



RAS

Rajasthan Administrative Services

Rajasthan Public Service Commission

Volume – 5

Indian Art & Culture



RAS

Indian Art & Culture

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Architecture is art & science which deals with designing building and non building structures. Architecture began in India from Indus valley civilization and led to creation of various structures like temples, Stupas, Rock-cut Caves, Palaces, Forts etc.

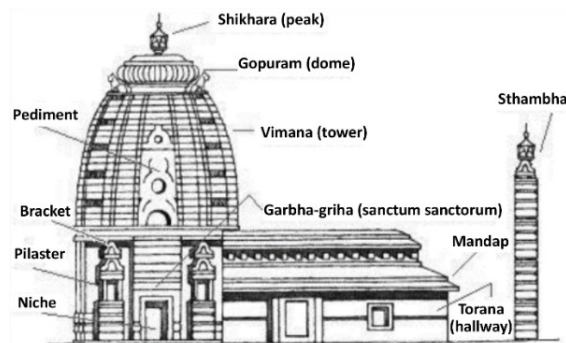
Temple Architecture

Temple architecture in India developed during the Gupta age in the 4th to 5th century CE. The first Hindu temples were built from rock-cut caves which were influenced by Buddhist structures such as stupas. During this period, free-standing temples were built extensively. Dashavatara temple (Deogarh, Jhansi) and brick temple (Bhitargaon, Kanpur) are some examples of temples built during this period.

The architectural principles of Hindu temples in India are described in Shilpa Shastra which mentions three main types of temple architecture – Nagara style, the Dravida style, and the Vesara or Mixed style.

Basic Structure of a Hindu temple

1. **Garbhagriha (Sanctum Sanctorum)**- The Garbhagriha, literally called the 'womb house', is made to house the main deity inside the temple. Earlier in the days, it had a single entrance which later grew into many chambers.
2. **Mandapa**- It is the entrance of the temple which may be a portico or colonnaded hall that incorporates space for a large number of worshippers. Some temples have multiple mandapas in different sizes named Ardhmandapa (entrance porch forming a transitional area between the outside and a mandap of the temple) and Mahamandapa (main assembly hall in the temple where devotees gather for ceremonies and group prayer). These are present only in few temples.
3. **Shikhara/Vimana**- It is a mountain-like spire, which is in the shape of a curving Shikhar in North India and a pyramidal tower (called vimana) in South India.

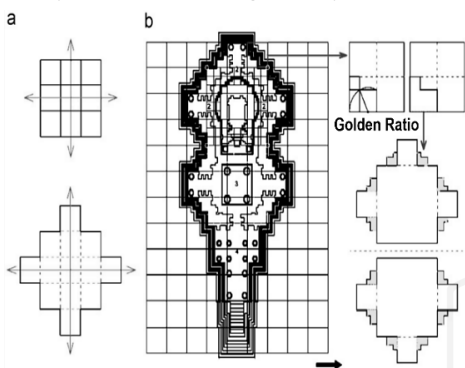


4. **Vahana**- It is the mount or vehicle of the temple's main deity which is placed before the garbhagriha.
5. **Amalak**- A stone disc like structure crowning the top of the North Indian style shikhara.
6. **Kalasha**- Wide-mouthed pot or ornamental pot-design decorating the shikhara in North Indian temples.
7. **Antarala**- A transition area between the Garbhagriha and the temple's main hall (mandapa)
8. **Jagati**- A raised platform for sitting and praying and is common in North Indian temples.

Use of fractal geometry in temple architecture

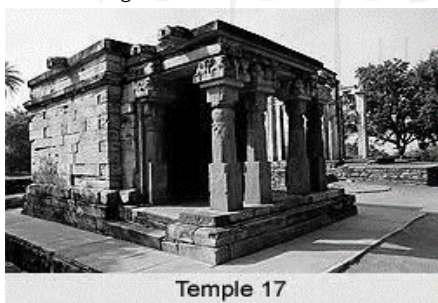
- Geometry of a plan starts with a line which then forms an angle, then triangle, square, circle and so on ultimately resulting in complex forms.
- This complexity results in self-similarity which leads to occurrence of fractal geometry.
- The plan of the Hindu temple strictly follows the principles described in Puranas related to the Vastupurushamandala.
- There are mainly two types of mandalas, one is with sixty-four squares and another with eighty-one squares where each square is dedicated to a deity.
- Starting with Mukhamandapa, Ardhmandapa, and finally the Maha Mandapa, comes the Mulaprasada, which encloses the Garbhagriha. The enclosures of these halls and the spaces gradually take the shape following the fractal theory.

- Fractal also has a great impact on temple elevations in both two-dimensions and three dimensions.
- Fractal works in the Amlaka part by creating self-similar ribs.
- The fractal theory fully supports the Hindu philosophical concept of “one among all, all is one”. It brings about “order in chaos” and thereby “a beauty in complexity”.
- The Surya kund at Modhera in Gujarat is a classic example of use of fractal geometry in Indian temples.



Stages of Temple Architecture

The development of temple architecture in India followed a gradual progression starting with a square building with a flat roof in the initial stage to circular buildings with sculptured shikhara in the later stages. This development can be observed in five stages-



First Stage

1. Square-shaped temple with a flat roof
2. Shallow-pillared approach at the front
3. The structure was built on low platform
4. Garbhagriha or the sanctum sanctorum lay at the center of the temple
5. A single entrance to the temple

Examples- Vishnu Varaha temples at Eran in MP, Kankali temple, Tigwa and Temple no. 17 at Sanchi.

Second Stage

1. Continued with the flat roofed temples and squared-pillared approach from the first stage.
2. Temples built on higher or upraised platforms
3. Addition of storeys to some structures
4. Addition of a covered ambulatory passageway around the sanctum sanctorum which was used as Pradakshina path.



Examples- Parvati temple at MP and Ladkhan temple at Aihole, Karnataka.

Third Stage

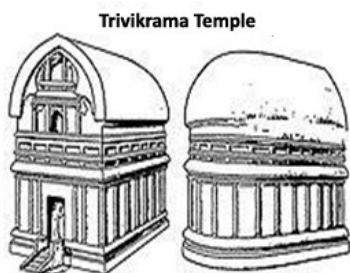
1. Most of the characteristics of stage two carried forward with the emergence of Shikhara (curvilinear tower) in place of flat roofs.
2. “Nagara Style” temple making is said to be the success of the third stage of temple making.
3. **Panchayatana style** of temple making was introduced. In this style, there were four subsidiary shrines along with the main temple which housed the principal deity. The subsidiary shrines were placed opposite to each other on either side of the mandap, which represented a crucified ground plan.



Examples - Dasavatara temple in Deogarh, U.P. and Durga temple at Aihole, Karnataka.

Fourth Stage

1. All the features of the third stage carried forward in this stage. Only the main temple became more rectangular in shape.
2. Barrel-vaulted roof above.



Examples- Ter temple at Solapur and Kapoteswara temple at Cazorla (Andhra Pradesh).

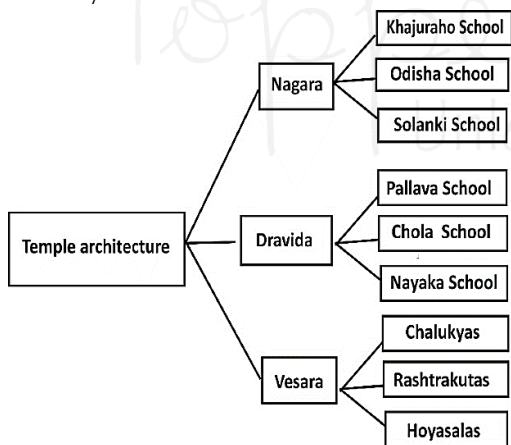
Fifth Stage

1. Introduction of circular temples with shallow rectangular projections.
2. Rest all the features of previous stages continued.

