CHAPTER - I

LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

Extending from 81°29' east to 87°29' east longitude and from 17°49' north to 22°34' north latitude, Orissa, has a rich legacy of cultural heritage. Bhubaneswar the present capital of Orissa, probably needs no introduction. As a place of pilgrimage it was known in ancient times as Ekāmra Kshetra.

The history of Bhubaneswar and its environs dates back to a period much earlier than the 7th century A.D. when it first witnessed a feverish zeal for temple building. In contrast to other places in India, where the temples or archaeological remains all date within a very short span of time, at Bhubaneswar we have archaeological remains and temples almost from the dawn of historical period to the end of the Hindu rule - a period of about a thousand years. And the most unique feature is that there is almost a continuous linkage between all these extant archaeological remains. Moreover, all these temples were conceived in a remarkably homogeneous style. This fact is suggested by Percy Brown when he writes, "so many fine examples persisting over such a period of time, make it possible to trace the gradual evolution of this particular movement without difficulty, an opportunity from various causes not presented in anything like the same continuity elsewhere". ¹

Though much work has been done on Orissan temples in general, we do not find a monograph on any individual temple. All the scholars have taken up the study of Orissan temples as a whole, none have devoted to a single temple. Eminent scholars such as Andrew Sterling, R.L. Mitra, M.M. Ganguly, K.C. Panigrahi, R.P. Chanda, R.D. Banerji and many others have made important contributions for the study of Orissan temples. Never has anyone of them taken up the comprehensive study of a temple as a single whole. Moreover, they have dealt with problems in general and little effort has been made to deal with the complex architectural problems. Yet such studies are utterly needed to show the trend of temple building, its unique features, its stylistic developments, its iconographic peculiarities and sculptural arrangements. The Muktesvara Temple is without any doubt one of the most important temples in the holy city of Bhubaneswar. It has its importance in the evolution of Orissan temple architecture, hence it is highly unfortunate that over the years a detailed and individual study has not yet been attempted.

Orissa came under the British administration in 1803. The archaeological remains and temples of Orissa attracted the attention of the British Officers. Almost immediately after conquest, British Officers not only saw the temples but prepared a number of drawings of these monuments. Col. Mackenzie sent his draftsmen who prepared drawings of temples, at Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark. Book 14 of Col. Mackenzie's
collection preserved in the India Office Library, London contains 37 drawings of sculptures at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar, Konārk, Vijayawada etc. which were produced in 1815 A.D. Book 15 of the same collection has 78 drawings depicting sculptures from Bhubaneswar, Puri and Jajpur and forms a supplement to book 14. One of these drawings relates to an image of the Mukteśvara temple.

In 1825, Andrew Sterling a British Officer of Cuttack in his article "An Account, Geographical Statistical and Historical of Orissa proper, or Cuttack"2 gives us the general environs of Bhubaneswar, with brief appreciatory comments upon the Liṅgarāja temple, which Sterling felt to be "......the first monument of antiquity". He presents a substantial amount of facts regarding the activities of the "Rājas of the Keśarī Vaṃsa". In his own words "......from almost countless multitude of temples which are crowded within the sacred limits of the Panj Kosi......one cannot turn the eyes, in any direction, without taking into view upwards of forty or fifty of these stone towers". The Mukteśvara temple forms an undeniable unit of these "forty or fifty stone towers", but Sterling does not give any particular account about the form and the character of this temple.

James Fergusson who visited Orissa in 1837 is the first art historian to deal with the temples of Orissa in a systematic

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manner. He, in his book *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan*\(^3\) 1848 and *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*\(^4\) 1876, gives us a general idea of the Orissan temples including the Muktesvara temple. While comparing the temples of Bhubaneswar with Western India he remarked "there are more and far finer buildings in the one city of Bhubaneswar alone than in all the cities of Maharastra put together, and the extreme elaboration of their details gives the Orissa examples a superiority that the western temples cannot pretend to rival".\(^5\)

In his book he writes "the temple of Muktesvara is very similar in general design to that of Paraśurāmeśvara, but even richer and more varied in detail, and its porch partakes more of the regular Orissan type. It has no pillars internally, and the roof externally exhibits atleast the germ of what we find in the porches of the great temple at Bhubaneswar and the Black Pagoda. Its dimensions are somewhat less than those of the last temples described, but in its class it may be considered the gem of Orissa architecture."\(^6\)

Fergusson characterizes the Orissan temple as a pure and homogeneous expression of the "Indo-Aryan" now usually

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6. Ibid. p. 419.
referred to as the Northern or Nāgara style, and states that from the earliest to the latest examples "the style steadily progresses without any interruption or admixture of foreign elements". He further states that the style in Orissa "is perfectly pure, being unmixed with any other, and thus forms one of the most compact and homogeneous architectural groups in India".

