





WORLD HERITAGE MONUMENTS  
AND  
RELATED EDIFICES  
IN INDIA



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ALI JAVID  
TABASSUM JAVEED

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Front Cover: Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations on Tower, 11-12th century, sandstone (photo by the Author).

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To my grandchildren  
Saher, Jasmine, Samir, Nadim, Alma, Nihad and Navid,  
who asked every day when I would finish my writing —  
especially Samir, who wanted to know  
where he could purchase the book when published.





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## PREFACE

This book is the result of my visits to World Heritage sites in India and the monuments associated with them, to enjoy the depiction of human beauty in decorative sculpture and architecture and the narration of mythology therein.

I have included a synopsis of India's religions and religious monuments for readers unfamiliar with Indian cultures. I have limited vernacular terminology but included many photographs to illuminate the evolution of the monuments presented. The location of these monuments is shown in the map of India.

To denote the time, the following abbreviations are used. Prehistoric period is "BP" (Before Present). The era before Christ is "BCE" (Before Common Era). The era after the death of Christ is denoted as "CE" (Common Era). To avoid repetition, for the period after the fifth century, CE abbreviations are omitted.

My primary guides in this study were *The Art of Ancient India* by Susan Huntington and *The Art of Indian Asia: Its Mythology and Transformation* by Heinrich Zimmer. I also have leaned heavily on other publications listed in the Bibliography.

The person who helped me the most with my writing is Dr. Tabassum Javeed, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Bangalore University.

The late Dr. C. B. Kurdikeri also assisted me tremendously by insisting I pursue my writing and by withstanding the hardship of travel with me in south India. I miss him very much. Dr. Shanta Ratnayaka, Professor of Religions, University of Georgia at Athens was kind enough to review my manuscript and suggest improvements. His input on Buddhism was invaluable. I am indebted to Mrs. Irshad Javid for proofreading the manuscript and for as-

sistance in presenting the Hindu mythology. I am much indebted to Ms. Janice Levie, a technical writer who assisted in formatting the manuscript and helped in preparing the index.

My children Fiaz financed my travels to South-East Asia and Central America and allowed me the use of his office facilities and equipment, while Parviz and Samina led me through the computer programs for preparing the transcript and photographs. My friend Sagheer Akif traveled with me on most of my journeys. I am indebted to my wife Anser for traveling with me in India and allowing me uninterrupted extended periods of time to complete the manuscript.

Ali Javid  
Sterling, VA



Locations of the World Heritage Monuments are highlighted in bold script

## INTRODUCTION

In July of every year UNESCO (the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) designates a number of manmade monuments and natural wonders as World Heritage Monuments, selected under the advice of experts and critics from a list proposed by each member nation. The selection is based on both the cultural value and the universal appeal of the monuments, which are open to all humanity. UNESCO provides technical advice for monument maintenance and upkeep.

Solitary monuments may be selected or a group of monuments in a given location. As of 2003, there were twenty-three such monuments in India, including six natural wonders, one prehistoric site at Bhimbetka, and three Buddhist groups of monuments at Bodh Gaya, Sanchi and Ajanta. Others include Ellora, with a group of monuments constructed by Buddhists, Hindus and Jains, and seven Hindu sites with one monument each at Elephanta, Tanjur, Konark and four groups of monuments at Patadkal, Mamalapurum, Khajuraho and Vijayana-gara. Delhi and Agra have two Muslim monuments each and a group of monuments are found at Fatahpursikiri. A group of Christian monuments is located at Goa. Some noteworthy monuments have not yet made the list, possibly due to restricted public entry which makes their study difficult for non-Hindu specialists.

There is an enormous wealth of sculpture in India, and the selected monuments present the best of Indian sculpture, art and architecture over a period of time. A comparative study of these monuments reveals the developmental history of India's religious monuments. This book presents all the manmade World Heritage Monuments (selected up to 2003) and related edifices in surrounding areas. It should be noted that since then, two Cola temples in south India, Victoria Railway Terminus at Mumbai and an archeological site in Rajasthan were added to the list. These monuments are not included in the book.

In order to highlight the major changes that have taken place, the monuments are classified in this book as early, early medieval, middle medieval, late medieval and recent. An outstanding monument in a group at one place typically incorporates attractive features of the surrounding buildings, all of which have evolved over a period of time causing some overlap of classification period between groups at different locations.

Early monuments constructed from the sixth to the third century BCE include Buddhist caves excavated in the hills and protected monuments at Sanchi and Bodh Gaya. The prehistoric site of Bhimbetka is included in the early group. All other structural monasteries and stupas that were constructed of perishable materials and not protected during the early period have perished. The protected monuments and

remains of stupas that have survived bear the finest sculpture and paintings. Early medieval monuments were constructed from the sixth century to the end of the eighth century BCE. Hindus started construction of caves during this period. Buddhists constructed caves up to three stories high. After the construction of a few caves, Hindus constructed a huge monolithic temple that sits in a pit. Sculpture started showing signs of a decline in quality. The development of free-standing structural stone temples began, and structural decorations for temple beautification were developed. Free-standing structural stone monuments spread all over India, bringing an end to the era of cave excavation and monolithic stone structures in hilly regions. Although the quality of sculpture began to decline, most sculpture remained vibrant. Tantrism flourished and spread its roots. Construction of Buddhist monuments ceased except for a few temples at Sanchi.

In the middle medieval period, from the seventh to the tenth century, a race began between the Hindu monarchs to construct the grandest temple with the tallest towers. Jain sculpture and decorative art still retained their beauty. The era of painting came to an end and the quality of sculpture further declined. Monuments constructed in the late medieval period, between the eleventh and the thirteenth century, displayed religious fervor with structural decoration on temple replacing what had been "feminine" beauty. Temple construction ceased.

Recent monuments, constructed between the thirteenth and the nineteenth century, were built on imported architectural and decorative designs. Muslims developed a distinctive Indo-Islamic architecture and decorative designs while Christians primarily copied Roman churches, and Sikhs constructed a marble temple at Amritsar based on Hindu and Muslim architectural styles.

## I. RELIGIONS OF INDIA

The four indigenous religions of India are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Two more religions entered India to stay: Christianity, in the third century CE and Islam, in the seventh century. Akbar, the Mughal Emperor (1542-1605), tried to develop a new religion, *Deen-e-elahe*, by synthesizing Hinduism and Islam; but it died in its infancy. His successor Shah-e-Jahan and orthodox Muslims did not favor it.

Mankind has inhabited India for over half a million years. The natural barriers that kept India in comparative isolation, allowing it to develop its own civilization, were not impermeable. There was always some migration through Himalayan passes. People of the proto-historic Indus River Valley civilization were not the first to enter India, but not much is known about previous immigrants. The cultural remains of the Indus River Valley civilization that flourished from 2500-1500 BCE (with a peak period between 2250-1750 BCE) indicate worship of procreative forces. The phallus, representing the procreative aspect of the universe by which the endless cycle of birth, rebirth and death occurs, and ring stones representing vulvae — the door through which one is born and reborn, dating to the third millennium BCE, have been unearthed here. A life-size Neolithic statue of a man carved in 9500-7200 BCE, excavated in Turkey, shows a prominent erect phallus, indicating the importance accorded to procreative forces long before the Indus River Valley civilization.

Aryans, coming in small groups, completely displaced the Indus River Valley civilization by 1600 BCE.

### HINDUISM

Hinduism, the oldest religion of India, has its roots in the Indus River Valley civilization and possibly beyond.

Aryans migrating from Iran and surrounding regions brought gods of Iranian origin. Hinduism is not based on the idea of the revelation of a god conveyed by a messiah. Worship of natural forces was at the root of religions in the Indus River Valley civilization. Lacking any clear explanation of the origins of the universe, Aryans believed that there were two separate primordial worlds. One was a sacred world with the germ of life, characterized by a complete and undifferentiated unity inhabited by a group of gods called *asuras*. A god Indra was born outside this primeval world and he created the world we know by rearranging the existing matter. He caused the separation of sky and earth by propping up the sky with a pillar, and he released the cosmic ocean between the sky and the earth by slaying the demon guarding the imprisoned cosmic ocean. He acted as catalyst for the creation of all the identifiable individuals and distinct categories of objects and beings within the world. Along with Indra came *devas*, the gods of the Vedic pantheon. The constant struggle between the *asuras* and *devas* resulted in a constant menace to the existence and coherence of the ordered world. Some *asuras* joined the ranks of the *devas*. Others, personifying negative characteristics such as ignorance, in *Puranas* or ancient tales, were vanquished by the *devas*.

Vedas, Hindu sacred texts, were developed between 1500 and 800 BCE. They present a pantheon of 33 gods representing various forces of nature and personification of the sky, thunder, sun, fire, and rivers. Indra became the head of the council of gods, and was god of rain and of war — two of the most important factors affecting life. Agni became the god of fire; Surya became the sun god and Vayu the god of wind, amongst a multitude of minor gods. Some of these gods are prototypes or aspects of gods known in later Hinduism.

The function of these gods was to provide material blessing, and to focus worshipers on a desire for gain, re-

ward or gain, rather than penitence and asceticism. Ceremonies that took place in the altar area developed into worship in the Hindu temple which included sacrifice of humans, animals and offerings of grain, milk and flesh through Agni, the god of fire. During sacrifice a grand ritual feast was arranged to which gods were invited and hymns of praise were sung. This developed into the present day Puja, which is a hospitality ritual offering food, water and flowers to the deity. Final codification of the rituals and ceremonies is found in the Brahmanas, a group of texts written later. Priests (Brahmanas) became influential as sole authentic authorities to transmit sacrifices and some more so by their expertise in effecting transmittals. The basic religious beliefs set in the Vedas were possibly different from the prevalent ideas. These ideas were not fixed but developed over centuries. The Harappans, part of the Dasa tribe, were mentioned as worshipping the phallus with strange vows but no specific rites; they were inhabitants of the Indus River Valley.

The multiplicity of gods increased with time. During the early Vedic age, starting perhaps in the second millennium BCE, when various kingdoms emerged in the valleys of the Indus and Ganges Rivers, three gods that affected human lives most were said to govern the universe. The concept of a triad of gods is rooted deep in the Indian mind and with the ebb and rise of the popularity of various gods, four successive triads of gods ruled the universe during Vedic era. There is no evidence of the existence of temples, any religious buildings or facsimiles of Vedic gods in Indus River Valley civilization or the Vedic age before the Christian era. The worshippers wrote hymns in Sanskrit to the gods and sang them in religious ceremonies.

Buddhists developed facsimiles of Buddha under the influence of Kusanas who had migrated from Central Asia and settled in India. Under the influence of Buddhist sculpture idols of Vedic gods were carved after the first century CE, and nature worship assumed the form of idol worship.

During the Vedic age a minor god, Vishnu, distinguished himself by taking three steps to conquer the universe, reflecting his sovereignty over the universe. By the advent of Brahmanism, especially in the Upanishad period, the most important Vedic god was Vishnu, not Indra (the head of the council of the last Vedic triad). Siva, early identified with fire, and a pre-Vedic Indus River Valley deity, became popular. An attempt was made to synthesize a single god by combining Vishnu and Siva as Harihara during the Brahmin era. This went against the concept of triad of gods and Harihara did not become popular.