Examples- Maniyar Math at Rajgir.

Styles of Temple Architecture

As mentioned in the Shilpa Shastra, there are three main types of temple architecture- the Nagara style, the Dravida style and the Vesara style.

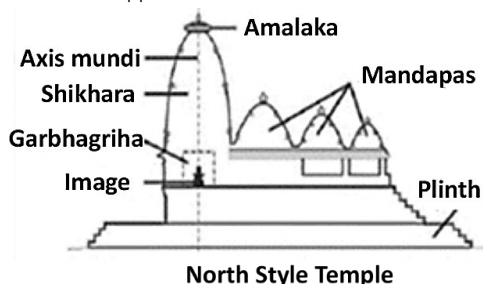


The Nagara or North Indian Temple Style

- Became popular in northern India from the 5th century AD onwards
- The temples are built on a stone platform with steps leading up to it.
- The temples follow the Panchayatana style of temple making- 4 smaller temples in the corners. Towers, known as shikharas, rise high and upward in a

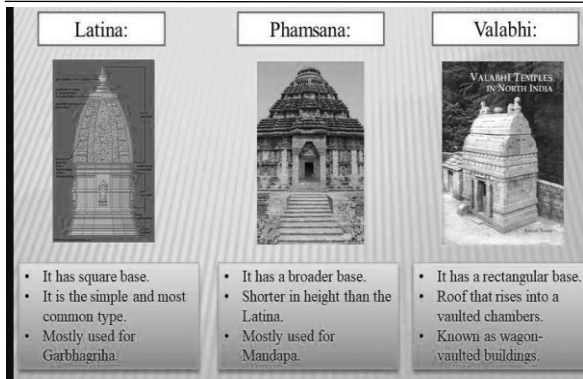


curved pyramidal pattern, highlighting the temple's vertical thrust ending in a horizontal fluted disc known as an amalaka topped with a kalash or vase.



- Presence of shikaras (spiral roofs), the garbhagriha (sanctum) and the mandap (pillared hall).
- Assembly halls present before the principal shrine.
- While the earliest temples had just one tower or shikhara, later temples had multiple Shikharas with the garbhagriha located directly under the tallest tower.
- Presence of *Amalak* at the top- a horizontal fluted disc at the vertical end of the Shikhara. Above amalaka, there is placed a spherical shaped *Kalash*.
- No water tanks or reservoirs located within the temple premises.
- Outside the garbhagriha, images of the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna were placed.
- The porticos had pillared approach.
- Covered ambulatory passageway or the pradakshina path.
- No elaborate boundary walls or gateways.
- A number of graduated projections (rathakas) are present.
- Based on the shape of Shikharas, Nagara temples can be classified into--

1. **Latina or rekha-prasad-** Shikhara is square at the base and walls curve or slope inward to a point on top.
2. **Phamsana-** these temple buildings tend to be broader and shorter than latina ones. Their Shikhara do not curve inwards, instead they slope upwards in a straight incline. Their roofs are poised of several slabs that gently rise to a single point over the centre of the building, unlike the Latina ones which look like sharply rising tall towers.
3. **Valabhi-** Rectangular buildings with a roof that rises into a vaulted chamber and are thus called 'wagon-vaulted buildings'. The vaulted chamber's edge is rounded, resembling the bamboo or wooden wagons pulled by bullocks in ancient times.



Examples of Nagara school – Dashavatara temple (Deogarh), Vishwanatha temple (Khajuraho), Lakshman Temple (Khajuraho), etc.

Under the Nagara style of temple architecture, three sub-schools emerged-

1. Khajuraho School
2. Odisha School
3. Solanki School

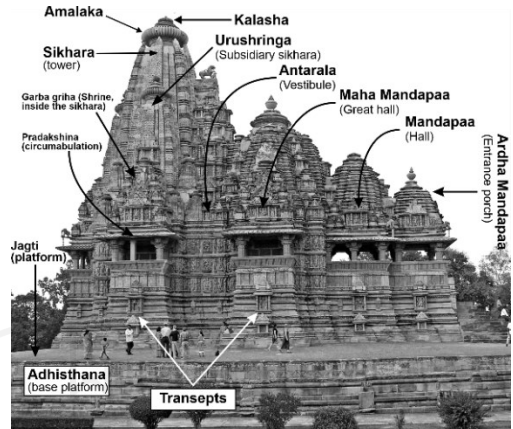
Temple Architecture of Chandela / Khajuraho School

- Khajuraho temples are known for their erotic sculptures. These sculptures are usually placed at the entrance of the temple or on an exterior wall or they may also be placed on the walls between the mandapa and the main shrine.



- The erotic expression is provided equal importance in human experience as spiritual chase, and it is viewed as component of a larger cosmic whole.
- The local style at Khajuraho is different from the Nagara Style as there is interregnum (called the antarala) between the Garbha-griha and Maha-mandapa. (In Nagara style, Garbha-griha and the Maha-mandapa are fused together).
- The largest temple at Khajuraho is the Kandariya Mahadeva temple, dedicated to Lord Siva. It is built in Panchayatana style. (4 smaller temples in the corners)
- Towers, known as shikharas, rise high and upward in a curved pyramidal pattern, highlighting the temple's vertical thrust ending in a horizontal fluted disc known as an amalaka topped with a kalash or vase.

- Another important temple in Khajuraho is the Lakshmana temple, dedicated to Vishnu and constructed in 954 by the Chandela king Dhanga.
- Apart from erotic sculptures, rest of the sculptures depict the everyday life of the common people such as women putting on makeup, playing games, etc.
- Temple walls are decorated with carvings of deities such as Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Agni and their spouses.



- Sandstone is used as building material.
- Temples are built on relatively upraised platforms.
- The temples followed the Panchayatana style and all had rekha-prasad shikhara.

Examples- The temple complex at Khajuraho, Chausath Yogini Temple, Kandariya Mahadev Temple, Chaturbhuja Temple, etc.

Temple Architecture of Solanki School

This school of temple architecture was patronized by Solanki rulers of Gujarat (11th to 13th century).

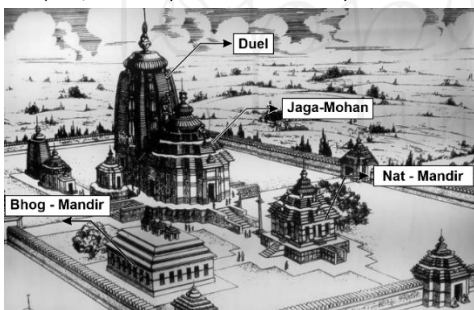
- Developed in the north-western part of India including Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- No carvings on temple walls.
- Presence of a step-tank, known as surya kund, within the temple premises is a unique feature of this school.
- A number of small shrines are carved in between the steps of the tank.
- Different types of stones are used for construction of the temples and these are of variant colours.
- While sandstone is the commonest, the most famed is the soft white marble which is also seen in some of the tenth to twelfth century Jain temples in Mount Abu.
- The temples are usually east-facing and are designed in such a way that every year, at the time of the equinoxes, the sun shines directly into this central shrine.

- There is no interregnum between the Garbhagriha and the mandapa.
- Torans or the arched gateways are present.
- Sculptures in western India and Rajasthan were very ornate, with the Jain Dilwara temples of Mount Abu accomplishing a marvelous architectural perfection in stone.
- Marble sculpture practises of Gujarat in Western India can be seen in the large quantity of intricately carved sculptures which beautify the Jain temples at Mount Abu, Palitana and Girnar.
- The beautiful figures of the four-armed Vishnu, the Hindu god of preservation, were customised in the 13th Century AD.

Examples- The Sun temple at Modhera, Dilwara temple in Mt. Abu, dedicated to Jain Tirthankaras, etc.