At certain points, he seems to realise that there are exceptions to this generalisation. While referring to the Paraśurāmeśvara temple he says that "its style is certainly different from the early Keśarī temples, and more like what we find in Dharwar and at other places outside the province". He says that there are two styles of Orissan architecture, one represented by the temples of Paraśurāmeśvara and Mukteśvara, and the second by the Liṅgarāja temple, which he felt to be totally indigenous. He views the two groups as "sister styles" which ran side by side during the whole course of development. He further points out that "about one-half of the older temples in Orissa follow the type of the great temple, and one-half that of Mukteśvara; but the two get confounded together in the 8th and 9th centuries, and are mixed together into what may almost be called a new style in the Rājarāṇi and temples of the 10th and 11th centuries A.D".

The dates of different temples as determined by him are totally arbitrary and are proved wrong by recent researches.

7. Ibid. p.435.
8. Ibid. p.414.
He assigns all the temples except that of the Jagannāth temple of Puri, including the Konārk to the rule of the Keśarī dynasty. He puts the date of the Paraśurāmeśvara and the Mukteśvara temple between 500-600 A.D., and that of the Liṅgarāja to 637 A.D. Inspite of these erroneous references his work should be regarded with respect for it made substantial contributions in the field of Orissan temples studies, particularly his drawings of Konārk temple throws light on the condition of the temple during the time of his visit.

Rajendralala Mitra in his work *Antiquities of Orissa* - 1875-1880 gives us a lengthy summary of Orissan temple and discusses the origin of Indian architecture and its background. He attached, however, more importance to the place where the temples stood, the festivals and rituals associated with the temples, rather than to their architectural and sculptural studies. While referring to the Mukteśvara temple he correctly writes "the first of these is the smallest of the four, but it is at the same time the handsomest - a charming epitome of the perfection of Orissan temple architecture - faded - colourless - joyless - but beautiful past effacing even by the decay of a thousand years, which has furrowed its brow, and wrought wrinkles on its once glistening surface".

He further states that "the temple barely 35 ft. high, and the porch 25 ft; but the parts are so adjusted, so adapted

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to each other, that the eye fails to detect anything puny, or trite, or common-place in any part of the edifice". He refutes the charges that anything showing exceptional merit in Indian art must be of some foreign origin - that is Classical Greek origin. And this exceptionality of the Muktesvara is evident when he states "the ornamentation is of the most sumptuous description sculptured and finished with the greatest care and taste". However, Mitra's discussion of Orissan temple architecture in general and of Bhubaneswar in particular is very inadequate. His account on the Muketesvara is just about four pages which is certainly meagre. He also failed to utilise the Orissan Silpaśāstra texts to explain the architectural details of the temple. But on the whole Rajendralala Mitra gives a dependable idea of Orissan art and the temples of Bhubaneswar.

W.W. Hunter in his book Orissa or the Vicissitudes of an Indian Province under native and British Rule published in 1872 discusses Bhubaneswar, the temple city of Śiva and provides us with a good amount of religious history of Bhubaneswar. He writes that "For 150 years Buddhism and Śiva-worship struggled for the victory. At the end of that period the contest had practically ceased. The reigning monarch was a worshipper of the All - Destroyer, with Bhubaneswar, the temple city of Śiva, as his capital. Year after year the

15. Ibid. p. 157.
Buddhist hermits, in their cave dwellings, gazed across the five miles of fruit-bearing groves towards the great tower of Śiva, slowly rising in the distance. Of the 7000 shrines which once clustered around it, not more than 500 or 600 now survive. They exhibit every stage of Orissan art, from the rough conception of the 6th century, through the exquisite designs and ungrudging artistic toil of the twelfth, to the hurried and dishonest stucco-like make-believes of Hindu architecture at the present day".16

Hunter also refer to the spontaneous transference of the regal religion, Śaivism, to the status of the peoples religion. In his own words, "The religion of royalty everywhere becomes sooner or later, a religion of luxury. The sixty-three kings of the lion-line not only built temples, but endowed them with noble estates and covered the country with settlement of priests. Śiva-worship, although the creed of the dynasty almost from the first, very slowly became the accepted faith of the people".17

The annual reports of the Archaeological Survey of India between the period 1871 and 1887 has made several references about the ruined condition of temples of the then period. 18

Temples situated even on the remotest of places found a place in their report. The report was of very general type and the architectural and sculptural programme was not analysed. J.D.Beglar who has reported about the archaeological remain of Orissa did not include Bhubaneswar temples in his survey as the place was already covered by R.L.Mitra.