Around 300 BCE, near the end of the Vedic era, the multiplicity of gods and myths and the absence of a detailed ex-

planation of the creation of the universe gave way to a search for some creator, a supreme god amongst the existing gods. A deity Brahma emerged from the confusion as a manifestation of all the old gods. It was an uphill battle to establish him as a new god. To settle various concerns a myth similar to the present day “Big Bang” scientific theory evolved. According to the myth, universal time is a never-ending cycle of creation and destruction, each cycle lasting for one hundred years in the scale of Brahma’s life. At the end of a creation cycle everything — including Brahma, the other gods, sages, demons, mankind, animals and matter are dissolved into a great cataclysm, the Mahapralaya. This is followed by a hundred years of chaos. Before the beginning of another creative cycle a golden cosmic egg, symbolic of fire, floats for a thousand years on the water of the cataclysmic flood that covers the universe. At the end of this time, the cosmic egg bursts open and the Lord of the Universe emerges. He takes the form of the first eternal man and destroys all sins by fire. He was called Purusha. According to myths developed later he is Narayana, who appears to be an aspect of Brahma, and in other myths he is an aspect of Vishnu. According to another myth the Lord of the Universe lay brooding over the cosmic sea on Ananta, the sea serpent, for a thousand years. At the end a lotus as bright as a thousand suns rose from his navel and grew as big as the world. On this lotus Brahma sprang, self created but imbued with the powers of the Lord of the Universe (believed to be Vishnu). He started the work of creation but he was not omniscient — and he made several mistakes.

Brahma lost his earlier position as All-god to Vishnu or Siva and remained only as creator. For the creation cycle to occur, a mythical world was created which changes little. Seven concentric rings of continents surround the earth like a wheel. In the center of the earth is Mount Meru, the Heaven of Brahma, circled by the River Ganges and surrounded by the cities of Indra and other deities. Benevolent spirits like Gandharvas inhabit the foothills of Mount Meru, and demons live in the valleys.

By the end of the Vedic era, the first triad of the Brahmin era took shape. A philosophical and abstract concept, the world spirit became a personalized deity and took up a position in the triad of gods as Brahma the Creator. Vishnu became the second member of the triad as sustainer of the universe and supreme god. As a self-existing and all pervading power, he became preserver and maintainer of the universe and of the cosmic order. As preserver he embodied the quality of mercy and goodness and became an object of devotion rather than fear. To acquire and retain more prosperity and happiness he fought demons and supervised procreation.

Siva, earlier identified with fire, and who was an Indus River Valley deity, became the third member of the triad. At the beginning of the Vedic era Aryans took delight in persecuting Dravidians as worshippers of the phallus. But by the end of Vedic era Hinduism absorbed Siva, as it had absorbed Buddha as the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Many other Vedic gods became minor gods. To balance the popularity of Buddhism, Hindus pushed the idea of intense loyalty to one chosen god and Vishnu and Siva became the most popular.

The Upanishads, a set of scriptures, largely philosophical, spiritual meditations on the nature of god(s), were developed between 800 and 400 BCE in reaction to the priestly Brahmins who were ruining the laity with their excessive demands for sacrifices. The reaction emphasized philosophical and speculative questions. The main concern was the relationship between individual and the universal being. Atma, the Brahman principal, was equated with individual being, and in the second phase by practicing yoga the individual becomes the universe, assuming the undifferentiated and non-dualistic world that existed before Indra. Jains call this *Moksha* (release) and in Buddhism it is called Nirvana (extinguishing the self). Two other concepts in the Upanishads are *Karma*, which is “as he acted, as he lived, so he becomes: he who has done good is born again as a good man and who has done evil will be born as an evil man”; and *Samsara*, earthly existence with cycles of birth and rebirths. The Upanishads came to be considered the philosophical portion of the Vedas and formed the textual basis of the Hindu religion.

The early Puranas, Mahabharata and Ramayana, possibly finalized in the fourth or fifth century CE, are records of events that took place centuries ago. They are imperfect as historical records but provide a great deal of information from a non-Brahmin point of view. The early Puranas record information about a prehistoric flood, and King Manu who alone saved the world from inundation and became the progenitor of the human race. Ramayana, the story of Rama, possibly occurred between 900 and 650 BCE. No archeological record of these events has been found. Starting in the late Upanishad period historical information has become comparatively specific. Puranas place the Vedic gods in position subordinated to other gods.

#### JAINISM, BUDDHISM AND SIKHISM

Jainism and Buddhism were developed as a reaction to what was seen as an excessive number of Hindu priests during sixth century BCE. Sikhism developed in the eighteenth century as reaction to communal strife in India. These religions downplayed the role of gods and laid more emphasis

on the actions of man. Jainism does not deny the existence of the superhuman but in Jainism there is no creator of the universe and the universe is not guided by a divine will or mind. The laws of nature are considered sufficient explanation. The transmigration of souls is taken for granted. The religious philosophy of Jain is also based on an undifferentiated and non-dualistic world. Jain explains time and the creation of the universe as an eternally revolving wheel with upward and downward cycles but without the great cataclysm, the Mahapralaya. In every cycle twenty-four Tirthankara are born; the last of them is Mahavir. Most of the Tirthankara have some connection with Hindu mythology, attaining Nirvana on Mount Kailas the abode of Siva. Tirthankara are individuals who have attained perfect knowledge and have given up attachment to the vices of life. They are not ultimate gods and cannot intercede on behalf of the faithful. Their value is as objects of meditation. The Jain universe resembles a headless man. The right leg has seven hells where lesser gods torture souls before they are reborn. The left leg is inhabited by minor deities and demons. The middle portion, the waist, is our world with eight concentric rings of continents separated by eight ring-shaped oceans surrounding Mount Meru. Gods of various ranks and other spirits inhabit the upper region, the trunk, sub-divided into many regions with Indra as their king. Jain gods and demons are largely of Hindu inspiration. Demons can eventually work for their salvation but gods cannot attain liberation without becoming human.

Jains by their religious beliefs are restricted to the professional trades; they are the richest and most literate community in India. Possibly due to the lack of political base they took back seat to Buddhist and Hindus in the construction of religious monuments.

The female attendants with their special features and mounts identify the Tirthankaras, the twenty-four Jains who have attained perfect knowledge. Bahubali is presented with vines trailing from his limbs and an anthill beside him. Parshvanath is carved with long hands standing under the *naga* hood (the cobra-like hood of a mythical serpent). Icons of only few Tirthankaras are popular.

Buddhism does not reject the existence of gods but believes that the world goes through periods of evolution and decline, without any significant influence of gods on the cosmic process. Buddhism rejects the existence of a permanent soul but accepts the transmigration of souls; this doctrine which appeared in the late Vedic age (1000 to 600 BCE) is assumed.

All things in the universe, according to Buddhism, are made up of form and matter, sensation, perception, psychic constructions and consciousness and conscious thought,



which are in a state of constant flux. Each act, word or thought in life leaves its traces on the constituents that make up an individual and his character. At the end of an individual's life, the material and immaterial separate, and the immaterial, called soul, obtains another body befitting his deeds in the previous life. No permanent entity transmigrates from body to body. In the end the individual becomes an undifferentiated and non-dualistic entity.

The Buddhist universe that evolved later has three planes: above, around and below Mount Meru. The lower plane has one hundred thirty-six hells, the plane around Mount Meru contains the world of animals, ghosts, demons and men, and above the peak of Mount Meru are the heavens, arranged one above the other, occupied by various gods and spirits of higher order.

In early *jatakas* (tales of the former lives of the Buddha) Sakyamuni (the sage of Sakyas) was presented as an incarnation of various animals. Later he was presented as various symbols, mostly the pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) with its characteristic long-pointed leaves, under which he attained enlightenment. Buddhas born before the birth of the historical Buddha are identified with the species of Ficus and other trees under which they were enlightened. The image of Buddha was carved in the last quarter of the first century CE with characteristic features like a knot on the top of head (*usnisa*) and an elongated earlobe. The image took time to spread in India as it was considered improper to present Buddha in the human body which he discarded after 550 rebirths. He was presented as a human engaged in human activities to reach Buddha-hood and as *mahasattva*, the perfect being awaiting his birth in *Tusita* heaven. The final stage of Buddha's life, depicting his demise, is carved as *Parinirvana*. Images of Buddha might have been created on perishable materials after his demise. It is reported that a Chinese ware made in 36 BCE bears a clear figure of Buddha with a few characteristic features. Chinese Buddhists generally followed Indian initiatives, so that facsimiles of Buddha may have existed in India earlier than 36 BCE. In earlier carvings, Buddha is depicted as an ascetic but from the tenth–eleventh century he has been carved as a regal person wearing a crown and ornaments.

A statue of Buddha dating to early first century CE, carved during the Saka-Parthian period, was discovered in the Swat Valley of Pakistan. The statue depicts Buddha sitting crossed legged (*Vijraparyankasana*) and holding his hand in a protection gesture (*abhaya mudra*), introducing yoga postures in Buddhist art.

A devotee, by taking a vow, becomes a *Bodhisattva*. One who has fulfilled the vow and has attained the stage of *Bodhisattva*-hood is *mahasattva*. A few *mahasattva* seek nirvana

and attain Buddha-hood. Others forsake nirvana to stay on earth to help laymen, to guide them on the right path. They are carved standing or seated in regal attire, wearing jewelry, and are recognized by symbols on their headdresses or attributes held in their hands. *Bodhisattvas* are usually carved similar in height but smaller than Buddha. Carvings much larger than *Bodhisattvas* also depict Amitabha (Amitayus), the Buddha who presides over his paradise, Sukhavati (Full of joy). The aim of the residents of this paradise is to be born again and again in the paradise till they attain Buddha-hood. He holds his hand in a variant of the preaching gesture.

The most important *Bodhisattva* is Maitreya Buddha. Because of his imminent Buddha-hood he is carved as Buddha. In early carvings he is shown standing in a regal pose wearing a long lower garment, jewelry, and a lock of hair falling around his shoulder or a curl on his head resembling snail shell. He holds a vase in his left hand.

The most popular *Bodhisattva*, recognized by the lotus held in his hand, is Avalokiteshvara (*Padmapani*). His consort Tara is also identified with the lotus. He is the personification of compassion and a guide to lost travelers. *Vajrapani*, the personification of wisdom, holds a Vajra (thunderbolt scepter) in his hand. Sometimes he carries a broken piece of a bell in the other hand. Some *Bodhisattvas* carry flags of different shapes, a lotus stalk, or book. The accompanying peacock or peacock feather in the hair identifies *Mahamayuri*, the goddess of learning.