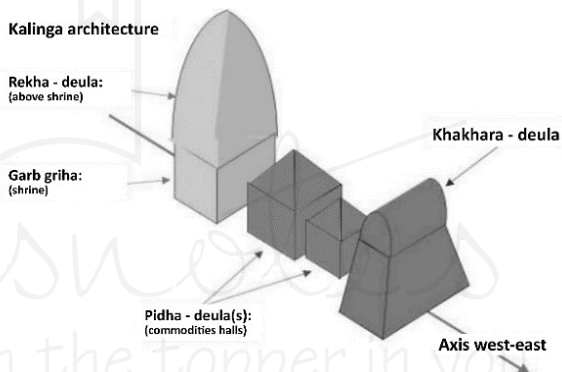
Temple Architecture of Odisha School

- By the middle of the ninth Century AD, a school of sculpture had grown in Orissa, which took lavish pride in the lovely forms of women, among other items. On the face of the walls, there are many sculptures of beautiful female figures. Many such examples of young and charming creatures with a seductive smile and luxurious hair full of jewelry can be found in Odisha temples, and they are known as *Nayikas*.



- The Kalinga or Odisha style of temple architecture is located in ancient Kalinga—modern Puri District, including Bhubaneswar or ancient Tribhuvaneshwara, Puri and Konark.
- Temple is divided into two parts- a tower (or Shikhara) and a hall. The tower is known as deul in Kalinga architecture and the hall or mandap is known as *jagmohan*.
- The Shikhara is vertical almost until the top when it suddenly curves sharply inwards. Lower upright portion is known as "*Bada*". The tall middle portion is known as "*Chapra*", over which is a flat fluted disk which was known as "*Amla*".

- The exterior walls of both the deul and the jagmohan are lavishly sculpted with architectural motifs and a profusion of figures. However, the interior walls are plain.
- Odisha temples usually have boundary walls.
- The ground plan of the main temple is usually square which as we move upwards, becomes circular in the crowning mastaka. Thus, cylindrical appearance in its length.
- The temples in Odisha have three types of Deula - Rekha Deula, Pidha / Bhadra Deula and Khakra Deula.
 1. **Rekha Deula-** It is a tall building with a shikhara. The most distinct example of Rekha Deula is the Lingaraj Temple of Bhubaneswar.
 2. **Pidha Deula** - It is a square building with a pyramid-shaped roof similar to the vimana. Konark Sun Temple is an example.
 3. **Khakhara Deula** - It is a rectangular building with a truncated pyramid-shaped roof, like the gopuras. One example is the Baitala Deula of Bhubaneswar, dedicated to Chamunda.



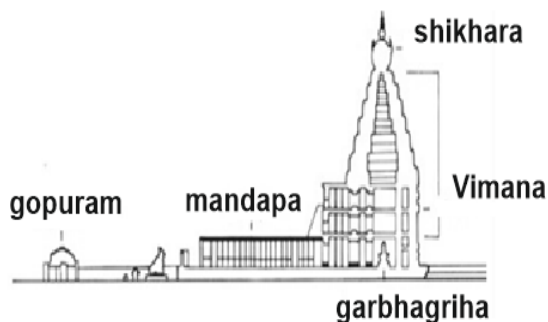
Examples- major temple sites are found in ancient Kalinga, modern Puri District, comprising Bhubaneswar or ancient Tribhuvaneshwara, Puri and Konark. The sun temple at Konark, Lingaraja temple built by the Ganga rulers, the Mukteshwar temple at Bhubaneshwar and the Jagannath temple at Puri are a few examples.

The Dravida or the South Indian Temple Style

- Emerged between the 7th to 18th century mainly in the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- The Dravidian temples are enclosed within high boundary walls unlike the Nagara temples.
- A high entrance gateway known as *Gopuram*, is present at the front wall in its centre which is heavily decorated and carved.



- The shape of the main temple tower known as *Vimana* is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving shikhara of North India.



- *Shikhara* is the crowning element at the top of the temple and is in the shape of an octagon. This is equivalent to the amalaka and kalasha of North Indian temples.
- Sculptures of fierce dwarapalas or the door-keepers are present at the entrance of the temple.
- A large water reservoir, or a temple tank, enclosed within the temple complex. (Temple tank is not found in Nagara Style of architecture)
- The temple premise is laid in Panchayatan style.
- The subsidiary shrines do not have vimanas.
- The main temple in which the garbhagriha is situated has, in fact, one of the smallest towers.
- The Garbhagriha and the assembly hall (Mandapa) are connected together through a vestibular tunnel called the *antarala*.

Sub-divisions of Dravida temples based on shapes. There are mainly five different shapes-

1. Square, generally called caturasra or Kuta
2. Rectangular or ayatasra or shala
3. Vrittayata or elliptical also called elephant backed or gaja-prishta
4. Circular or vritta
5. Octagonal or ashtasra

This is, however, a simplistic division of the subdivisions. Several different shapes can be combined at various times and in various locations to create their own distinct form.

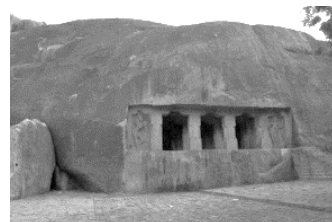
Examples- Brihadeshwara temple at Thanjavur, built about 1010 by Rajaraja 1, temple at Gangaikondacholapuram, built about 1025 by Rajendra Chola, Shore temple (Mahabalipuram), Meenakshi Temple (Madurai), etc.

Temple Architecture of Pallavas

The tradition of direct patronization of the temples began with the Pallavas. From the reign of Mahendravarman I, the Pallava king, finest examples of Pallava art were created in Tamil Nadu such as Shore Temple and 7 pagodas of Mahabalipuram. Some of the terrific sculptures that are recognized for their patronage are the Mahishasuramardini, Giri Govardhan panel, Trivikrama Vishnu Arjuna's penance or the Descent of the Ganga, Gajalakshmi and Anatasayanam. Pallava architecture shows the transition from the rock cut temples to the stone-built temples.

Mahendra Group or Mahendravarman style (600-630CE).

- The early buildings are generally attributed to the reign of Mahendravarman I.
- This stage marked the beginning of rock-cut temples.
- During this stage, the temples were called mandapas, unlike the Nagara temple style where mandapas meant assembly halls.
- **Example-** Mandagapattu rock cut temple- it is a single rock cut temple built without any wood, brick or metal. It is located near Villupuram in Tamil Nadu. Large dwarfals were present at the entrance of the temple which later became a characteristic of almost all south Indian temples. With no other construction materials used, it was truly an invention in the field of architecture. The pillars are carved to look like they're standing on the heads of lions.
- Mahendravarman I rock cut temples can be found in Tamil Nadu. The most important among them are Mamandur, Pallavaram, Vallam, Mahendravadi and Thalavanur



Narasimha Group or Mamalla group (630 to 668 AD)

- This stage of temple architecture is named after the Pallava ruler, Narasimhavarman I, also known as Mamalla.
- Starting from this stage, the rock-cut temples were decorated with intricate sculptures. At Mahabalipuram, there are excavated pillared halls and monolithic shrines known as Rathas.



Ratha temple Mahabalipuram

- Under Narasimhavarman, Port City of Mamallapuram was converted to a beautiful city of art and architecture. Mandapas became rathas or chariots and are named after the five Pandava brothers and Draupadi. Dharmaraja ratha was the biggest one while the Draupadi ratha was the smallest one. Mamallapuram's monolithic rathas are now known as Pancha Pandava Rathas. (Monolithic refers to the fact that each ratha or chariot was carved from a single piece of rock.)
- Dharmaraj Rath is considered as the precursor of Dravidian style of temple making.
- Mahishasura Mardhini Mandapa, a scene depicting the Goddess Durga's attack on Mahishasura can be seen. Arjuna's Penance at Mahabalipuram is also an important example.