M.H.Arnot in his "Report with Photographs of the Repairs executed to some of the principle temples of Bhubaneswar and caves in the Khandagiri and Udayagiri hills, Orissa" between 1898 and 1903 gives us some interesting "before and after" views of the key temples of Bhubaneswar.

In 1908 M.M.Chakravarti published a few drawings on some temples of Orissa.19 Nagendra Nath Vasu undertook a survey of the archaeological remains of the erstwhile princely state of Mayurbhanj. In his report published in 1911 he mentioned a few ancient temples of the state.20 As his work is categorised to a specified area, it cannot be regarded as a yardstick for the purpose of studying Orissan temples.

M.M.Ganguly in his work Orissa and Her Remains - 1912 gives us a clearer idea of the salient features of a temple. His study was more scientific than the others who had yet

done anything on temples. Ganguly in his study of the Agni Purāṇa found that the placement and iconography of the Dikpālas, had much correspondence to the placement of images on the temple. This observation of Ganguly was further strengthened, when by his observation he saw that some of the ritual procedures recommended during the construction of a temple were still being observed in the sites of new shrines in Orissa. It was M.M. Ganguly who took the first step towards a more detailed study of iconography.

R.D. Banerji in his work on Orissan temple architecture has made some contributions. Previous works and researches had mainly focused on the temples of Bhubaneswar. But Banerji widened the horizon of study by taking up the temples of Baudh and Gandharāḍī. R.D. Banerji says that the temples of Orissa fall into three groups. He says that the Śikharas (shape of temple) have been the constant principle in the evolution of Indian temples. He places Paraśurāmeśvara, the twin temples at Gandharāḍī and the Mukteśvara in the first group. The second group consists of the three Śiva temples at Baudh, the khiching temple and some temples of Bhubaneswar - all these have been grouped together because they all lack the Jagamohana or Forehall. The third group consists of the Liṅgarāja, Anantavāsudeva and Brahmaśvara temple - the binding factor has been their tall Śikharas. Pointing out R.D. Banerji's

inadequacies in observation N.K.Bose writes "as they were not in touch with Indian craftsmen, they lost the means of gaining an insight into the traditional point of view in regard to architecture. They did not know how buildings and temples were classified by the builders themselves, what distinctions were drawn between different varieties of temples, which were considered the finer points in the building - technique and so forth". 23

Nirmal Kumar Bose in his work Canons of Orissan Architecture-1932 has made an extensive study of the Bhuvanapradîpa (a late medieval Śilpa-Śāstra). N.K.Bose does not give a translation of the text, but he arranged the materials in it according to specific topics - classification of the temple, its different parts etc., but does not follow the order as given in the original text precisely. It was he who set up a standardized set of terms for the various parts of a typical Orissan temple. It also gives in the analysis of the system of proportion for the different temples.

Thus we can say that N.K.Bose's work helps us in knowing the various types of temples, their different components and their relative measurements. It provides us with the basic knowledge which is required for the study of temple architecture. However, it does not provide us with a comprehensive picture of the evolution of temple architecture, the changes that it

underwent with the passage of time, and whether any external factor influenced the temple's decorative programme.

Stella Kramrisch in her articles "Kaliṅga Temples" and "The Walls of Orissan Temple" in 1934 and 1947 changed the focus from studying a Orissan temple from the archaeological aspect to art history - driving the nail on visual properties. She defined the many parts of a temple and finally concludes in showing how they unite together to produce a cohesive whole and further traces the nature of Orissan temple's stylistic development.

In putting forth her theory, Kramrisch compares the Paraśurāmeśvara with the Mukteśvara, where she shows the squat, squarish images of the 7th century Paraśurāmeśvara as against the 10th century Mukteśvara, which has a three dimension effect.