Other individuals depicted are *Pancika* and *Hariti*. *Pancika* is carved with a full body, wearing princely garb and jewelry representing wealth and abundance. *Hariti* is carved with five small children representing her five hundred children. *Pancika* and *Hariti* are also depicted as keepers of wealth or treasurers of enlightenment. *Hariti* sometimes is considered as the embodiment of the mother of Buddhas. Angry *Hariti* has been carved with fangs protruding as tusks from her mouth and trident.

## SIKHISM

The founder of the youngest religion of India, Guru Nanak (1469-1539), was born in Punjab to a Hindu family. The details of his life are not known. The Sikh scripture *Adi Granth*, recorded during the time of the fourth guru, Arjan, gives little information on his life.

By the fifteenth century Indian society was torn by intolerance of Muslims and the injustices of the caste system in Hindu society. Guru Nanak taught that the almighty creator and sustainer of the Universe is timeless, without form and beyond human reason. True religion is inward meditation

and outward observance, like worship and mere reading of scripture, is futile. Liberation can be obtained only by inward meditation. His message was to love god, remember him all the time, follow the work ethic, share the fruit of your work with others and lead a proper family life.

As in Buddhism and Jainism, the role of god was pushed to the background and emphasis was laid on the actions of man. The concept of rebirths (*Samsara*) and karma (the accumulation of good and bad deeds) and the final merging of the soul with god are the foundation of the Sikh religion.

The guru as the mediator of the divine voice is eternal. He lives in direct consciousness of god, experiencing no separation.

Before his death, Guru Nanak selected a guru to take his place, and a succession of ten gurus followed. Babar established the Mughal emperor in India during the life time of Guru Nanak.

Very soon the Mughals' apprehension in relation to the Sikhs grew. A few skirmishes with Mughals occurred during the lifetime of the third guru, Arjan. Guru Arjan died while in the custody of Punjab Mughal rulers. Relative peace followed in the sixteenth century. Under the rule of Aurangzeb, the ninth guru was executed in Delhi. During the time of the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, Sikhs were required to identify themselves visibly.

Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa, the spiritual brother and sisterhood devoted to purity of thought and action. He prescribed a distinct dress code known as the five Ks to install self-identity and militant spirit to face the persecution by neighbors and Mughals.

The most sacred book of the Sikhs is *Guru Granth*, compiled by Guru Arjan and updated by the last guru, Gobind Singh. It includes hymns sung by Guru Nanak, the teachings of nine gurus, texts by Muslim and Hindu saints, and many independent statements of beliefs and practices.

Guru Gobind Singh declared that all the guidance required by Sikhs in temporal matters is complete and there will be no more gurus. At this time the functions of the guru passed to the holy book and the custodians of the book, abolishing the need for priests. Guru Gobind Singh died in 1708.

## RELIGIOUS MONUMENTS

The early religious monuments constructed by Buddhist, Jains and Hindus that have survived the destructive forces of nature are the caves temples excavated in sandstone, basaltic hills and granite outcrops.

These caves are the product of sculpture on a grand scale, not rock-cut architecture. Few or no architectural principles are involved. To excavate a cave like those at Ajanta and Ellora, the face of the rock with its perpendicular drop was burrowed into horizontally; the space marked for doors and windows was hewn in the solid rock mass. Rock splitting was accomplished by inserting wooden pegs into holes cut close along the proposed line of split. When soaked with water, the wooden pegs would expand and exert pressure, and when the temperature fell at night this would fracture the rock along the intended line. After the passage into the rock was cut, the roof was designed by removing the rock above. By cutting the rock below, the floor was created. Large masses of rocks for columns and other structures were left attached to the roof and mother rock for later finishing. Rock cutters using pickaxes separated the split rock and removed the debris. Masons executed more precise cutting. Sculptors carved, and fine finishing was done by polishers using iron chisels and hammers. The absence of faults and deposits of sedimentary rocks in the basaltic lava flow was a great bonus. Caves in sandstone hills were excavated using the same technique.

The caves and monuments in large granite boulders as seen at Mamalapurum were excavated by a different technique, presumably because of the hardness of rock. The surface was first delineated by cutting square-inch wedge-shaped holes at close intervals using a hammer and chisel. Flat-edged iron wedges of the same thickness were inserted into the holes and driven with a heavy hammer and the broken pieces of rock removed. Then deeper work was done by cutting grooves in a two-foot-square area to the depth of two or three inches and chiseling out the projected square blocks. The process was repeated, keeping the excavated surface at uniform depth. Rock for structures like pillars and walls were left in place for later chiseling. While the work went on in one direction, often another excavation was started down from above. Because of the hardness of the rock, the depth of the cave was kept to bare minimum. This technique can be seen on the unfinished surface of a boulder in front of the Mahisasuramardini cave and on the unfinished surface of the sculptured cliff at the left bottom corner at Mamalapurum.

## HINDU TEMPLES

There is no evidence of the existence of any type of religious buildings during the Indus River Valley civilization or the Vedic era in India. Destructive forces of nature and the passage of time obliterated any temples built with perishable materials in the early part of the first millennium. Sculptures,

created from clay since pre-historic times, were also lost except for a few terra-cotta figurines.

The few brick temples built in the early fourth century CE that survived weathering show a fairly developed stage in temple construction. In the early fifth century stones were introduced to the construction of temples and the present-day freestanding stone structural temple was evolved over next two hundred years, starting as a simple structure.

The earliest stone temple, developed in the fifth century, had a sanctum enshrined with the deity and an open, pillared hall called a *mandapa* to accommodate visitors (but not large gatherings). Later the open hall was enclosed, a front porch was added, and a tower was developed on the center of the temple roof. The tower was soon moved over the sanctum. A small cell (vestibule) between the sanctum and hall, called the *antralia*, was added to allow the few visitors to wait while the Brahmin and a worshipper (alone or with his family) occupied the sanctum. Still later the front hall was divided into a small hall (*ardha-mandapa*) and a relative large hall (*maha-mandapa*).

By the seventh century the basic design of the present freestanding stone temple was complete and was adopted in the plain regions. By the eighth century the race was on for the construction of grand temples with the tallest towers under the patronage of Hindu monarchs. The basic units of temple building have remained the same except for the number of individual units and regional diversification of units.

Hindus started excavating cave temples in mountain terrains in the fifth century at Ellora on the model of Buddhist caves, but without the funeral mound in the cave. Almost simultaneously the development of freestanding stone structural temples started. The caves are decorated with sculptures of Hindu gods and some decorative elements developed on freestanding Hindu temples. The structural temples had tall towers — which could not be accommodated in a cave. To maintain the tall tower and to free the temple from the confinement of the cave, very soon Hindus opened the roof of the cave at Ellora, ending the era of caves in the seventh-eighth century.

Regional developments modified the temple complex. The small hall (*ardha-mandapa*) and front porch were modified into a comparatively large hall for the offering of food (*bhoga-mandapa* — dining hall) and hall of pleasure (*nata-mandir* — dance hall) in some Orissa temples. The large hall, *Maha-mandapa*, was retained as the *Jagamohana*. The roofs of the front units of the temple remained flat, in the south, but in the north roofs were built in a pyramidal shape. Further developments added a large court, subsidiary shrines for

spouses and children of the god, saints, and a holy basin in large temple complexes.

The external decorations on Hindu monuments are unique in different regions. Although most of the decorations and shapes of the units were developed in the south, the north and west adopted specific shapes and decorations for different units. The temple gateway towers (*gopuram*) remained simple and inconspicuous in the north and west of India. The high gateway towers of south Indian temples with the wagon-shaped roof became the most prominent structures of the temple gateways, with more than one gateway in some temples. In later-built temples, gateways taller than temple towers apparently assumed the role of a secondary sanctum.

The decorations used on gateway towers and temple towers in the south are similar. These decorations were adopted from the tower of Ganesha Ratha at Mamalapuram, which became the prototype of gateway towers. The most commonly used decorations are chaitya windows — the circular or semi-circular arched blind windows with carvings inside. Miniature shrines were carved on the tower with the wagon-shaped roof called a *sala*, with the bulbous-shaped roof called *kuta* and a bulbous decoration with a pointed tip called *stupi*. The small circular decoration with carvings (mostly of human heads) inside is called *kudu* and the overhanging cornice with kudu is called *kaputa*. On gateway towers females, particularly *mithuna* (embracing) couples, became prominent but females were rarely carved on the temple towers. Representing the mountain of gods, the tall towers with many stories were constructed to provide dwellings for the gods.

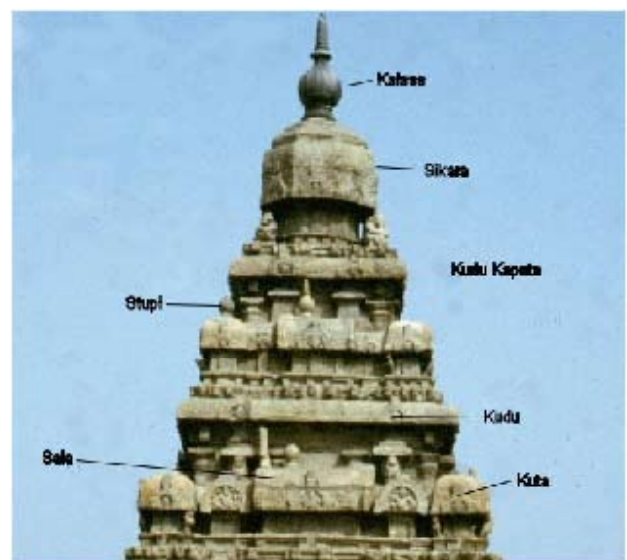


Fig. A. Shape and Decorations of south Indian towers. Shore temple, Mamalapuram. 7<sup>th</sup> Century.

The pyramidal tower in south Indian temples bears a square or octagonal but mostly dome-shaped *sikara* on the top, surmounted by a water pot called *kalasa* (Fig. A). In a later development a *sukanasa*, an elongated structure with a wagon-shaped roof, was added at the base of tower with a chaitya window on front façade. The decorations on the south Indian temple towers are similar to the decorations on gateway towers.

The towers on north and west Indian temples differ radically from south Indian temple towers in both shape and decorations. The curvilinear tower developed in the south was also used in the north and west, but there were changes in height, shape and embellishment with locally developed decorations (Fig. B). The crowning element of these towers is a flat stone with ribbed margin called *amalaka*; it bears a finial (*kalasa*).

The structural decorations on the north and west India temple towers include full or half interlocking circles called *gavaska* that give a mesh appearance to the tower. The corners of the tower are imbedded with small ribbed pieces of *amalaka*. Temple towers are generally decorated with a few gods and goddesses.

The decorations on the walls of north and west India temples generally differ from the decoration on south Indian temple walls. The base of south Indian temples is molded, and the wall above bears niches with flanking pilasters enclosing carvings and foliated decorations above pilasters. The top of the wall is decorated with an overhanging cornice with kudu decorations (called a *kaputa cornice*) (Fig. C). The walls of the sanctum are usually carved with images of gods and goddesses.