Rajasimha Group (690 to 800 AD)

- This stage developed under the Pallava ruler, Rajasimhavarman also known as Narasimhavarman II.
- From this stage onwards, stone-built temples became more prominent compared to rock-cut temples.
- Examples- Shore Temple is a temple at Mahabalipuram built during the reign of Narsimhavarman II. This group of temples is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is the oldest structural temple (in contrast with rock cut temples) in India. This temple is also called Rajasimheswaram and it is the Crown of Pallava architecture.



Shore Temple Mahabalipuram

- Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchipuram and the Shore Temple at Mamallapura were built by using sandstones. The Shore temple at Mamallapuram is also filled with numerous sculptures.

Nandivarman Group (800 to 900 AD).

- Small temples were constructed during this period with features similar to the Dravidian style of temple architecture.
- Examples- Vaikuntha Perumal temple is located at Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu. It was built by Nandivarman. It is one of the 108 holiest Shrines of Vishnu.

Temple Architecture of Cholas

- The Chola period marked the culmination of Dravidian temple art.
- The Chola temples were bigger in scale than anything built by their predecessors, the Pallavas, the Chalukyas or the Pandyas.
- The pyramidal shaped vimana in Chola temples rises a massive seventy metres (approximately two hundred feet), topped by a monolithic shikhara which is an octagonal dome-shaped stupika.
- At the corner of the Shikharas, one can find huge Nandi figures.
- The dwarapalakas at the entrance to the mandapa which started from the Pallava period became a unique feature of the Chola Temples.
- Two large gopuras (gateway towers) are noticed for the first time in Chola temples and these are heavily decorated with sculptures.
- The vimana is decorated with hundreds of stucco figures. This tradition was carried forward by Maratha rulers too.
- The main deity of the temple is Shiva.
- The walls around the sanctum sanctorum are beautifully decorated with painted murals and sculptures.

Examples of Chola temple architecture

1. The Rajarajeswara or Brihadeswara temple at Tanjore/Thanjavur- It is the world's first complete "granite" temple. The temple was constructed during the period of Rajaraja Chola-I and is a part of UNESCO's World Heritage sites. The Vimana of the temple tower is 216 Feet in height and is one of the tallest buildings.
2. Brihadeswara temple at Gangaikondacholapuram- built by King Rajaraja's son Rajendra I, Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva in Tamil Nadu.



Brahadesshwarae Temple

Great Living Chola Temples is included in UNESCO World Heritage site. Completed between early 11th and the 12th century CE, the monuments include:

- Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur
- Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram
- Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram.

Temple Architecture of Nayaka School

- Presence of Prakars-huge corridors in the porticos around the garbhagriha along with roofed ambulatory passageways. The temple walls are intricately carved.
- Another prominent feature of this style of temple is the presence of a large tank set slightly off the axis to the main temple.



MEENAKSHI-SUNDARESWARPAAR TEMPLE

- The tank is surrounded by steps and a pillared portico. The tank is used for the purpose of ritual bathing.
- Under the Nayaka style, the art of Gopurams reached its prominence. The gopurams built during this phase were some of the largest gopurams in the world.
- Elaborate mandapas of hundred pillared types were also constructed during the rule of the Nayaka rulers.
- The pillars as well as the ceilings are decorated with colorful paintings showing kings, queens, mythical animals with fantastic shapes and sizes.

Example - Meenakshi- Sundareswarar temple at Madurai and is dedicated to goddess Meenakshi, the consort of lord Shiva. Shiva. The great temple complex actually has two shrines; the first one dedicated to Shiva as Sundareswara and the second one to his wife Meenakshi.

There are 985 richly carved pillars within the temple complex adorned with the exquisite murals. The temple has the tallest gopuram in the world which is richly carved.

Vesara School of Temple Architecture

Flourished under the patronage of later Chalukya rulers in the Karnataka region around mid-seventh century AD.

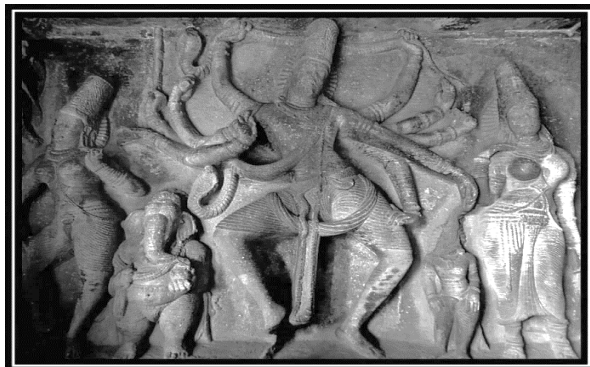


- A hybrid of Nagara and Dravida styles.
- The temples under this school developed in Deccan and Central India, between the Vindhyas and the river Krishna.
- This style of temple architecture has also been called the "Karnataka style".
- Following the Dravidian style, this school lays emphasis upon vimana and mandapa.
- The shape of the tower was Pyramidal but height was reduced (called Miniature Vimanas)- Vimana was crowned by a circular shikhara above the neck.
- Open ambulatory passageway as seen in Nagara style temples.
- Gopurams may or may not be present.
- Water tanks are present at some of the temples.
- The temple walls, pillars and the ceilings were intricately decorated with beautiful carvings.

Examples - Badami temple (Nagara and Dravida temples are raised side by side in Badami), Durga Temple (Aihole), Keshava Temple (Somnathpur), Dodda Basappa temple at Dambal, etc.

Temple Architecture of Chalukyas

- Developed in the period between the 6th and the 8th centuries during the Badami Chalukya period was called the "Chalukyan architecture" or "Karnata Dravida architecture".
- Reddish-golden Sandstone was the principal building material for these temples.
- The cave temples built by them depicted both religious and secular themes.



Nataraja Sculpture, Ravana Phadi Cave

- The temples had beautiful mural paintings also.
- Height of storeys were minimized and arranged in descending order of height from base to top with much ornamentation in each storey.
- Early Chalukyan activity takes the form of rock-cut caves whereas later activity is of structural temples.
- Chalukyan figures are distinguished by their slim bodies, graceful long, oval faces; they are different from contemporary western Deccan or Vakataka styles.

Examples - The earliest monument of Chalukyas of Badami is the **Ravana Phadi Cave** at Aihole, not far from Badami. It was probably made around A.D. 550 and is dedicated to Siva. One of the most noteworthy sculptures at the site is of Nataraja, surrounded by larger-than-life-size depictions of the saptamatrikas: three to Shiva's left and four to his right.

- Badami cave temples are located at Badami. Made up of red sandstone, these caves have three Brahmanical and one Jaina (Parshwavanath) and one natural Buddhist cave. The cave temples, mainly those at Badami, include fine sculptures of Vishnu.
- The largest temple of Chalukyas of Badami is **Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal**, whose complex encloses 30 sub shrines and a large Nadi mandapam. This temple is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Pattadakal Temple complex - UNESCO World Heritage site

- The temple complex houses 10 temples- four of them belong to Nagara school and the rest six show characteristics of the Dravida school.
- Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal, is the largest temple here. Its complex encloses 30 sub shrines and a large Nadi mandapam. This was also the earliest example of Shiva temples, which have a Nandi pavilion in front of the temple.

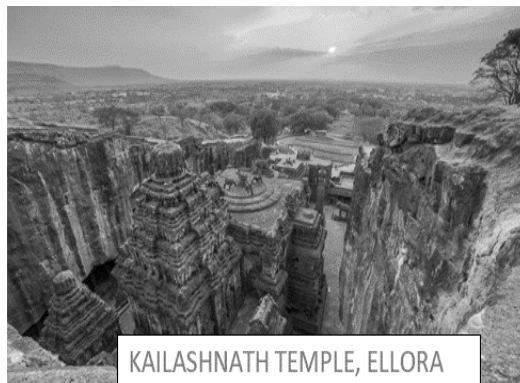
Temple Architecture of Rashtrakutas

Rashtrakutas built rock-cut temples and shrines at Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad. The Kailashnath temple at Ellora is a magnificent example of their architectural style.