The first serious work on the Indian architecture employing standard art historical method was that of Percy Brown. His work mainly concerns with those aspects of history which Stella Kramrisch neglected i.e. chronology, stylistic development and inter regional influences. In Chapter XXI he deals with the Orissan temples (800 AD to 1250 AD) under the heading "The Northern or Indo Aryan Style". Here he writes "the temples

of Orissa provide the most logical beginning for a study of the Indo-Aryan style".  
This chapter on Orissa is a brief study of the main monuments, but is quite enough to give us a clear cut idea of the broad stylistic development of the temples. He groups the temples of Orissa into three periods according to their style and date. The first as the Early Period - 750 AD to 900 AD. The second as the Middle Period - 900 AD to 1100 AD. The third as the later period 1100 AD to 1250 AD. 
In this respect his method of study appears to be more scientific. However, his inadequate analysis of certain features led him to draw a wrong chronology of the temples. For example, his observation that the method of construction of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple is an improvement upon the earlier Chalukyan temple of Aihole and so the former can be assigned to the close of the 8th century AD is absolutely wrong.

In 1953 S.K.Saraswati wrote an article on the "Temples of Orissa" which gives us a thorough description of the general form of the Orissan temple and its various parts. This work threw more light and was much more clear than any of the

26. Ibid. p. 101
27. Percy Brown, Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Periods) p. 102.
28. Ibid. p. 103.
previous works done. Saraswati's view is that Orissan temple is a pure reflection of the "original archetype" of the Nāgara style. In justifying this, he has cited the Rājarānī temple, where the prominent śikhara clusters are not products of Central Indian influence but originated in Orissa, developing logically from the rounding of the kanika and rāhā projections, seen in an early stage on the Mukteśvara temple.\(^{30}\)

Archaeological Remains of Bhubaneswar\(^{31}\) by K.C.Panigrahi is the first work on Orissan architecture at a single place. This work is not only elaborate, but deals with the monuments within their historical context. It also proposes a meticulously worked out chronology of the temples of Bhubaneswar. Along with art history it gives us much information on the political and religious history which cannot be found elsewhere.

The sources upon which Panigrahi depends most heavily in formulating his chronology are the inscriptions found on some of the temples. He gives attention to the various historical sources, which helps us to associate a particular temple with a particular dynasty and ruler.

Panigrahi concludes his stand on chronology by placing the temples of Bhubaneswar into several groups based on epigraphic evidences. However, his work is not a comprehensive one,

\(^{30}\) Ibid. pp. 240, 243, 244.

for many aspects of a temple has been neglected by him, for example, he does not show how the various components of a temple have evolved through the ages.

Bhubaneswar, a book by Debala Mitra published by the Archaeological Survey of India provides a highly condensed summary of Panigrahi's findings. It gives us a concise, yet thorough general description of the major temples. It describes the architectural and sculptural programme of individual temples of Bhubaneswar spanning a period from the 6th century to the 15th century AD. This book being so condensed serves us as a good reference book.

After a long gap of thirty years, the study of Orissan Šilpa Śāstra started by N.K. Bose was again taken up by Alice Boner and Pandit S.R. Sarma, whose critical edition and translation of the Šilpa Prakāśa was published in 1966. This publication was regarded as a landmark discovery of unmatched importance on the study of Indian temple architecture. It was unique for it had a detailed technical description of the Vimāṇa. In addition, it had iconographical descriptions of prominent images and motifs on Orissan temples. Boner was highly praised by critics for her scholarly presentation of the text.

There are, however, serious question regarding the authenticity of the Šilpa Prakāśa. According to D.P. Das, the

language seems to be very late, particularly in regard to the Oriya elements, which are not thought to have been developed by the twelfth century A.D.

Vidya Dehejia in her work *Early Stone Temples of Orissa* 1979 deals with Orissan architecture from 600 to 1000 AD. She discusses the earliest known examples through those in early mature style, exemplified by the Mukteśvara temple.

V. Dehejia groups the temples into three broad categories or phases. Formative (with two subdivision), Transitional and Culminative. She assigns the following dates to the three formulated periods - 600-750; 700-850; 830-950 AD respectively. She further says that the dates she suggests for these three phases must remain tentative because unfortunately neither historical nor palaeographic evidence is conclusive in this respect.

The name of Charles Louis Fabri needs mention while dealing with the subject matter of Orissan temple art. Fabri writes that the Orissan temple appears on the scene, "a complete masterpiece, with no hesitating beginnings". And this sudden emergence of Orissan temple architecture has again been explained by Fabri, who maintains that the explanation lies in the previous

35. Ibid. p. 103.
Buddhist architecture of Orissa. He says that "further excavation will, without a shadow of doubt, support the contention that Hindu temple architecture had burst into perfection so rapidly, precisely because the ground had been so well prepared for it by Buddhist monastic and ecclesiastic architecture". However, he still admits that the "convention of the temple tower remains a puzzle". His hypothesis is that the Buddhists evolved the Śikhara in an intermediary stage. Fabri's theory of Buddhist origin is unacceptable because Ratnagiri monastery is placed later than the earliest temples.

