

Study Material for M.A. 4th Semester, A.I.H.C and Archaeology

Course No. 403 (Indian Temple Architecture)

Unit-3: Eastern Ganga Architecture

Lecture 2

By Professor S.K.Dwivedi

Sun Temple Konark

- 1) Konark is located about 18 miles in the north eastern direction along the sea coast from Puri. This temple is now in a ruined state. Facing east, it is dedicated to Sun-God and was built by the Ganga king Narasimhadeva first (AD 1238-64). This magnificent temple was conceived as a huge chariot of Sun-God with exquisitely carved 24 wheels (12 pairs) dragged by rearing horses. It is surrounded by an extensive compound wall.
- 2) On plan, this colossal temple consists of a sanctum, a Jagamohana and a detached nata-Mandapa (dancing hall) in the same axis. The bhoga-Mandapa (Hall of offerings) is absent here. The compound of this temple has three entrance gates. A number of small subsidiary shrines and some obscure structures are also enclosed within the campus. The roofs of sanctum and dancing hall are now lost, only Jagamohana is standing intact with its roof. The super structure (including sikhara) over the sanctum was once definitely the tallest in Orissa, possibly about 240 feet high. The lofty platform having bold mouldings (bandhanas) and offset projections are studded with intricate sculptures of a highly erotic character. The temple stands on a common platform.
- 3) This temple is approached on each side by a flight of steps, guarded by big animal figures. The temple is Pancharatha on plan and in elevation. Though, the sanctum has lost its sikhara but shows three bigger sized images of Sun-God in the niches of three cardinal directions. The bruised wall of Jagamohana is embellished with the sculpture and decorative motifs. The roof of Jagamohana arranged with the pidhas (horizontal tiers) is fashioned in three stages with the charming life size images.
- 4) Entire structure of this temple is surmounted by a huge figure of bell showing a real contrast of light and shade. The grandeur of this temple seems to be majestic and divine. The chief architect who had conceptualised this temple with profuse imagery was definitely a divine personality like Visvakarma. It seems to be a grandest monument of India.