Kailashnath temple at Ellora

- The Kailashnath temple was built by the Rashtrakuta ruler, Krishna I in the 8th century.
- It is carved out of one single rock measuring 200 feet long, and 100 feet in breadth and height.
- Carved via the vertical excavation in which the carvers started at the top of the original rock, and excavated downward.

- It is a vast multi-storey structure with carvings on both interior as well as the exterior walls. Temple's bold and spectacular carving depicts the Rashtrakuta style of tall, powerfully formed figures reflecting spiritual and physical poise.



- Ellora's Rashtrakuta-period sculpture is complex and distinct from contemporary regional styles, the figures often larger than life-size, infused with unparalleled grandeur and the most overpowering energy. An example of this is the well-known Nandi Shrine in Kailash temple.
- It has a three-tiered shikhara or tower rising to thirty metres, which resembles the shikhara of the Mamallapuram rathas.
- The Mandapa has a flat roof which is supported by 16 pillars.
- One of the sculptures of the temple shows the image of Goddess Durga slaying the Buffalo demon.
- In another sculpture Ravana is shown lifting Mount Kailash. Trembling of the mountain could be felt, and Parvati is shown greatly agitated, turning to Siva, grasping his hand in fear.
- The deities in this temple belong to both the Shaivite as well as Vaishnav faith.

Ellora Caves- Ellora caves are located near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. The cave belongs to the 6th to 10th century AD. It represents the marvel of the Indian Rock Cut architecture and is one of the World Heritage sites inscribed on the UNESCO list in 1983. The caves belong to three religions- The Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina, in which 12 are Buddhist Caves, 17 Hindu Caves and 5 Jaina Caves. Oldest caves are Hindu Caves.

Temple Architecture of Hoysalas

- Developed in the period between the 11th and 14th centuries and is mostly concentrated in southern Karnataka with prominent seats being Belur, Halebid and Sringeri.
- Hoysala temples consist of a number of shrines grouped together around a central pillared hall. It is designed in such a way that it represents the shape of a star. This was known as the **Stellate plan**.

- They designed temples at Halebid and Belur that resemble lacework in stone.
- Soapstone was the principal building material.
- The vimana in Hoysala temples are plain on the interiors while the exterior is intricately decorated with carvings.
- The ornamentation is complex, with a concentration on ornamentation rather than movement or the grace of the human body. Hoysala sculptures are squat and short, heavily embellished, or almost overloaded with ornamentation, but they are pleasing to look at.



HOYSALESHVARA TEMPLE

- A kalash stands on the top most portion of the temple tower.
- Mythical women figures called Salabhanjika or madanika are used to decorate pillars. Sometimes, these characters are portrayed engaging in artistic activities like music, dance etc. It is a peculiar feature of Hoysala sculpture.
- The scenes from Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas are depicted on the walls of the Hoysala temples.
- There may be one or multiple shrines within the temple complex.
- The temples were built on an appraised platform known as Jagati, which was about a metre high.
- The walls and stairs of the temples followed a zigzag pattern.
- The Hoysala temple architecture was heavily influenced by the Western Chalukyas, Cholas as well as Pallavas, though there was a departure from the Chalukyan style.

Examples- Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid in Karnataka was built in dark schist stone by the Hoysala king in 1150. 1150. Another temple called the Chennakeshava temple in Somnathpur, Karnataka built around 1268 AD under Narasimha III and the Kesava temple at Belur in Hassan district of Karnataka built by Vishnuvardhana.

Vijayanagara Style of Temple Architecture

- Vijayanagar empire played a very important role in the development of temple art and architecture between 1336 to 1672 AD.
- Architecturally, Vijayanagar has synthesis of centuries old Dravidian style and influence of Indo- Islamic style of Bijapur.
- Local hard granite was the building material of choice due to its durability. Soapstone, which was soft and easily carved, was used for reliefs and sculptures.
- The pillars are carved beautifully. Horse was the most depicted animal on the pillars.
- Tall Raya Gopuram (gateways) which were previously present only at the entrance of the temples, were now built on all sides. These gateways were carved with life-sized figures of gods and goddesses.



VITTALASWAMI TEMPLE

- More than one mandapa in each temple. The central mandapa was called the kalyana mandapa (marriage halls).
- Temple walls were heavily decorated with carvings of figures from Hindu mythology and geometrical patterns.
- They introduced the concept of secular buildings within the temple premises (Example-Lotus Mahal).
- Presence of an Amman shrine was meant for the consort of God.
- Vijayanagar emperors caused outstanding portraits to be carved by the sculptors to immortalise them in the vicinity of their favourite deities.
- During this period illustration in narrative forms of the Ramayana and Krishna, Bal Lila became favourite themes.
- Their sculpture, too, reveals the presence of foreigners on occasion, despite being essentially derived from and consciously trying to revive Chola ideals.
- Vasanta mandapa was added for gathering of devotees, and a hall of dance at Lepakshi was added.

Examples- Vittalaswami temple and the Hazara Rama temple of Deva Raya I.

Pala and Sena School of Temple Architecture

- The Palas were Buddhist rulers and built many Buddhist monastic sites, while the Sena rulers were Hindus. Temples reflected the influence of both religions. Temples in the area are built in the Vanga style.



- Similar to the bamboo roof of a Bengali hut, the temples under this style had a curve or a sloping roof. It is known across North India as the Bangla roof.
- Principal building material- Terracotta bricks
- A tall curving shikhara crowned by a large amalaka
- Stone- principal element used for sculptures. However, metals are also used in some cases.
- Mahayana phase of Buddha and Bodhisattva images used in temple
- Figurines are highly carved.
- Contemporaneous Odisha temples- with the passage of time, this simple form becomes loftier. Many temples from the ninth to the twelfth centuries were found in the Purulia District. When dams were constructed in the area, they were submerged.
- **Example-** The Siddheshwara Mahadeva temple at Barakar built in the 9th century shows a tall curving shikhara crowned by a large amalaka and is an example of the early pala style. The rock cave temple at Kahalgaon (9th century) shows the gabled vault roof characteristic of South Indian architecture.

Sun Temples in India

Sun temples are dedicated to the Sun god Surya. There are many Sun temples in the country.

Konark Sun Temple

- Constructed by the Eastern Ganga ruler Narasimha Deva I in about 1250 A.D in Odisha.
- This temple was included in UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.
- The Sun Temple is a classic illustration of the Odisha style of Architecture or Kalinga Architecture.



Sun Temple, Konark

- The temple faces the east so that the first rays of sunrise strikes the main entrance of the temple.
- Due to its dark colour, this temple was called the “Black Pagoda”.
- Its shikhara reached 70m in height, which, proving too heavy for its site, fell in the nineteenth century. The jagamohana (mandapa) of the temple has survived.
- Sun god, its presiding deity, is depicted here and is portrayed in the typical north Indian manner, wearing boots, chain-mail armor, holding a lotus in each hand.
- The temple represents a chariot of the Sun God, with twelve pairs of wheels (representing the months of the year) drawn by seven horses evoking its movement across the heavens.
- In between the wheels of the temple structure, the body is decorated with reliefs of lions, musicians, dancers, and erotic images.
- On the temple’s southern wall, there is a sculpture of Sun God made of green stone.
- Chandrabhaga Mela around the month of February is held every year.