Fig. B. Shape and decoration of North Indian temple tower and temple walls. Visva-Brahma Temple. Alampur. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

In north and west Indian temples the base is generally not molded. The plinth is decorated with females, in bands, with mythological creatures interposed. The walls above bear sculptured panels between pilasters decorated with full or half interlocking *gavaska* above and below. The walls of sanctum are carved with a sprinkling of female forms.



Fig. C. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

#### GODS AND GODDESSES

Most of the gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon have multiple hands, two legs and some have multiple heads, but only the seated Siva in a carving at Khajuraho has four legs. The emblems they carry or the mounts they ride identify major gods and their spouses. Siva is mostly depicted as a phallus (*lingam*), sometimes with a beautiful female face carved near the tip. In human form he carries a three-pronged trident, and a begging bowl made of a half skull, or a noose held in his hand. His mount is Nandi (the bull). The spouse of Siva, Parvati, is mostly identified with a rosary, ladle or water pot she carries and sometimes she is accompanied by Nandi.

Vishnu carries a conch shell and a wheel-disc. The conch shell represents eternal peace. The wheel disc represents eternal time and the power to destroy all things. The conch shell and wheel disc in combination with gestures made by his other two hands identified some of his form. Animals such as the fish, boar and lion identify some of his incarnations. His mount is Garuda, mostly carved as a man with wings. His spouse Lakshmi is identified with the lotus, in Buddhism, and sometimes by the emblems of Vishnu.

Brahma is identified by having four faces and by his swan mount, and Indra with his elephant mount (later replaced by a horse). Varuna carries a noose in his hand but he is not stern

looking and travels on a *makara* (quasi-crocodile). Yama, the god of death, is identified with his mount, the buffalo.

Goddesses also have emblems representing their nature and power. The river goddess Ganga travels on Crocodile and Yamuna on Tortoise. Goddess Ganga has three heads, as three rivers join to make the Ganges River. Durga, the mother goddess, carries a multitude of weapons including a trident. Sarasvati, the goddess of music and learning, is identified by a musical instrument.

#### TEMPLE SCULPTURE

Hindu temple is a place to worship the facsimile of a god and offer him gifts. The social and religious lives of Hindus revolve around the temple.

The canons of temple building ordained that temples should be attractive and beautiful to induce frequent visits. Sex is sacred and females are more attractive than any flower or sunset that can be carved in gray stones. Thus there were no better assets than the female to decorate the temple.

Indian artists idealized feminine beauty with large almond eyes, chiseled nose, sensual lips, a full firm breast, narrow waist, bulging hips, and long cylindrical thighs with shapely legs. Serving as places to worship the gods and glorify their accomplishments, temples blossomed with feminine beauty, emphasizing her charms and reproductive servitude.

Gods were carved in the image of mortals with features like special hairdos, often with multiple faces, hands, and in one instance multiple legs, or an erect lingam to emphasize their superior nature. They look stern, evoking respect and submission and in few cases fear. Gods were given the position of honor in the sanctum.

Goddesses were carved in the image of idealized females with all the feminine charms. The Goddess Durga was created, possibly as a revolt against male dominance, by combining the attributes of all the gods. She fought with many demons but could not stay on top because she was female, and later became associated with Siva.

Yoga, a graded path leading to final salvation through body control and meditation, was introduced in the Buddhist and Hindu religion. Yoga is an attempt to yoke or unify oneself to the divine, or the universe, eliminating the duality of the individual and the greater being. Meditation and use of *asana* (sitting position of legs) and *madura* (hand gestures) are associated with yoga.

The use of yoga as a religious practice appeared in Harappa civilization (Indus Valley Civilization) but was not necessarily connected to a particular sect. Hindus, Buddhists and Jains adopted yoga in historic times. It led to organized

Tantrism in Buddhism by the seventh century and reached a peak in Hinduism in the tenth century, exploiting sex on temple walls.

The artists at Sanchi in the first century carved the most beautiful female torso and gave her a three body-bend pose imbued with sensuality. The Pallava dynasty of the Andhra region in the fifth century made her tall, slim, delicate and radiantly beautiful. Her body started to become more voluptuous but still she remained radiantly beauty by the sixth century under the Kalacuri of central India. The Cola in the tenth century started changing her stature. The Candella dynasty of Khajuraho started modifying her proportions by giving her longer legs. The Ganga of Kalinga in the eleventh century made her tall, more graceful and poetic.

In the thirteenth century the Hoysala of Karnataka gave her an attractive face and compressed her height, making her shorter and bulkier, and buried her naked body in ornaments. The emphasis on the beautification of temples shifted from female beauty to decorative sculpture. With the destruction of temples by the Muslim sultans in the thirteenth century, temple building came to a halt and the sublime female creation vanished into thin air.

Female nudity is common in temple sculpture. To the Indian mind every thing exists at three levels: the physical, the subtle level of senses and emotions; and the spiritual. Artists depict the world of senses and emotions. The human body is the wrapping worn by the subtle level, and to put dress on the body was considered to bury the subtle further down. Therefore in temples the image was mostly left disrobed. The designs or folds of fine textiles cleaving to her body were considered dress enough. She was pure, sweet and tender. The artists presented her with all her attributes as seen by her lover, but she was not carved nude entertaining groups of males.

Even by the eleventh century her upper body was visible through translucent drapery and the lower body showed the contours of her thighs and hips. She remained radiantly beautiful through the thirteenth century — and then vanished.

As in most cultures, woman was not elevated to the status of men in Indian society though the female was considered auspicious. Because of her fertility she was associated with growth, abundance and prosperity. The mango tree was believed to blossom at the sound of the goddess' laughter and unlike Eve she was not associated with the fall of man.

The view of female procreative servitude changed with different ascending gods. When the Vedic god Indra, controlling the rain clouds, ruled the agrarian society, she was a fertility deity who provided sons to till the soil. With the attainment of some prosperity the obscure god of thunder-

bolts, Rudra, appeared as Siva, representing the male reproductive nature with an erect phallus; he became a popular god in south India, eclipsing Agni of the Vedic triad.

Though Siva is associated in Indian thought with the female active principle (*prakṛti*, nature) that makes possible the manifestation of the inactive male principle, it was the lingam that dominated. The *yoni* was given the shape of the spout on a pedestal to drain the gift of milk poured on the lingam standing in the pedestal pit.

Like the erect lingam, the *yoni* did not become a major symbol. The *yoni* was presented as a simple slit, except in a few early carvings of a squatting mother goddess in Karnataka and in Konarak it was carved with a few anatomical details. In the Preah Khan temple of Cambodia, the spout of lingam pedestal is carved like lips of *yoni*.

On the main gateway of Virupaksha temple at Vijayagara an *apsara* with a beautiful body and firm breasts is standing flanked by attendants with her shapely long legs spread apart. With the fingers of both hands inserted in her *yoni*, she pulls it open, exposing the erect clitoris, resembling a phallus, possibly to indicate that lingam resides even in *yoni*.

A couple of circular *yogini* temples constructed in west India have the main shrine in the center of a circular space representing the womb of the female installed with the lingam. In rectangular temples the projected entrance represented the lingam.

The development of the female spirit Shakti was snubbed and she was installed in the subsidiary Devi shrine of the temple complex, subordinating her to the male god. Most Shaktis of Siva took cruel aspects.

Depiction of sexual acts is not rare in temple sculpture. It started with *yaksis*, the fertility deities with bulging breasts and *apsaras*, courtesans bursting with sex appeal. Loving couples holding hands and in the act of disrobing the female appeared on a carved railing of Bodhi-Gaya temple, erected in around 150 CE. The first large carving of a couple engaged in sex appeared in the fifth century in south India at Aihole. In north India this started proliferating from the ninth century, leading to larger-than-life carvings of copulating pairs on the walls of Konarak temple. In later Puranas it is reported as mentioned that the gods are interested in a variety of sexual poses for the sake of novelty as well as for the satisfaction of their female partners.

Possibly this trend was started to stimulate the sexual urge of devotees to increase the population, to meet the needs of agrarian society. Meanwhile Tantrism emerged, leading to sexual orgies. Sucking of the phallus by a female squatting between an embracing couple is explained in Tantrism as freeing the self of desire by excessive indulgence on the part

of souls who have attained some merit. Sexual orgies of three females with one male and one female with three males, female masturbation with inanimate objects, fingers, licking of the *yoni* by dogs and men were carved on temple walls.

The *apsaras'* dignity is often violated by devotees rubbing their hands, resulting in blackening of breasts, thighs, *yoni* and even anal region. Philip Rawson has suggested that such rubbing for good luck by devotees has caused pits in the vulva of some *apsaras*. The pit in the *yoni* of Durga in Malapurum Varaha cave has deepened considerably in just three years. However, except at Khajuraho and Konarak, the sexual act is carved on temple gateways or in corners and in generally unnoticed part of the temple.

The hands of sculptors fulfilled the canons of temple construction and made the temple an attractive, beautiful and romantic place. Even with an excess of Tantrism it is a beautiful, sweet and poetic world to live in, full of life exuberance, sensory delights and tender emotions. Even with stern-looking gods it is a world of beauty and delight. The blessings of the gods and the engrossing myths and fables carved on the walls are an added bonus.

#### BUDDHIST AND JAIN TEMPLES

Buddhists built monasteries, *stupas*, caves and freestanding stone temples for devotional and residential purpose. Most of the early monasteries are in ruins. The earliest extant temples are *stupas* and caves. *Stupas* are funeral mounds to incarnate the sacred relics. There are many ruins of *stupas* all over the country. Some *stupas* have beautifully decorated gateways and a railing around. Buddhists visit *stupas* to feel the proximity of Buddha's relics.

The best and most famous *stupa* is located at Sanchi. The brick *stupa* at Bahurath, with square base and beautiful sculpture on stone railing posts, has become a victim of time, although parts of the railing are saved. Another *stupa* at Amaravati leaves its trace only in bits and pieces of sculpture in various museums.

In the mid fifth century, Buddhists built a simple and eminently logical freestanding structural temple at Sanchi but did not improve on it. The later built Buddhist temples resemble Hindu temples.

Buddhists were the first to excavate caves during the regime of Maurya dynasty in the second century BCE. The early Buddhist cave temple complex with a hall and a shrine in the shape of funeral mound are called *chaitya*. Most of the *chaitya* are carved in imitation of thatched-roofed huts of central India with non-functional accessories like beams, imitating wooden beams on the ceiling, and pillars supporting the roof.

A few caves have arched windows, imitating the wood window of the time, above the entrance façade. The windows were covered with wooden screens to filter sunlight into the caves. Chaitya evolved into *vihara* caves with pillared verandahs, a hall without funeral mound, a shrine in the back wall with vestibule and residential cells on the sidewalls for the monks. In further developments the shrine was moved to the center of the hall and circumambulatory passage around the shrine was added. Hindu and Jain caves were modeled on Buddhist Vihara but without funeral mound. Jain cave complexes to a large degree resemble Hindu caves.

The Jain started constructing caves in first century CE. The early built caves and shelters were used by monks as residences. The caves built later were on the model of Buddhist caves without funeral mound and facilities for residence of monks. The freestanding structural temples of Jain are similar to Hindu temples.