From these writings we can very explicitly see Fabri's buddhistic bias. And it is this buddhistic bias that has prevented him from arriving at a right conclusion regarding the nature of Orissan temple art. To understand correctly the emergence of Orissan temple as a whole it is absolutely necessary to consider the subject in a wider perspective.

Thomas Donaldson's work Hindu Temple Art of Orissa is one of the most ambitious study on Orissan architecture. This work documents in a highly detailed fashion almost every sculptural image or motif appearing on the temples of Orissa, from the images of deities within the wall niches to the all-pervasive scroll work. In his work Donaldson widens the spectrum

36. Ibid. p. 106
of his study of monuments to places outside Bhubaneswar. He defines the sculptures of each individual temple in a very disciplined manner - starting from the plinth and base mouldings and gradually moving on to the lower and upper walls, and finally finishing off in the śikhara. Donaldson's work is an encyclopedia of information on the art of Orissan temple. It helps us in furthering our knowledge on the stylistic growth and chronology of Orissan temples. While Donaldson's descriptions are detailed and objectively accurate, they do not form part of a comparative method which would help us to see the development from monument to monument.

Donaldson has made some changes in the terminology (words used for different components of a temple) which was prepared by N.K. Bose. And the changes which he has made have not been convincingly forwarded. He further says that Orissan temples were highly indebted to outside influence. Here we can say that the Orissan style belongs to the Northern Śikhara type which has been termed as the Nāgara style. Hence, most of the temples and architectural monuments of this style will definitely bear some resemblance with one another.

The four sanskrit works viz. the Ekāmra-Purāṇa, Svarṇadri-Mahodaya, Ekāmra-Chandrikā and the Kapila-Sāṁhitā profess to deal with the origin and history of the notable temples at Bhubaneswar. They also deals with such other matters like the rituals, festivals and the benefit that one gets from worshipping
a particular deity. It was Pandit Ratnakara Gargabatu who for the first time published these works. M.M. Ganguly had seen the Kapila-Saṁhitā and the Ekāmra-Purāṇa but had missed some tradition recorded in them which could have been used as corroborative evidences for the purpose of history. However, these works give us some definite information. They tell us the names of the temples together with their respective distances and directions. They also give us an idea about the number of temples that existed when these works were compiled. Though these works were composed at different times, none of them can be placed earlier than the third quarter of the 13th century, because all of them have mentioned the name of the Ananta-Vāsudeva temple which was built in 1278 AD.

Many other books appearing in the last twenty years on Orissan architecture have contributed little or no new information on ideas and tend to be popular rather than scholarly in nature, basing on the factual information as given by Panigrahi or Debala Mitra earlier. This class of work include Kanwar Lal's Temples and Sculptures of Bhubaneswar, and other guide books meant for tourist.

It is clear from this that the books on Orissan temple architecture have been exceedingly general in nature. A march in this direction will lead to reproduction of the same old

findings. What is necessary now is an extensive and intensive study on a single temple, focussing on the various individual sculptural characters, its iconography, its style and workmanship.

This work attempts to show the Muktesvara temple as a cohesive unit, and the rise of the mature style in the art of temple building in Orissa. The purpose of this research is to present the Muktesvara temple in its proper perspective. The temple marks a sudden change in the sense, that it presents some features of the early Orissan style, while also unfolding certain elements of the later style. Dedicated to Śiva the temple has been assigned to the 10th century AD. It is said that this temple best integrates the new architectural features and decorative motifs filtering into Eastern Orissa via the upper Mahānadi Valley with the indigenous traditions.

Although small, the deul rising only to a height of 10.42 metres, it has been aptly described as "the gem of Orissan architecture", "as a dream realised in sandstone", a monument in which sculpture and architecture are in complete harmony with each other.

It is the earliest surviving example of what will become the standard temple plan, a rekha type deul with curvilinear spire, and a pidhā type jagamohana with a stepped pyramidal roof. We also have, for the first time at Bhubaneswar, a perfect and natural joining of the deul with the jagamohana without the crude overlapping of the sanctum decoration by
the jagamohana roof, noticed in so many other temples, suggesting that the two structures were conceived as a uniform complex in the original plan. This temple is particularly important in tracing out the gradual development of the Hindu temples in Orissa from the 9th century AD onwards, to a mature style of temple architecture. It demarcates the end of the earlier style and the ushering in of a new and mature phase in the course of Orissan temple architecture.