Modhera Surya Temple, Gujarat

- Built between 1026-27 CE during the reign of Bhima I of the Solanki dynasty. The temple is located on the banks of the river Pushpavati.
- The hundred square metre rectangular kunda (tank) is perhaps the grandest temple tank in India.
- 108 miniature shrines are built in between the steps inside the tank.
- The halls and the pillars of the temples are extensively carved.
- A massive ornamental arch- torana welcomes visitors to the sabha mandapa (assembly hall), which is accessible on all sides, as was the custom in western and central Indian temples at the time.



Sun Temple, Modhera

Martand Sun Temple, Kashmir

- Built by the Karkota dynasty, the sun temple was built by the third ruler of the Karkota Dynasty, Lalitaditya Muktapada, in the 8th century CE. Martand in Sanskrit means Surya.
- The structure is constructed of limestone, and the entire complex has been built on top of a plateau near Anantnag. The Government of India has opened the ruined temple complex for tourists, and this site is considered to be of National, Historical and Architectural importance and hence comes under The Archaeological Survey of India.

Dakshinaarka Temple, Gaya (Bihar)

- Built by King Prataparuda of Warangal in 13th century AD.
- Stone used to carve the Sun God is made of granite and the deity wears Persian attire like waist girdle, boots and a jacket.

Suryanarayana Swamy Temple, Arasavalli (Andhra Pradesh)

- It is a 7th-century AD Sun Temple built by king Devendra Varma, ruler of the Kalinga Dynasty. The beauty of this temple is its construction which is done in such a way that rays of Sun fall on the feet of the statue (at Garbhagudi) during March and September in early hours (Sun rise time) and stay for some time.
- The idols inside the Vimana Gopuram are carved from a single black stone. The Sun God, Dwarapalakas, saints, Chariot, Horses and the Saradhi are the main figures one can see which are included in the single stone inside the main temple.

Suryanaar Kovil, Kumbakonam (Tamil Nadu)

- This temple is considered one of the nine Navagraha temples in Tamil Nadu.
- Built during the reign of Kulottunga Chola (AD 1060-1118) in the 11th century with later additions from the Vijayanagara period.

Brahmanya Dev Temple, Unao (Madhya Pradesh)

- Built in the prehistoric time by the king of Datia.
- The temple contains carvings of twenty-one triangles, which represents the 21 phases of the Sun.
- Below the temple, Pahooj river flows. Sulphur content found in the water of Pahuj river is helpful in treating skin diseases.

Temple Architecture at the Hills

- In the hills of Kumaon, Garhwal, Himachal and Kashmir; a unique form of architecture developed.
- Kashmir being in close proximity to the Gandhara regions (Taxila, Peshawar, etc) was heavily influenced by the Gandhara style by 5th century CE.
- The Gandhara influence got mixed with Gupta and post-Gupta traditions that were brought to it from Sarnath, Mathura and even centres in Gujarat and Bengal.



- Brahmin pundits and Buddhist monks frequently travelled to the hills resulting in intermingling of both Hindu and Buddhist traditions in the hills.
- The hills' architecture had the characteristic of wooden buildings with pitched roofs.
- At a few hilly regions we find main garbhagriha and shikhara made in a rekha-prasada or latina style, while the mandapa is of an older form of wooden architecture.
- A few temples take the shape of a pagoda.
- The Karkota period of Kashmir is the most significant in terms of architecture.
- A temple called Pandrethan, built during the 8th and 9th centuries, is built on a plinth built in the middle of a tank.
- The images of Mahishasuramardini and Narasimha at the Laksna-Devi Mandir suggest the influence of the post-Gupta tradition.
- At Kumaon, temples like Jageshwar in Almora, and Champavat near Pithoragarh, are examples of nagara architecture in the region.

Jaina Temple Architecture

- Jains were prolific temple builders like the Hindus, and their sacred shrines and pilgrimage spots are to be found across the length and breadth of India.
- The oldest Jain pilgrimage sites are to be found in Bihar. Many of these sites are famous for early Buddhist shrines. In the Deccan, some of the most architecturally important Jain sites can be found in Ellora and Aihole.
- In central India, Deogarh, Khajuraho, Chanderi and Gwalior have some excellent examples of Jain temples. Karnataka has a rich heritage of Jain shrines and at Sravana Belagola the famous statue of Gomateshwara, the granite statue of Lord Bahubali which stands eighteen metres or fifty-seven feet high, is the world's tallest monolithic free-standing structure. It was commissioned by Camundaraya, the General-in-Chief and Prime Minister of the Ganga Kings of Mysore.

International Influence of Indian Temple Architecture

As part of Greater India and propagation of Buddhism from India to various parts of the world like Sri Lanka, Burma, China, South-east Asian nations, etc, most of the temples have been influenced by the style of temple architecture that developed in India. The propagation of Buddhism from India to Burma led to construction of many temples and statues to honour Buddha in Burma.



1. **Khmer Temple Architecture-** Flourished in the regions of present-day Cambodia. One of the magnificent examples of this type of temple architecture is the Angkor Wat temple of Cambodia. Built in the 12th century AD, it is the world's largest Hindu temple. Sandstone and laterite are the principal building materials used in the temple. The temples belonging to this Khmer style are enclosed by a concentric series of walls, with the central sanctuary in the middle.
2. **Indonesian Architecture-** This style of temple architecture flourished in the period between 7th to 15th century AD. The Indonesian temples belong to both Buddhist as well as Hindu religions. Temples in this region are called "Candi". Inspired by Indian temple architecture, the temples here have a pyramidal tower above it and a portico for entrance. The largest Buddhist temple is found at Borobudur in Indonesia constructed in the 8th century AD.

3. **Champa Architecture-** This style of temple architecture flourished in parts of Vietnam between the 6th and 16th century AD. Red bricks were used for building temples. The most important remaining sites of Cham bricks temple architecture include Mỹ Sơn near Da Nang, Po Nagar near Nha Trang, and Po Klong Garai near Phan Rang.

4. **Myanmar Architecture -** Myanmar's architecture is tied to ancient Indian culture, and can be traced to the country's earliest known inhabitants. During the Pyu period, cylindrical stupas with four archways—often with a hti (umbrella) on top—were built. The Mon and Pyu people were the first two influential groups to migrate to Myanmar, and the first Indo-Chinese adherents of Theravada Buddhism. Beikthano, one of the first Pyu centers, contains urbanesque foundations which include a monastery and stupa-like structures.

Bagan, with over 10,000 of Myanmar's red brick stupas and pagodas, had become a center of Buddhist architecture by the mid-12th century. During this period, the Pyu-style stupas were transformed into monuments reminiscent of alms bowls or gourd-shaped domes, unbaked brick, tapered and rising roofs, Buddha niches, polylobed arches and ornamental doorways influenced by India's Pala Empire and its monuments. Stucco was widely used here.

Stupa Architecture

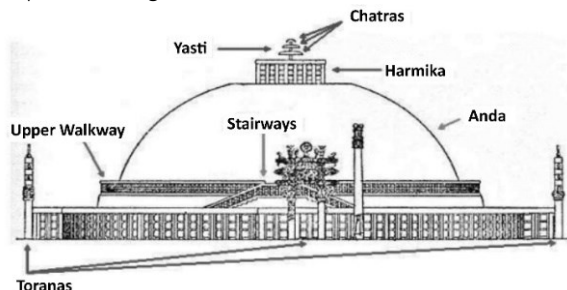
The stupa is a burial mound, hemispherical in shape, containing relics of Buddhist monks and nuns. It has religious and cultural significance. Stupas' construction began in the Vedic time period and gained significance during Ashoka's period. The Buddhists popularized the stupa.

Component of Stupas

Medhi: It is the core of the Stupa, made up of unburnt bricks, containing the relics of Buddhist nuns & monks

Anda: Large hemispherical dome made up of bricks.