The sculpture in Buddhist, Jain and Hindu monuments is similar. The Jains have excelled in decorative sculpture, particularly on pillars. Sexual love is implied in Jain sculpture, but not sexuality. Buddhist sculpture set new standards for carvings of female figures by introducing three-body-bend poses, an idealized female torso, and sensuality in the carving. It exhibits sexuality but not the excesses of Tantrism.

#### SIKH MONUMENTS

The third guru, Ram Das, excavated a pool in 1577 at Amritsar, built a temple in the center of the pool, and made it a place of pilgrimage. The fifth guru, Arjan, enshrined the holy book in the temple. The city was sacked and the Mughal Emperor demolished the temple in 1761. But the temple was rebuilt in 1764 and the roof was topped with copper plate in 1802. The two-story high marble temple built in a Hindu and Muslim architectural style sits in the large pool and is reached by the marble causeway known as Guru Bridge.

Sikhs in the early stage assembled in halls for congregational singing of hymns. These halls developed into *gurdwara*, the Sikh temples in India. A common kitchen to feed the people is an essential part of the *gurdwara*.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

The triad of gods of ancient West Asian religions was gradually replaced by belief in a supreme god. Christianity replaced the triads of gods with their own trinity, in which there is one god with three distinct co-equal and co-eternal entities who are equal gods, the father, the son and holy spirit. The son, like the Hindu gods appeared as a human, to guide humanity. Islam replaced the trinity by one omni-

present and omnipotent god who created the universe by his personal will.

#### CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

Christian churches constructed in India show the strong influence of the western world. No composite Indo-Christian architecture was developed, possibly because the colonial powers, in spite of their long stay in India, remained alien for political expediency.

Syrian Christians were living in Cochin, south India, as early as the Gupta period (300-500 CE), but organized Churches in the western style appeared only in the fifteenth century with the arrival of colonial powers. Well-known churches built on the model of European churches are located at Goa in India. Local craftsman and artists decorated the interior of the churches. The alien rulers exerted no effort to synthesize Indo-Christian architecture, although some see a hint of Khajuraho curvilinear towers in the retable of some churches. The intricate and beautiful woodwork of the retables by local craftsmen has no equal. The wooden statues that adorned the altars are beautiful imitation of western art. The paintings, done in the Italian style under the supervision of Italians, on wooden boards, are a poor imitation, but Indian artists excelled in painting frescoes with floral designs.

#### INDO-ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Islamic sculpture is primarily ornamental with calligraphic, geometric and floral designs combined in endless ways with inlay of semiprecious stones in marble.

Reproduction of real animals (much less humans) in two- or three-dimensional form is not permitted in Islam.

In Islamic art, primacy is given to calligraphy. Architecture is important because it leaves the stamp of Islam on the land. The most numerous and important structures in the Muslim world are mosques and tombs with their long cylindrical minarets and round domes with pointed tips staring at the sky. The mosque, a place for congregation of devotees to pray, is a large, open, lighted court with arcades or galleries or cloisters, the *mihrab* — a niche in the wall indicating the direction to Mecca, a pulpit (a raised platform from which to deliver the sermon) and a tower from which to call the devotees to prayer.

Temples are large, closed structures with a small, dim, mysterious cell in the center or rear of the temple to accommodate the image of deity and couple of devotees, a narrow passage around the cell to circumambulate the cell, and a comparatively large hall (not for the congregation of devotees, but for devotees waiting to enter the cell).

The Muslim Mohamed Qasim conquered the lower Indus Valley in 711-712. In the late tenth century Turkish slaves and nomads settled and established an empire in what is now Afghanistan. Mahmud (998-1030), a fierce fanatic from Afghanistan, invaded India seventeen times to loot and destroy temples. Qutabuddin Aibak, a Turkish slave, led another Turkish clan from Afghanistan and settled in India. He demolished Hindu and Jain temples, and re-used the stones (some even retaining Hindu sculpture) for the construction of Islamic monuments. In 1193, to construct the tall colonnade of the first mosque built at Delhi, pillars of uneven height from a demolished Jain temple were placed on top of each other to obtain the required even height. Muslims designed the façade of the mosque but Hindu masons built it, giving the sculpture and Arabic inscription friezes a purely Hindu background.

In 1200, Qutabuddin did not demolish a Sanskrit college in Ajmir but built a beautiful stone screen in front of the mosque (called Adhai-din-ka-jhonpra) using stones from demolished temples.

The first Islamic monument in India, Qutab Minar, considered a perfect tower, owes much to the skilled native masons with their centuries-old tradition of working with stone and other spoils from Hindu temples.

In all, Qutabuddin destroyed twenty-seven temples and re-used the building materials. His choice of design was limited by the shape and size of the looted stones. In addition, the dearth of experienced Muslim craftsmen meant that others had to be brought in, and this led to the meeting of alien minds and changes in the traditional training of Muslim craftsmen. Thus the influences of Central Asia (Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan) on the architecture of India combined to create a synthesis: Indo-Islamic architecture. Indo-Islamic art reached its glorious culmination in the golden age of the Mughal Empire. It is neither imitative nor hybrid art but distinct in itself.

In the Lower Sindh Valley, excavation has revealed the ruins of a small Samara-style mosque with thick brick pilasters. This mosque was possibly constructed during the late eighth century after the invasion of Mohamed Qasim in 711.

At Banbhore, 67 km (40 miles) south of Karachi, Pakistan, the foundation of a mosque approximately 128m (397 ft.) square has been discovered. A doubtful inscription dates the mosque to 727. There is a definite record of repairs to this mosque in 907. If the construction date is truly 727, this mosque is as old as any in the world.

Before appearing in India, tombs were common in the Muslim world. Mosques and tombs did not change much when introduced in India. But the shape of the base of the dome was changed from square to octagonal to round, and

the dome itself from semicircular to bulbous. Central Asian architectural features, arcades and galleries were modified; the true arch and its variations and vaults were introduced. Perforated stone screens and inlay work covered the monuments. A little pillared dome pavilion without walls, called the *chatri*, of Hindu origin, appeared around the drum of the central dome. Indigenous features were added to the Islamic monuments: *jalis*, or pierced stone screens, *jharoka*, a projecting balcony with a small vaulted roof, and *chajja*, the angled eave. The gateway to the courtyard of Muslim monuments, with the dome and interior bays, remained different from temple gateways.

Mughals were nomadic and their buildings resemble tents built of stone. Jami Masjid in Delhi is an example. After the nomadic influence, the Persian cultural influence was strongest. Humayun's tomb, with a circular dome resting on the high circular neck of the supporting drum, brilliant glazed tiles, and six-pointed stars, is in the Persian style, but Akbar's Fatahpursikiri is almost Hindu in construction. The architects added temple bells to the arches and the lotus to the Islamic geometric designs. Ribbed fruits and pot-like finials, the traditional Indian temple motifs, crowned the apexes of vaults. Brackets were sometimes fashioned as animals and birds in full relief. The curved roof with its downward-sloping cornice imitating the thatched-hut roofs of Bengal were introduced. The hallmark of Mughal architecture is the multi-cusped arch. Columns were multifaceted or had fluted sides with vase-shaped bases.

By the seventeenth century, pure Persian art disappeared. Under Jahangir and Shahjahan, semi-precious stones like jade, lapis lazuli, and carnelian were set in white marble panels to create delicately-tinted flowers and leafy arabesques. Different colored sandstones and limited use of glazed tiles added to the color effect.

Orthodox Muslims gained influence during the regime of Shahjahan and the preference shifted to the Persian style again. The twelve-door pavilion with triple entrances on all four sides and vaulted halls called "Baradari" were introduced.

Taj Mahal is thoroughly Indian in spirit but some critics offer qualifications. At its peak, Indo-Islamic architecture started showing significant elements of Persian style and a sort of decadence set in. Before the end of the Mughal dynasty, the development of Indo-Islamic architecture had ceased and with the end of the dynasty it became a real orphan.



## 2. THE ROCK SHELTERS OF BHIMBETKA (PREHISTORIC–18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, central India, is one of the three richest sites of painted rock art in the world. This is the largest group of pre-historic painted shelters and perhaps the oldest paintings in India.

Bhimbetka, meaning the seat of Bhima, a hero of the Mahabharata epic, is located 47 km (28 miles) from Bhopal in central India in the Vindhyan Mountains — one of the oldest geological formations in central India. Transportation facilities are scarce and no facilities of any kind are available at Bhimbetka. Bhopal is the convenient center for boarding, lodging and transport to visit Bhimbetka. UNESCO declared the rock shelters a World Heritage site in June 2003.

Bhimbetka represents a group of seven small hills, designated as areas 1 to 7, extending over 10 km (6 miles). There are 754 natural rock shelters with cave paintings on these hills. The hills are designated A through F and on each hill the shelters are in numbered groups. Area 7 at Bhimbetka has only 10 shelters grouped under A. Area 3 has 291 shelters grouped in six groups, A, B, C, E, F, & G. The shelters are painted with scenes from the life and times of Stone Age nomadic hunters that occupied the shelters from 1.5 million years up to about CE 1700, representing the earliest human cultures in India.

V. S. Wakankar discovered more than 500 of these shelters in 1970. The surrounding area, covered with dense deciduous trees and abundant wild life, offered plenty of food and three perennial water springs; it was an ideal habitat for prehistoric men. As the shelters are spread over a wide area (currently uninhabited) in locations difficult to access without guides, the Archeological

Survey of India has selected a few representative shelters for visitors on Bhimbetka and has provided a guide facility. The photos presented here are from these caves, numbered 1 to 10 by the Archeological Survey.

The Bhimbetka hills, formed of sedimentary rock, are six hundred meters (1860 ft.) above sea level and 100 meters (600 ft.) above the valley floor, and crest at a 25-meter (75 ft.) high flat-topped ridge. The ridge has broken into large boulders of various shapes due to weathering (Fig. 1.1). Mechanical and chemical weathering of the base of boulders by water and wind carrying sand and debris has eroded the lower layers of the boulders, thus naturally creating the shelters. Some large boulders dislodged due to the erosion of the base have formed shallow caves (Fig. 1.2). Weathering has carved the boulders into various shapes and sizes.

The shelters vary in size and height, but most are large enough to provide shelter and high enough to serve as a look out for the game animals that once visited the water holes in the area.



*Fig. 1.1. Bhimbetka. Ridge of the hill. Sandstone.*

A few shelters are so small that they are suitable only for small animals. The shelters provide some protection from rain, tropical sun and predators. Weathering has exposed metamorphosed crystalline rocks, in some places,

containing quartzite as outcrops through the sedimentary strata. Early inhabitants used this crystalline material to make tools.



Fig. 1.2. Bhimbetka. A large detached boulder. Sandstone.

The northern slope of Bhimbetka Hill, due to considerable tree felling in recent times, shows much erosion. A road suitable for vehicular traffic has been built up to the base of the ridge. There are considerable Hindu and Buddhist archaeological remains in the region. A temple dedicated to the mother goddess is located very near to the shelters.

