was possibly constructed in the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Das, 1958, p.20). P.K. Ray opines that the date of the Sovanesvara temple can be fixed within 1170-1190 A.D. when the poet Udayana Archarya flourished (Ray, 1975, p.11). One of the senior scholars suggests that the Sovanesvaratemple had been built towards the last part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Mohapatra, 1986, p.69).



T.E. Donaldson (Donaldson, 1985/86,p.429) remarks that the temple of Sovanesvara can be ascribed to the closing years of the 12<sup>th</sup> century possibly during the reign of Anangabhimha Deva-II (A.D. 1190-98A.D). In this connection K.S. Behera has mentioned that the Sovanesvara temple was built by King Sri Baidyanatha, the son of Hari and grandson of Madhava of the *Kasyapagotra*. The actual architect of the temple, according to the inscription, was a Brahmana named Savana (Behera, 1993,pp. 60-61). Architectural style, iconographical features of the *parsvadevatas* and the available inscription in the outer *badawall* of the *jagamohana* confirm that the Sovanesvara temple was constructed in the last quarter of the 12 century A.D. (i.e. from 1175 A.D. to 1200 A.D). Most probably, this temple was built in the same period when the construction work of the present Jagannatha temple of Puri was completed.

### 3.9. Boundary Wall

The temple complex is enclosed by a boundary wall, which is made of laterite stone. It is about 9 feet in height. The temple is placed in the middle of a court measuring 185ft.x 105 ft. (Das, 1958,p.20). A Mahisamardini Durgaimage is fixed to the boundary wall on western side. A few earlier scholar remarks that the image Mahisamardini Durga is earlier, possibly belongs to the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Donaldson, 1985/86,p.433). The image of Durga is mutilated This image is ten armed and puts her uplifted right leg on the back of the decapitated buffalo from which Mahisa is attempting to escape. The worship of *Dasabhuja* Mahisamardini Durga image in many places of the Prachi Valley and she is worshipped either as *Pishtadevi* or as side deity. Iconographical features indicate that this Durga image is earlier than the present temple. The presence of ancient Durga image in the temple premises indicates that the worship of Goddess Durga was also popular in that locality.

Now, the temple is being managed by a local committee of that village.

### IV. Conclusion

We come to know that the temple of Sovanesvara is a *Dvadasa Sambhu* shrine of the Prachi

Valley in Odisha. Artistic features of the Sovanesvara temple are very interesting study for the scholars of art history. The present *parsvadevatas* are the original side deities of the temple. Iconographical features of the *parsvadevatas* indicate the Odishan classical art of the medieval period. Undoubtedly, the Sovanesvara temple was built by the vassal king named Sri Baidyanatha as recorded in the inscription of the *jagamohana* wall. The Sovanesvara temple is a close contemporary of the Meghesvara temple of Bhubaneswar, on the ground of commemorative inscription. Most probably, all the four structures of the temple were constructed in the same period. Though the temple is dedicated to Shaivism still its complex conserves some Vishnu images. To prove the above fact the sculpture shed located in the temple premises conserves nine Vaishnavite images and an image of Yama, the Lord of death, which are lately collected from other sites of Prachi valley. Most of the above images of shed possess the iconographic features of the Odishan classical art of the Ganga period. Some ancient *Shivalingas* are also noticed in the temple premises. One of the *lingas* contains an inscription of a few lines, which indicates that before the present Sovanesvara temple, this *Shivalinga* was being worshipped in that site. In fact, the temple site is a co-ordinating place of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Considering the religious significance, the Sovanesvara temple is a notable Shaiva shrine of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. On the whole, the Sovanesvara temple of Nuagaon represents a fine specimen of the *Kalinga style* architecture of Eastern India.

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