Toran: The entry gateways generally constructed in all four directions, containing intricate carvings and decorated with wooden sculptures. Each torana consists of two vertical pillars and three horizontal bars on top. The bars contain exquisite carvings on front and back.



Pradakshina Path: Open ambulatory passageway used for walking around, as a token of worship

Harmika: a small platform with a railing located at the very top of a stupa

Chattra: a triple-umbrella form supported on a central pillar/rod.

Yasti: the central rod or pillar on which Chattra are located

Vedika: Stupa is enclosed by the vedika

Symbols: In the early stages, Buddha was represented through symbols that represented the different events of Buddha's life like footprints, lotus thrones, chakras, stupas, etc.

Maurayan Stupas

After the death of Gautam Buddha, nine stupas were constructed. (Rajagriha, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Vethapida, Pava, Kushinagar and Pippalivana.). During the Ashoka period, 84000 stupas were constructed. Examples include



The Great Sanchi Stupa, Madhya Pradesh

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- Many small stupas are there; three main ones – stupa 1, stupa 2 and stupa 3. Stupa 1 is also called the Great Stupa at Sanchi. It is the most prominent and the oldest and is believed to have relics of the two great disciples of the Buddha, Sariputta and Mahamoggallana.
- Stupas were built from grants given by the business community of Vidisha though believed to be originally commissioned by Emperor Ashoka in 3rd century BCE.
- It was built from burnt bricks and mud mortar initially. Later it was rebuilt using stones by Shungas in 2nd century B.C, doubling its size.
- 3 stupas - along with 4 Toranas, Jataka tales inscriptions, use of Brahmi and Kharoshthi script.
- Gateways and banister were built during Satavahana rule around 70 BC. Using stone slabs, the stupas doubled to their original size. Flattened near the top and 3 umbrellas (Yasti) were placed on top as a symbol of Dharma.
- Four decorated toranas, depicting Buddha's stories, Shalbhankikas – a lady holding the branch of a tree and Jataka stories. Lion capital similar to the one at Sarnath is also present here.

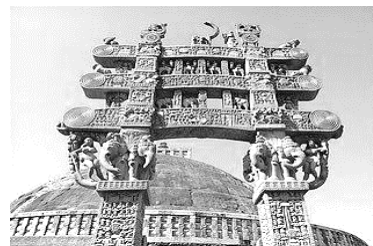
Sandstone pillar edict of Ashoka on Sanchi Pillar

"The path is prescribed both for the monks and for the nuns. As long as (my) sons and great-grandsons (shall reign; and) as long as the Moon and the Sun (shall endure), the monk or nun who shall cause divisions in the Sangha, shall be compelled to put on white robes and to

reside apart. For what is my desire? That the Sangha may be united and may long endure"

Piprahwa Stupa

- Present in Uttar Pradesh, it is the oldest stupa. Ancient residential complexes and shrines



were uncovered at the adjacent mound of Ganwaria.

- Piprahwa-Ganwaria is also regarded as the ancient city of Kapilavastu, the capital of the Shakyas kingdom, where Siddhartha Gautama spent the first 29 years of his life.

Bairat Stupa, Rajasthan

- Grand stupa with a circular mound and a circumambulatory path.
- Made of polished sandstone. The surface is heavily polished.
- Construction began in third century BCE

Depiction of Buddha in early phase

Buddha is depicted symbolically through footprints, stupas, lotus throne, chakra, etc. This indicates either simple worship, or paying respect, or at times depicts historicisation of life events.

Gradually, narrative became a part of the Buddhist tradition. Thus, events from the life of the Buddha, the Jataka stories, were depicted on the railings and torans of the stupas. Mainly synoptic narrative, continuous narrative and episodic narrative are used in the pictorial tradition.

While events from the life of the Buddha became an important theme in all the Buddhist monuments, the Jataka stories also became equally important for sculptural decorations. The main events associated with the Buddha's life which were frequently depicted were events related to the birth, renunciation, enlightenment, dhammachakra- pravartana, and mahaparinibbana (liberation from the cycle of birth.) Among the Jataka stories that are frequently depicted are Chhadanta Jataka, Vidurpundita Jataka, Ruru Jataka, Sibi Jataka, Vessantara Jataka and Shama Jataka.

Sarnath/ Dhamek Stupas

- Near Varasnasi, Uttar Pradesh
- Also known by other names like Rishipatana, Mrigadava and Mrigadaya. The word Sarnath comes from a corruption of the name Saranganatha (lord of deer).
- Built by Ashoka, later rebuilt in the Gupta period.
- Lord Buddha gave his first sermon at Sarnath about 4 noble truths.
- Sir Alexander Cunningham (1st - General of Archaeological Survey of India), excavated the Dhamekh, Dharmarajika, and Chaukhandi stupas between 1834 and 1836.

Chaukhandi Stupa

- Chaukhandi Stupa has been declared as a monument of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- It is an ancient Buddhist site in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.
- The octagonal tower on top is a Mughal monument built to commemorate Humayun's visit to this place

Amravati Stupa

- Constructed during the period of the first and second centuries CE.
- Pradakshinapatha (Circumbulatory path) enclosed within a vedika portrayed with much narrative sculpture.
- Domical stupa structure covered with relief stupa sculptural slabs.
- The Torana (Entrance gate) of the Amravati Stupa has disappeared over time.
- The stupa art forms present here depicts the events from the life of the Buddha and the Jataka stories.
- As in Sanchi Stupa, the early phase of Amravati stupa is devoid of Buddha images except in the later stage during the second and third centuries CE Buddha images were carved upon the drum slabs and at many other places.

Nagarjuna Konda Stupa

- An inscription of Gautamiputra Vijaya Satakarni has also been discovered at the site, and proves that Buddhism had spread in the region by this time.
- The Amravati school of sculpture influence is seen.

From the second century BCE onwards, we get many inscriptional evidence mentioning donors for construction and maintenance of stupas. The pattern of patronage has been a very collective one and there are very few examples of royal patronage. Patrons range

from lay devotees to gahapatis and kings. Donations by the guilds are also mentioned at several sites. However, there are very few inscriptions mentioning the names of artisans such as Kanha at Pitalkhora and his disciple Balaka at Kondane caves in Maharashtra. Artisans' categories like stone carvers, goldsmiths, stone-polishers, carpenters, etc. are also mentioned in the inscriptions.

Cave Architecture

Cave architecture is often called as Rock-cut architecture. Indian rock-cut architecture is one of the main forms of architecture seen in caves. It is the practice of creating a structure by carving it out of solid natural rock. Along with sculptures some caves are famous for painting like the Ajanta caves. The earliest caves were natural caves used by people for a variety of purposes such as shrines and shelters. Indian rock-cut architecture is mostly religious in nature. There are more than 1,500 rock-cut structures in India.

Rock-cut cave architecture emerged during the Mauryan Period. They were constructed by carving out of solid natural rock. The earliest cave temples include the Bhaja Caves, the Karla Caves, the Bedsa Caves, the Kanheri Caves, and Ajanta Caves.



1st phase (2nd B.C. to 2nd C.A.D.)
Symbolical representation of Buddha e.g. Lotus, Wheel etc (Mostly belongs to Hinayana or Theravada Buddhism)
E.g. Ajanta, Karla, Bhaja, Kanheri, Nasik, Bedsa caves.
An important connection existed between the religion and commerce, as Buddhist missionaries often built monasteries (caves) close to trade route

2nd phase (5th to 7th C.A.D.)
Buddha was personified and the plan of excavations specially for chaitya remained the same as earlier but viharas underwent some changes like an image of Buddha was housed By the 5th century, rock-cut cave temples continued to be built along with free-standing structural temples

3rd phase (7th to 10th C.A.D.)
Buddhist architectural traditions were also extended by Hindus and Jains with some modifications which were suitable for their rituals
Ellora caves have sculptures from Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu themes

Viharas- caves were constructed for Jain and Buddhist monks' residences. The plan of the viharas consists of a veranda, a hall and cells around the walls of the hall. Many of the early vihara caves are carved with interior decorative motifs like chaitya arches and the vedica designs over the cell doors of the cave.