The rock art includes petroglyphs (engraving), geoglyphs (large figures drawn on the ground by arranging stones), rock bruising (chipping off the weathered rock surface to create a two-dimensional picture by changing the surface color) and pictographs (paintings on stone). The major art form of India, rock-cut architecture and sculpture, is possibly the outgrowth of early practices as evidenced here.

The earliest rock paintings in Europe were discovered at Altamira in Spain in 1879. Twelve years earlier, in 1867–1868, Archibald Carlyle discovered rock paintings in Uttar Pradesh, a neighboring state of Madhya Pradesh. He described the paintings as “Illustration in a very stiff and archaic manner, scenes in the life of the ancient stone chippers; others represent animals or hunts of animals by men armed with bows and arrows, spears and hatchets.” Carlyle had no doubt about the prehistoric vintage of the paintings. But he did not publish his finding and left his notes with a friend. In 1906, V.A. Smith published the notes. In 1883, J. Cockburn discovered a well-preserved painting of a rhinoceros in the region. But he believed the painting to be only 300 years old, as the Mughal Emperor Babar had reported rhinoceros in the region in 1529. V.S. Wakankar, who had discovered painted shelters earlier in the adjacent region, noticed the broken

cliff of Bhimbetka Hill in 1970, while traveling by train, and suspecting there might be something there he arranged to visit the hill.

Rock art is pure art as it reflects the infancy of painting without the complex influence of the mainstream of civilization, and there are many masterpieces. In rock art we see the history of man presenting his rituals, myths, beliefs, customs and way of life through the ages. In addition the art reveals evidence of early tools used by man. Microliths are small stone projectiles attached on the tip of wooden handles for use in hunting. It would have been difficult to understand the use of microliths in the absence of these paintings.

A few scientific techniques can be applied to date the rock paintings. The most often used technique is radiocarbon dating. This method is not reliable for dates going back more than 40,000 years as the amount of radiocarbon remaining in the residue is too small to provide a reliable test.

In colored paintings where bird droppings are used for white, or colored pigments are mixed with binding agents containing organic compounds like blood, plant gum or sap, the age of the painting can be determined. Regrettably, to obtain sufficient quantity of sample for analysis a large chunk of painting need to be scraped.

Other analytical techniques are the potassium-argon and thermo luminescence (TL) methods. Rocks that are 100,000 years old can be dated by the potassium-argon method, but not embedded objects.

The TL technique is based on radioactive elements in pottery (soil). When heated to 500 C, pottery releases electrons in the form of light energy. This method is suitable for measuring the age of objects up to 80,000 years old.

The stratified deposits in refuse dumps also provide a rough way to estimate the age of manmade artifacts. Most of the Middle Paleolithic habitation deposits ranging from 140,000 to 70,000 years BP are well preserved at Bhimbetka, but remains of human skeletons pertaining to this period have not been found. The few human burial sites and skeletons unearth at Bhimbetka belong to the historic age. It is difficult to ascertain the type of human who occupied the cave during this period.

In one cave excavated at Bhimbetka the lowest layer was found to contain pebble tools similar to pebble tools found in East Africa, where they have been dated to 1,500,000 years BP. Based on this evidence, R.R.R. Brooks suggest habitation of some of the shelters by predecessors of modern man (*Homo sapiens*) who entered Asia between 150,000 and 120,000 BP. There was one major glaciation during this period.

As noted above, Wakankar discovered the Bhimbetka shelters in 1970. The first attempt to date the paintings

was made on the basis of stylistic drawing, but none of the paintings were considered more than a thousand years old. Wakankar had discovered paintings in shelters in the surrounding area and in 1955 proposed another method to date the painting by studying the style used in each superimposed layer of painting. By this method he dated some paintings in Madhya Pradesh to the Mesolithic period.

Man has been living in India for more than 500,000 years and has left his material wealth, mostly tools, in the habitation deposits. The general sequence of prehistoric and historic cultures in India, some based on C14 carbon dating, has been determined. The top most Iron Age covers 2300 to 3000 years BP, followed by Copper-Bronze Age 3000 to 5500, Mesolithic 7000 to 10,000, Paleolithic 10,000 to 100,000, Acheulian 4000 to 500,000 and pebble-tool culture 500,000 to 1,500,000 BP.

To study the times and life of the Stone age man through various ages and find artifacts in habitation deposits that may relate to the paintings, archaeologists started excavating shelter floors in 1972. It was noticed that some shelters were used for habitation only once or twice, some shelters were used intermittently, and some were in continuous use. The excavation of the largest rock shelter (IIF-23) in 1973-76 by V.N. Misra, revealed habitation deposits ranging over all the archeological periods, starting from pebble-tool culture.

The earliest culture recognized in habitat deposit above the bedrock in Bhimbetka shelter III F 23 and 24 is pebble-tool culture (500,000 to 1,500,000 BP), characterized by tools made from river pebbles. A clear evolution of Acheulian culture from pebble-tool culture was not seen in Bhimbetka excavations. But study of the open campsites in areas near Bhimbetka showed a change from pebble tools to Acheulian bifacial tools. Early man had started fashioning simple tools by breaking one side of an oblong stones small enough to hold in hand by striking it with another stone to get a sharp edge on one side (choppers) and by breaking both sides of the same stone to create bifacial chopping tools. The bifacials made at Bhimbetka are 22 centimeters (9 inches) long.

Chalcedony, agate and chert, hard stones widely distributed in the area, were used to make tools in the Acheulian period but sandstone tools were also widely used. The evolution of upper Acheulian from Lower Acheulian is also marked at Bhimbetka. In the lower Acheulian thick bifacial tools were in use. In the upper Acheulian, flakes and thin tools were manufactured.

Possibly the oldest wall in the world was built at Bhimbetka during Acheulian era.

There is a habitation gap after the Upper Acheulian period. Thick deposits of Acheulian cultures were left by Homo

erectus, the nomadic hunter-gatherer using the shelters. They had migrated throughout the world except the Americas and Oceania. They discovered methods to make fire about 500,000 years ago, which helped them survive the Ice Age.

A form of art has been ascribed to the Homo erectus occupying the shelters during Acheulian era. On the floor of the Auditorium shelter at Bhimbetka and in various sites in Africa, Homo erectus made shallow circular cavities a few centimeters (inches) in diameter and in depth. An unknown tool was used to make and polish the inside of these "cupules". It has been proposed that these cupules were used over 100,000 years ago, in the Acheulian age, as the depository of human placenta to assure long life. Engravings around cupules have been made, making them appear like vulva, a link to fertility. Cupules between the legs of human engravings were made to indicate female sex.

No other forms of art are attributed to Homo erectus.

The Ice Age (Pleistocene) was a long period between 1.8 million and about 12,000 years BP. Glaciers intermittently advanced from the north and retreated eight times in the northern hemisphere, followed by shorter interglacial periods. (The interglacial period we enjoy today started around 12,000 years BP.) There were three glaciations during the early Paleolithic period. The effect of climatic changes on habitation deposit is seen at Bhimbetka. To study the climate of Bhimbetka, trenches were excavated in few shelters to observe soil profile characteristics, weathering of tools, presence of highly cemented breccias and conglomerate and encrustation with CaCO<sub>3</sub>, etc.

It was concluded that during the Middle Paleolithic the climate had become comparatively drier. Late summer had heavy rains but not as much as in the Acheulian. During the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic period rainfall decreased and drier conditions prevailed. The Mesolithic period was extremely dry. During the Mesolithic age profound changes took place in fauna and flora. New species of plants appeared. Swift and agile animals requiring light tools to hunt like bow and arrow dominated the fauna. The climate was similar to today's. The detailed correlation of climate with glaciations and inter-glacial periods has not been worked out.

The next culture represented at Bhimbetka is Middle Paleolithic (30,000 to 100,000). In India the Middle Paleolithic culture is outgrowth of Acheulian culture. The traditional development of Upper Acheulian into Lower Paleolithic (540,000 to 140,000) did not take place at Bhimbetka. Evolution of Middle Paleolithic from Acheulian is distinct at Bhimbetka. In the middle Paleolithic Period tools made from chert and jasper as well as from fine sandstone were used. It is natural that early hunter-gatherer occupying sandstone

hills would manufacture scrapers, blades and points from sandstone and as he moved back and forth to the plains at the foot of the hills in the Malwa region he used chert and jasper, available in the trap region, to make tools. The color and transparent appearance of these minerals are attractive, besides.

Such movement has also been recorded in other regions. A shift in tool manufacturing also took place resulting in manufacture of composite tools. Cleavers and hand axes disappeared. Smaller tools were made of flat natural slabs. There was increased use of tools made of organic materials, like bone. Scrapers were used for woodwork and to insert bones on other tools or clubs, using natural resins. Other tools made during this era included side-scrapers with many subtypes; and points with circular cross-sections and borers. Early Stone Age tools were also still in use. There was a major shift in raw materials used for tool-making in Europe, but at Bhimbetka quartzite remained in use.

The evolution of the Upper Paleolithic (10,000 to 20,000) from the Middle Paleolithic might have taken place in the Deccan Trap region. The Upper Paleolithic tools obtained from the top red silt layers of the south campsite in Bhimbetka have longer blades with fluted cores. Burins are extremely common.

The tools were characterized by the introduction of true blade technology along with the use of flake tools. The tools were mostly non-geometric microliths. Bone tools were also in use. Evidence of fireplaces and animal remains is seen. Worship of the mother goddess and fire, and painting of shelters at Bhimbetka and other shelters in Vindhyan hills in central India began. At Bhimbetka thick blades with burin and several types of scrapers are found just below the deposits of next period.

The next cultural period, the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age, extended from 20,000 to 9500 years BP. Small "pigmy" tools were in use. Pottery did not yet exist. The last glaciations occurred near the end of the Mesolithic period, when the present climate appeared, with new flora and fauna. Big game became extinct, giving place to smaller and faster animals that required light, small and thin tools to hunt. Geometric microliths were mostly fitted into wood and bone and used as compound tools. There was marked increase in use of triangles and trapeze-shaped microliths.

Decoration on bones and bone ornaments was evident. In Bhimbetka the preferred raw material for tool manufacturing changed to chert and chalcedony, available in the vicinity. Rich deposits of such tools are found at Bhimbetka.

Intentional human burial occurred during this period for the first time. An appreciable increase in population is indi-

cated by occupation of the maximum number of shelters and an increase in habitation deposits. Construction of fireplaces, artificial stone slab floors, and walls have been detected. This was the golden age of rock painting at Bhimbetka.

The chronology of the Mesolithic period is not securely established for all shelters. For some Bhimbetka caves the oldest date is 7790 +/- 220 years.

It is suggested that man in the Middle and New Stone Age gave aesthetic consideration in the making of stone tools by selection of color and the process of carving facets. Carvings on shell and bones also suggest that early man was concerned with more than the utility of the tools.

