



Indian Council of Historical Research

Sponsored National Seminar

On

Indigenous Knowledge System: Revisiting to Odishan *Śilpa* Texts

School of History, Gangadhar Meher University, Amruta Vihar, Sambalpur

January 11-12 (Saturday-Sunday), 2025



About the Seminar

The temples of Odisha serve as profound symbols of the cosmos, intricately designed to channel cosmic powers that guide the evolution of humanity. The architects, through their skill and creativity, crafted these sacred spaces not only as places of worship but as vessels for divine energy and enlightenment. This seminar will explore the rich heritage of Odia temple architecture, emphasizing the indigenous texts known as the *Śilpa-śāstras* and how they embody the identity of the Odia people.

The temple architecture of Odisha, flourishing between the 6th and 14th centuries CE, reflects a distinct progression through three main phases: the early phase (6th-9th centuries), the mature phase (10th-12th centuries), and the climax phase (12th-14th centuries). Notable temples from these periods include the Paraśurāmeśvara and Vaitāla from the early phase, Mukteśvara and Rājārāṇī from the mature phase, and the renowned Jagannātha temple of Puri from the climax phase. In addition to these structures, inscriptions, manuscripts, and visual resources like sculptures and paintings provide essential insights into the socio-religious context of Odisha. Texts such as the *Ekāmra Purāṇa* and *Śiva Purāṇa* offer invaluable information about the beliefs, practices, and historical developments surrounding temple architecture. The *Śilpa-śāstras*, or canons of architecture, form a cornerstone of Odia architectural studies. They categorize temples into distinct styles and provide guidelines for their construction, emphasizing the symbolic connection between architecture and the divine. Texts like the *Bhubana Pradīpa* classify temples into three main types: *Rekhā*, *Pīḍhā*, and *Khākarā*, each with unique characteristics that reflect the spiritual and cosmological dimensions of Odia beliefs.

Odisha temples are notable for their intricate layouts and distinct styles. The typical temple comprises a sanctum (*vimāna*) and a frontal hall (*mūkhasālā*). The sanctum houses the deity, while the hall serves as a gathering space for devotees. The relationship between the two is often described in terms of traditional beliefs, likening the main temple to a bridegroom and the hall to a bride. The interior design of these temples typically follows a square or star-shaped plan, symbolizing the cosmic order. The structures are adorned with elaborate sculptures, depicting not only religious iconography but also themes of love and sensuality, reflecting a broader understanding of Eros as a divine force. These motifs serve an intermediary role, bridging the material and spiritual realms.

The temples of Odisha encapsulate a rich tapestry of architectural innovation, spiritual significance, and cultural identity. Through the *Śilpa-śāstras* and the enduring legacy of temple building, the architects of Odisha crafted sacred spaces that resonate with cosmic energies, guiding the spiritual evolution of humanity. The exploration of these temples reveals not only the artistic prowess of their creators but also the profound connection between the built environment and the divine, making them enduring symbols of Odia identity and heritage. As we study these structures, we gain insight into the values, beliefs, and aspirations of the people who constructed them, offering a timeless reflection of our collective quest for meaning and transcendence.

Subtheme:

1. Art and Architecture
2. Iconography & *Śilpa* Texts
3. Odishan temple architecture
4. Rock Art
5. Forts and Fortifications
6. Buddhist Art and Architecture
7. Jain Art and Architecture
8. Recent archaeological Excavations and explorations

About Gangadhar University and Sambalpur

The institute was upgraded from a college to a university in 2015. Sambalpur City, located on the banks of the Mahanadi River in the western part of Odisha, was founded in the 16th century by the Chouhan ruler. Today, it is a thriving municipal corporation and an emerging education hub, home to four universities, an Indian Institute of Management (IIM), the oldest engineering college in Odisha, and a medical college. Located just 9 km from Sambalpur, the Hirakud Dam, the longest earthen dam in the world, is a stunning site offering opportunities for water sports. Sambalpur is renowned for the goddess Samaleswari and its globally recognized warp and weft Bandha textiles.