Chaityas- These are the places of worship used by the Buddhist monks. It has an object of worship called 'Stupa' In Hinayana period (earlier Buddhism) symbolic worship is observed so any sculpture of Buddha and related deities are not carved on the Stupa. In Mahayana (later Buddhism) Buddha, related deities and jataka Stories are carved and painted. On the Stupa, Buddha in various posture is also carved. They are generally quadrangular in shape.

Mauryan Caves (3rd BC- 1st CE)

Features

1. Highly polished internal surface.
2. Decorative gateways

Barabar & Nagarjuni Hills caves

- These caves are situated in the twin hills of Barabar (four caves) and Nagarjuni (three caves).
- The earliest known rock-cut caves, built during 300 BC, i.e. during Ashoka and his grandson Dashrath periods.
- Originally built for the Ajivika sect, but later rock-cut caves were built for Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical practises.
- Ex - Lomas Rishi Cave, a frieze of elephants imitating the earlier woodwork.
- Lomas Rishi and Sudama caves have wood emulating chambers with their walls polished like a glass mirror.
- The hut-style entrance in the Lomas Rishi Cave is the earliest surviving example of the ogee-shaped "chaitya arch" which was to be a prominent feature of Indian rock-cut architecture and sculptural decoration for centuries.
- Famous 4 caves of Barabar Hills are
 - Sudama cave
 - Lomas Rishi cave
 - Karan Chaupar
 - Visva Zopri

Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves, Odisha

- Built during the 2nd century BC by King Kharavela of the Meghavahana dynasty.
- Only 33 caves continue to exist, out of 117 caves built for Jain monks
- Udayagiri caves -Total 18 caves - Ganesh Gumpa, Vyaghra Gumpa etc.
 - RaniGumpa - Double storied and beautiful carvings, largest caves
 - Hathigumpa - Inscription of King Kharvela regarding governance and victories in Brahmi script. Jain Namokar mantra is also inscribed.
- Khandagiri caves -Total 15 caves - Navagiri, Devsabha and Anant Gumpa etc

Nasik Caves or Pandav Leni caves

- 24 buddhist caves built during the 1st century A.D.
- Under Hinayan sect, presence of motifs and symbol like peepal tree etc.
- Later under Mayana sect, Idols of buddha were erected

- The vihara caves at Nashik were excavated with front pillars carved with ghata-base and ghata-capital with human figures.

In western India, many Buddhist caves dating back to the second century BCE onwards have been excavated. Mainly three architectural types were executed—

- (i) apsidal vault-roof chaitya halls (found at Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Bhaja);
- (ii) apsidal vault-roof pillarless hall (found at Thana-Nadsur in Maharashtra);
- (iii) flat-roofed quadrangular hall with a circular chamber at the back (found at Kondivite in Maharashtra).

The front of the chaitya hall is dominated by the motif of a semi-circular chaitya arch with an open front which has a wooden facade and, in some cases, there is no dominating chaitya arch window such as found at Kondivite. In all the chaitya caves a stupa at the back is common. In the first century BCE some modifications were made to the standard plan of the apsidal vault-roof variety where the hall becomes rectangular like at Ajanta Cave No. 9, with a stone-screen wall as a facade. It is also found at Bedsa, Nashik, Karla and Kanheri.

Post Mauryan Caves (1st CE- 4th CE)

- This period saw the emergence of chaityas along with viharas.
- Associated with Hinayana Buddhism.
- Buddha was symbolically represented by Lotus, Wheel, Stupa etc.
- Open courtyards & stone screen wall was created in front of cave gateways
- Windows & gates carved in the form of an arch.
- Built by Satvahanas rulers, Traders guilds (Shrenis), Foreigners (Yavanas)
- Ex- Pandavleni caves in Nashik, Early Ajanta Caves, Kanheri Caves, Sittanavasal Caves, Karle Caves, etc.

Karle Caves

- Excavated in the Sahyadri Hills near Lonavala, Maharashtra.
- Related to the Mahasamghika sect of Buddhism
- Developed during 2nd BCE to 5th century CE.
- Grand Chaitya Hall - The biggest rock-cut chaitya hall was excavated. The cave consists of an open courtyard with two pillars, a stone screen walls to protect from rain, a veranda, a stone-screen wall as facade, an apsidal vault-roof chaitya hall with pillars, and a stupa at the back.
- Karla chaitya hall is decorated with human and animal figures. They are heavy in their execution, and move in the picture space.



Bhaja caves, Near Nashik

- Collection of 22 rock-cut caves, depicts a typical early phase of Buddhist architecture, showing Hinayana Buddhist culture, a deep apsidal hall carved out of solid rock is distinguished by a series of simple octagonal pillars near the walls.
- Chaityagriha, which has an open horseshoe-arched entrance
- A group of 14 stupas is another notable feature of the cave.
- Relics of monks who lived and died in Bhaja caves are housed in the stupas.

Junagarh Caves

- Cave constructed during 1st - 4th century CE
- Uparkot Caves, Khapra Kodiya Caves, and Baba Pyare Caves
- Room carved for monks from stone
- A unique feature of the Junagadh caves is the presence of a 30-50 ft high citadel known as "Upar Kot" in front of the prayer hall.

Sittanavasal Caves

- Jain cave complex built during 2nd century CE, in Tamil Nadu.
- Rock cut monastery or temple
- Frescos paintings were added during the 7th century.

Kanheri Caves

- Inside Sanjay Gandhi National Park forest, Bombay
- Built during 1st - 10th century CE
- Most caves acted as Buddhist Viharas, larger caves were for chaityas.
- It has total of hundred and eight excavated caves
- Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteshwara and fresco paintings are also present.
- Kanheri Cave No.3. - Though the cave's interior was not fully finished, it shows how the carving progressed from time to time. Subsequently, the quadrangular flat-roofed variety became the most preferred design and is extensively found at many places.

Gupta period caves (5th–6th century CE)

- Rise of Mahayana Buddhism
- Artistically associated with Gandhara & Amaravati school of Sculpture.
- Sculptures of Buddha, Vishnu, Thirthankars, Yaksha & Yakshagani, etc. were carved.
- Fresco painting on cave walls. Ex- Ajanta cave
- Cave temples & Rock Cut temples developed in later phases. Example - Badami cave Temples under Chalukyas.

Ajanta Caves

- Constructed during 200 B.C. to 600 A.D.
- 29 rock-cut caves in the Sahyadri ranges, Aurangabad District, in Maharashtra.
- 25 Viharas & 4 Chaityas.
- Horseshoe shaped caves.
- Fresco Paintings - naturalism, Outline in Red colour & absence of blue colour.
- Patronage of the Vakataka kings mainly Harishena.
- 5 developed during Hinayana and remaining 24 during Mahayana.
- References of the Ajanta caves can be found in the travel accounts of Chinese Buddhist travellers Fa Hien and Hsien Tsang.
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage site.



- Carved in basalt rock. This rock is soft when initially cut hence very workable during carving but hardens on exposure to oxygen. Hence delicate carvings could be made which have survived for long.
- Some prominent sculptures of Ajanta Caves are:
 - Mahaparinirvana of Buddha in Cave No. 26
 - Naga King and his consort in Cave No. 19
- Cave No. 26 is very big and the entire interior hall is carved with a variety of Buddha images, the biggest one being the Mahaparinibbana image.
- The rest of the caves are vihara-chaitya caves. They consist of a pillared veranda, a pillared hall and cells along the walls. The back wall has the main Buddha shrine.