The New Stone Age (Neolithic), from 9500 to 4500 BP in India, refers to the era with settled life, animal husbandry and cultivation, but primarily man still depended on stone tools. In the plains below Bhimbetka Hills a Neolithic transition from food gathering to food production, requiring some control of the environment, gradual took place between 8000-6000 BP in Baluchistan. In northern, eastern and southern India the change appeared during the second millennium BCE.

The Chalcolithic (Heliolithic), from 4500 to 3500 BP, refers to the age when copper and bronze tools were used along with stone tools. Microliths were used along with metal tools. Earthen pots replaced basketry. Beads were used for decoration. The tribal lifestyle was not much different from that of the Mesolithic period but contact with people living in the plains made possible the exchange of copper objects, pottery and other objects for jungle products. The basic tools of hunting remained the same.

During the Iron Age, from 3500 BCE, iron tools were in use. Domestication of animals was another accomplishment. In the upper most layers the presence of iron tools, historic pottery and punch-marked coins suggest persistence of the Mesolithic way of life in the shelters well into the Iron Age. Increased contact with agricultural communities finally brought the inhabitants of these shelters to the plains.

The excavation work at Bhimbetka shows that the shelters were in use for more than 100,000 years. However, the human bones found in habitat deposits were from no earlier than 10,000 BP and no direct evidence of earlier habitation was unearthed. Indirect evidence suggests occupation of shelters by *Homo erectus*, *Homo sapiens* and true man in progressive sequence.

The presence of many-faceted hematite pebbles used for red coloring of paintings was first found in the Upper Paleolithic layers (70,000-20,000 BP) in close proximity to the paintings. Nodules and rubbed cakes of mineral colors, mainly hematite red, were found in early Mesolithic caves. Green

colored pieces found in Upper Paleolithic shelters were not found in any Mesolithic deposits. It was concluded that some of the art is prehistoric, dating to about 10,000 years BP. Man has inhabited some of the shelters for well over 100,000 years and some of the paintings could be much older. Further research is required.

The paintings are broadly classified into prehistoric and historic. Prehistory refers broadly to the period before which writing was developed. Proto-history refers to the period when early writing had been developed, which remains undeciphered today.

Many paintings in Bhimbetka are very faint or obliterated. Due to calcification many paintings are obliterated in part, and imagination in many cases takes over as we strive to interpret the images.

In Bhimbetka paintings were done without any preparation of the shelter wall. A rock surface was used or re-used, without rubbing off the old paintings, resulting in as many as fifteen layers of figures superimposed — even though a large blank area remained available in the shelter. In most cases two or three superimposition layers are noticed. This preference for a particular location may be due to the availability of light in these areas that are easily observed from outside. Super-imposition of paintings has provided further clues as to the relative age of the paintings.

Pigments used for coloring were obtained in the surrounding hills. Ochre, hydrated oxide of iron, was used mixed with clay for red color. When burnt it yields a wide spectrum of colors: yellow, brown and orange. Copper compound produces green. Kaolin, gypsum, bird droppings or plant latex was used for white. Pigments were mixed with water. White and green were diluted greatly with water to give transparent colors. Solid or powder colors were used rarely. Wet opaque colors were achieved by application of pigments in oils. In historic paintings dark crimson and dark red were applied as non-transparent colors.

Pigments were applied to the rock wall by fingers, stick, chewed palmetto stick washed to remove broken fibers and dried. Most paintings were possibly drawn by brushes made from the hair of animals living in the vicinity. Handprints on the walls are an important element. A few handprints appear to be those of infants and children.

The medium to carry pigments varied from water to blood, oils, plant sap and white of egg. Fat is reportedly not used in Indian paintings.

The inhabited shelters have no paintings or have paintings of poor quality. Those shelters that show no signs of habitation have superb quality paintings, drawn by skilled artists who were keen observers of nature and life. Some

paintings are done on high locations, probably using scaffolds or branches of trees. In some cases projection platforms were constructed (which have since collapsed). These artists seem to have been provided with facilities to paint and freedom from the daily routine of life in order to develop their skills.

Shelter IIIE-9 is richly painted with the oldest and finest paintings. There are fifteen horses and fifteen buffalo, six chital deer, six langur or leaf monkeys, five elephants, two cows and an ox. One boar and one unidentified animal are also painted in this shelter. Eleven of these drawings are from prehistoric times. It is difficult to ascertain if the bulls and cows were drawn to record life as it existed or had any religious significance to the occupants.

The paintings depict all the activities of primitive life, like hunting, dancing, religion, domestic, recreation, copulation, picnics, collection and transportation of foods.



*The trees are very natural (Fig.1.3).*



*Fig.1.3. Bhimbetka. A tree. Prehistoric.*

Natural scenery is almost non-existent. Different kinds of birds in groups are depicted. One painting depicts men trying to steal eggs from a huge bird and the bird attacking them (Fig. 1.4). A feline beside them is awaiting her chance.

In another painting, a large predatory type of bird with large claws is seen (Fig. 1.5). One man is throwing a spear at the bird while another man, camouflaged as a bird, is aiming an arrow at a chital deer.



Fig. 1.4. Bhimbetka. Bird attacking men stealing eggs. Prehistoric.

The characteristics of paintings differ in the prehistoric and the historic periods. Most historic paintings were drawn from 600 BCE to as recent as 1700. Most of the historic period scenes depict battles between the rulers governing the valley below with swords, shields, spears, bows and arrows. One painting realistically depicts a cavalry charge with men carrying spears in raised hands on galloping horses (Fig. 1.6).



Fig. 1.5. Bhimbetka. Camouflaged men hunting bird and chital. Prehistoric.

A panoramic scene in shelter III A-30 depicts a march of cavalry through a pass. The cavalry has taken all the precautions to avoid surprise attack. Some men on foot are leading the horses by holding the reins and some are marching

holding drawn bow and arrows. Many birds and a scorpion are interposed in the marching cavalry to make the scene authentic. Near the end of the painting a large drawing depicts a blooming lotus, possibly on a flag, which is the quest of the marching cavalry (Fig. 1.7).



Fig. 1.6. Bhimbetka. Marching cavalry. Historic.



Fig. 1.7. Bhimbetka. Cavalry passing through Mountain pass. Historic.

Another painting in shelter III A-30 depicts men riding horses and carrying iron weapons; they have breached a circular enclosure, possibly a fort. Tame elephants with men carrying spears are also part of these scenes.



Fig. 1.8. Bhimbetka. Colored flowers and stallion. Prehistoric.

Decorative paintings and flowers appeared in the historic age. Flowers and leaves are mostly drawn in color. A stallion is standing near a bunch of colored flower in valley in Fig. 1.8. Above, on the ridge, a man is standing with weapon near a tree. A man driving a domesticated animal with a thick stick in his hand suggests the settled way of the life of the people living in the valley (Fig. 1.9). Most of these paintings lack naturalism and show marked decline in artistic quality.



Fig. 1.9. Bhimbetka. Man leading a domesticated animal. Historic.

The earliest historic period paintings do not contain fighting scenes, pre-Vedic gods, or the proto-historic fertility symbols of the phallus and vulva. The historic symbols and gods that are drawn in the shelters include the trident (the three-pronged emblem of Siva); Nandi, the carrier of Siva, the elephant-headed and multi-armed Ganesha carrying the trident in one hand (Fig. 1.10), and a multi-armed Siva dancing with an inverted trident in one hand (Fig. 1.11). All other Vedic gods including Vishnu (he was a Vedic god till the advent of the Brahmin era) are absent.

Other celestial figures are *yaksa* or nature spirits, and a multi-armed being drawn in shelter IIIIF-35. In shelter IIIC-19 a boar is drawn using a technique which makes him appear gigantic: the boar has large, broad face, and the men standing beside it are drawn in stick style, so that the boar dominates the entire scene. In the foreground a stick-figure man is running, possibly in fear. This could possibly be the germ for the creation of the boar incarnation of Vishnu.

The inscriptions found in some of the shelters were not written by the early inhabitants. Visitors during historic times introduced wrote in a few shelters.



Fig. 1.10. Bhimbetka. Multi-armed Ganesha. Historic.



Fig. 1.11. Bhimbetka. Multi-armed Siva. Historic.

Animals are the most common subjects of the paintings. In the Upper Paleolithic paintings realistic outlines of animals are drawn. Sometimes a sense of the modern art styles of impressionism, cubism and symbolism can be imagined. Chalcolithic drawings are less realistic and dynamic. The animal body infilling is generally accomplished by cross hatching or different geometrical designs. Humped bull was introduced during this period.

The most common animals in the paintings are chital, both stags and does; the most beautiful scene is of a fawn looking back. The majority of paintings, especially of the early prehistoric age, depict closely-packed large mixed herds of herbivores and carnivores. The animals are full of vitality, always drawn in motion or grazing. Men carrying spears are interposed in herds, walking, running or galloping behind the animals. In later paintings hunting tools depicted include bows, arrows, traps, nets and snares. Animals drawn

smaller in size also show remarkable realism. Most animals are drawn in a side pose but their horns are painted in front profile (Fig. 1.12).



Fig. 1.12. Animals in side pose with large horns facing front. Prehistoric.

Some animals are drawn in what we might call an x-ray style to show a fetus (sometimes two), or the vegetation that has been eaten in the stomach. Stomachs are decorated with lines or geometric designs (Fig. 1.13). Large animals like boar and buffalo are interposed in herds of other animals or drawn alone on ceilings. Few of the large animals are drawn in life size.

Small lizards and scorpions are also seen in the paintings. A large scorpion is drawn with a hair-like structure on the back — probably the mother is carrying the newly hatched baby scorpions on her back (Fig. 1.14). In addition to the scorpion the drawing shows a rabbit, goats, a donkey and a bird.

There are no scenes of animal copulation, although some animals are drawn with an erect penis. In a few drawings an animal is painted with an erect penis standing behind an animal with slightly raised tail (III-E-9). Animals with udders, like cows and buffalo, are rare, possibly due to the inhabitants' lack of pastoral background.



Fig. 1.13. Bhimbetka. Animals in X-ray style and with geometric designs. Prehistoric.



Fig. 1.14. Bhimbetka. Scorpion and other animals. Prehistoric.

Carnivorous animals include the tiger, leopard, cheetah and hyena. One sketch of a tiger crouching, muscles tensed to jump on a stag in the foreground, indicate the keen observation of the artist (Fig. 1.15). In the background a leopard is drawn with white outlines, the white dots applied on the body by the fingertip.

The predatory instinct of man in some cases is accompanied with sympathy for the injured animal. The wounded animals are generally depicted standing majestically, surrounded by hunters, and very rarely shown fallen down.



Fig. 1.15. Bhimbetka. Tiger posed to attack stage. Leopard in background. Prehistoric.

The artists were also capable of depicting emotion. In the neighboring state one painting in a shelter depicts a deer standing with a large spear thrust in her chest by a man standing in the foreground. Blood is gushing out of the wound and milk is spilling from the udder. Her entrails have dropped out of the abdomen. Two hunters are running away, in shame or fear.