About the Department:

The Dept. of History came into existence in 1944 catering to the academic needs of the U.G. and P.G. students of this region in particular and of Odisha in general. After the transformation of G.M. College into G. M. University in 2015, the Department also got its new identity as School of History and presently offers U.G., P.G. and Ph.D courses with 48, 78, and 16 seats respectively. The Department is endowed with outstanding faculty members, committed to innovative pedagogic practices and with cutting-edge research interests in History. According to the Objective of the University much emphasis is given on local history, culture, art, architecture, tradition, customs, economic activities, beliefs, technologies and resources in the course content. In the process of teaching ancient Indian coins and inscriptions, emphasis is placed on the allusions to various tribal clans and organizations. Fieldwork and Practical's are an essential component of the Postgraduate Curriculum. Students receive field training while pursuing their education. For a deeper comprehension of ancient civilization, students are introduced to all the theoretical and practical facets of comparing data from ethnography and archaeology, including the use of ethnographic analogies and archaeological ethnography. School of History carried out Archaeological Excavation in Barapali Asurgarh, District Baragarh (Odisha) during the Field Season 2021–22. The School of History has organized several awareness programs to promote the preservation of local heritage and culture. In a bid to inspire both students and the local community, the department has established a museum that houses a rich collection of prehistoric tools, protohistoric artifacts, early historical material culture, and medieval antiquities.

Arriving at Sambalpur

Sambalpur is connected with the major Railway networks of the country. Sambalpur is connected with other parts of India by railways and by road. Jharsuguda is a major Railway junction, 50 km away from Sambalpur, and is connected well with the Tier I cities of India. The nearest airport is at Jharsuguda which is connected with major metros of India. If you are interested to come via the state capital i.e. Bhubaneswar, there are train services throughout the day from Bhubaneswar Railway Station to Sambalpur or Jharsuguda.

Must-Visit Destinations in Sambalpur

If you're seeking a meaningful and enriching experience, Sambalpur offers a variety of incredible places to explore. Some of the top attractions include Samaleswari Temple, Budharaja Hill, the Wild Animal Conservation Centre, Regional Art Gallery, Ghanteswari Temple, Hirakud Dam, and the iconic Huma Leaning Temple. Each location provides a unique glimpse into the culture, nature, and heritage of this

fascinating region.

Weather

The weather of Sambalpur in January will be pleasant with minimum temperature in the night around 14° C and maximum day time temperature around 27° C. You can equip yourself with warm clothing accordingly.

Exhibition and Poster Presentation

The School of History, GM University, will provide stalls for showcasing documents, photographs, and poster presentations. Scholars interested in participating in the exhibition or poster presentation can contact the Local Secretary for further details.

Accommodation:

We are committed to providing our delegates with a memorable experience by offering accommodation on our campus. Accommodation in GM University Hostels will be on a shared basis, with common washrooms and toilets. Room allocation will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. Hotel accommodation will be available from the evening of January 10, 2025, to the morning of January 12, 2025. Delegates staying in university hostels are advised to bring their own bed sheets, mosquito repellent, and other personal necessities. Delegates traveling with their families are kindly requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. Transportation will be provided only for delegates staying outside the campus.

Registration fee: Kindly send your registration fees Rs. 700 (Rs. 500 for students) along with the filled in registration form, your complete research paper/abstract and your itinerary (with clear mention of your arrival and leaving time and date) by or before 5th January, 2025 positively so that we can assure your accommodation and include presentation of your research paper in the academic programme. Please send your filled in registration forms to Dr Santosh Kumar Mallik, convener of the seminar. Registration forms have been given at the end of this circular. Limited sharing accommodation will be arranged for the registered delegates from whom we will receive the request on or before 5th January 2025. After 6th January 2025 the delegates have to make their own arrangement for stay.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Santosh Kumar Mallik
Convener

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January 11-12 (Saturday-Sunday), 2025

To,

Dr Santosh Kumar Mallik

Convener

School of History

Gangadhar Meher University, Amruta Vihar

Sambalpur, Odisha- 768004

Mobile: 90134 70778/9754875987

Surname... .. : ..First name(s)... ..Title... ..

Sex -----Age

Address -----

-----Post Code-----

Email:----- Contact No.-----

Title of the Paper -----

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Details of the delegate fee (Pl attach remittance receipt).....

Date and time of Arrival:

Name and No. of Train/Flight:

Date and Time of Departure:

Food Preference: Vegetarian: Non-Vegetarian:

Signature with Date