Artists have also portrayed the expression of fear and bewilderment in animals. In shelter IIIA-21 a boar is shown chased by two dogs. The galloping boar shows the signs of fear; open mouth, ears turned back and erect tail. The bewilderment of animals upon the appearance of hunters is visible in most scenes.

Economic activities include depictions of a group of men carrying loads, or collecting honey (Fig. 1.16). One man appears to be running away, possibly because of the bees' attack.

The depiction of cultural life in shelter IIIC-9 shows a family on a picnic: a pregnant woman, two old women, and three children of various ages playing around. Boys are always depicted playing or running. A painting on Shelter IIIA-21 gives a panoramic view of community life similar to the depiction of morning activities of village life on the wall of the Krishna *mandapa* (pavilion) at Mamallapuram. Animals of various sizes move about, running and galloping. Hunters carrying bows move slowly towards an animal. A group of men carrying spears are driving a large buffalo with huge horns, possibly into a trap. The huge buffalo appears to be charging the people standing near the trap gate. In the center of the painting some men carrying weapons are climbing, possibly on a high lookout. In one corner bushes are drawn in a semicircle, with men standing, surrounding a beautiful female wearing a pigtail. Her lovely body possibly coincides with the start of the development of the idealized feminine body as drawn at Ajanta. A very faint figure appears to be prostrated before her, indicating her status.



Fig. 1.16. Bhimbetka. Men collecting honey and carrying loads. Prehistoric.

Drawing of humans are always stylized and schematic but full of dynamic spirit. In early paintings men are drawn as stick figures, later as geometric figure with triangles, circles and straight lines. In late drawings humans are drawn more naturally.



Fig. 1.17. Bhimbetka. Group and solo dancing. Prehistoric.

These artists had good knowledge of animal anatomy and animals are drawn with more naturalism than humans. The artists were keen observers and could hardly have missed the detailed observation of human anatomy. A superstitious belief that has survived to the present is that painting a figure (never mind taking a photograph) seizes the soul of the object. It is likely these artists drew the animals to seize them and thus facilitate the hunt. It is interesting to speculate whether these Stone Age hunters were wary of drawing a human too realistically in case that would make him easy prey.

Women, even when drawn with stick bodies, are rhythmic, and those drawn in abstract and natural styles are shapely. Facial features are omitted in all human renderings and people are always shown in motion. In early paintings both men and women are drawn naked. Occasionally a naked man with erect or pendulant penis was drawn but not decorated as in African paintings. By the Mesolithic period, leaves or loin cloths were worn. Men wear long hair and females tie back their hair. Some women are shown wearing ornaments such as armlets and knee bands. Wall and ceiling paintings of the Mesolithic phase depict scenes of hunting, food gathering and fishing. The hunters carried long harpoons (lances), bows and arrows.

Dance and rituals seem to have been important cultural features in a life full of fear and struggle with nature. There are many scenes of men and women dancing together, arm in arm, in rows or in circles. Rarely, solo dancers are also depicted (Fig. 1.17). The drum is the only musical instrument depicted.

Man, armed with bow and arrow, was the most powerful entity in the jungle during the Mesolithic period. This kind of hunting was comparatively safe and easy, leaving a little leisure in which to ponder life and the changes in nature. At this stage some sort of primitive spiritualism or religion seems to emerge. Fantastical large and composite animals appear in the art work; ceremonial dances are created. Superstitious fears are warded off by masked and animalized representations in the person of the sorcerer, who protects man from harm. In Shelter III E-3 two sorcerers wearing elaborate masks and grass skirts are drawn. One of the sorcerers is hitting a lizard on the head with the end of a long stick. A scorpion is shown advancing toward the sorcerer. Possibly the drawing depicts some superstition associated with lizards, or hunting lizards for food.

In shelter III C-12, an infant is shown lying on the ground below between the outstretched thighs of a spider-shaped woman, indicating birth. Possibly she represents the mother goddess. The death of a child is depicted by the excavation of a circular pit with the body of a child placed at one end and three same size-bodies placed at a right angle to the first body. Possibly it was a mass burial. In this painting there is only one man, who is digging the grave, and a pair of mourning figures sitting beside the grave. The children must be from a single family and one can only suppose the deaths were due to an epidemic or accident.

There are only a couple of human copulation scenes. On the ceiling in shelter III B-20 a painting depicts a woman drawn in white, in stick style, lying on the ground with her legs wide open. The outstretched erect penis of the man standing in front is touching the junction of the woman's thighs. In shelter III F-1 a naked woman with outstretched legs is sitting on the ground and a man is moving away in a hurry, with his loincloth floating behind.

Men and women in erotic postures are seen in four caves. Y. Methpal (1984) has attributed the scarcity of erotic scenes to the indifference of the artists to sex. It could as well reflect a low level of sexual activity on the part of the inhabitants. The census of humans in the paintings given by Methpal indicates a monumental scarcity of females. There are 2076 figures of men compared to 67 of women, a ratio of 31 men to 1 woman. Some of the women are also shown engaged in hunting along with men. The indifference to sex in the face of a monumental scarcity of females is possibly due to the daily constant struggle with harsh environmental factors. The most revealing census is the drawing of only 7 pregnant women. In addition only 24 boys, 2 girls and 6 infants are found in the paintings. Rarely is the death of an adult or child depicted. The artists were keen observers and unless there

were other considerations that remain unknown, these numbers indicate that in a total population of 2175 there were only 32 children, representing stagnant population growth. The abundance of erotic sculpture in temples of recent (historic) times possibly suggests that efforts were made to draw the attention of man to procreation, which in combination with other factors has led to the present overpopulation of India.

Rock art has been described as the first conscious effort of prehistoric man in the abstraction of reality, to communicate, to create and to influence the course of life. It is said to portray the origins of human the conception of reality and to perpetuate the cultural precedent of a society. It throws light on the contemporary life. The development of rock art is intertwined with the emergence of abstract concepts, the ability to symbolize and to communicate at an advanced level, to develop the notion of the self.

With or without a sufficient number of women, the most important force for society was fertility, the ability to reproduce its own kind. As a result figurines of Venus were carved; the earliest known is dated between 28,000–23,000 BCE, followed by other deities. The first life-size statue of Neolithic man unearthed in Turkey was carved between 9500–7200 BCE, and he has a prominent, erect phallus. The most common figurines from this era are of women. Terracotta female figurines associated with fertility, procreation and continuity may not have had divine status but they were a popular motif.

Whether these painting were intended as a kind of food magic to establish control over game and insure success in hunting, as an effort to propitiate the spirits that live in dark places to obtain their help in bringing rain, to provide some kind of totemic protection or merely to document and illustrate life, the paintings reached a glorious height of beauty and perfection at Ajanta, after which the era of rock paintings in India came to an end.

Some of the people who still live in the valley below could be descendents of the Stone Age hunters that occupied these shelters. Their ancestors have not passed on any information about the paintings; or the descendants, thinking the paintings an unworthy inheritance, have discarded the knowledge. They believe witches and goblins did the paintings on moonless nights. In a way, this is fortunate as it has kept the caressing human hand at a distance and helped the pictures survive so far.

### 3. BODH GAYA

(260 BCE–II<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

The most sacred Buddhist religious center in India is located at Bodh Gaya, which is 13 km (8 miles) from Gaya railway station on the Delhi–Calcutta railways, with direct trains from Delhi, Calcutta, Varanasi, and Panta. Crowded public transport buses and auto-rickshaws are available for transportation from Gaya to Bodh Gaya. Monasteries and residential facilities are available at Bodh Gaya. UNESCO declared the monuments at Bodh Gaya World Heritage Monuments in 2002.

Buddha, the founder of one of the largest religions of world, was born at Lumbini in 562 BCE (according to Nepalese tradition, in 624 BCE). His father Shudhodana was chief of the Shakya tribe, ruling Kapilavastu, in Uttar Pradesh, on the present-day border with Nepal. All the places associated with Buddha's life and travels are shown in the map of western India below. Except Lumbini (now in Nepal), they are all in the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states of India.

While Buddha's mother was pregnant she dreamed of a white elephant entering her body. Shudhodana invited astrologers to interpret the dream and was told that the child to be born would become a universal monarch or universal teacher. The mother of Buddha delivered him while standing under the Shala tree (*Shorea robusta*) in the garden of his grandfather's palace. At birth, the prince Sidharta was given the family name, Gautama. He was well educated, and sheltered from the needs and suffering of men in the palace of his father at Kapilavastu. He was married to his lovely cousin Yashodhara of the Koliya tribe, and had a son, Rahula. He was pampered with the luxuries and pleasures of the palace. But during his

visits to the town he spied an old, debilitated person, a sick person, and a dead body. Even more affecting was the sight of an ascetic who was peaceful and happy without the luxuries of life or any possessions. That started him on a quest to find the cause of sorrow in life and a way to escape its miseries.



*Map of West India showing places associated with Buddha.*

One night at the age of twenty-three, when everyone was asleep, he left the palace, with his personal attendant Chandaka. When they reached the outskirts of the city he sent Chandaka back with his belongings, cut off his hair, turned mendicant and walked 650 km (300 miles) to Rajagriha (modern Rajgir) in Bihar, the capital of Magadha and a great center of learning with many resident philosophers and teachers. When the king of Magadha, Bimbisara, learnt that son of his friend King Shudhodana was begging in the city, he went to meet him — and learned that Sidharta had renounced the luxuries of world. Bimbisara begged Sidharta to return to the kingdom of his father, as the life of a mendicant was not befitting to him; or to accept half of his kingdom to rule if he did not wish to go back.

Sidharta gracefully declined the offer. Then Bimbisara begged Sidharta to visit him first, after he attained enlightenment; Sidharta agreed. But he was not satisfied with what he learnt at Rajagraha and left for the forest at Uruvela, near Gaya, where he meditated on Gayasirsa hill for some time. Then he moved to the outskirts of Uruvela and settled at Bodh Gaya, on the banks of the river Neranjana, to meditate under a Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*), after a grass cutter spread some grass for him. The five ascetics he had met at Rajagraha joined him.

During the first six years of his search for enlightenment Sidharta by practicing self-mortification, and was reduced to skin and bones. One day he fell unconscious and a shepherd give him milk, and took him into his care. After the incident Sidharta concentrated more on meditation than on austerities, realizing the futility of bodily mortification. At this time Sujata, the daughter of the Senani village chief, who was expecting a baby, had vowed that if a son were born she would make a special offering of food to the deity of a nearby banyan tree (*Ficus indica*). When a son was born to her, she prepared rice pudding and sent her maid to the banyan tree to clean the area and arrange the offering of food to the god. Meanwhile, Sidharta arrived at the banyan tree and sat down to mediate. When the maid saw Sidharta seated under the tree, she reported to her mistress that the god himself had appeared. Sujata excitedly hurried to the tree and offered the food to Sidharta in a golden bowl, saluted him with respect, and withdrew in consideration and modesty, leaving the golden bowl. It was the first solid meal Sidharta had in years. After accepting the food, Sidharta went to the Neranjara River, nearby. He put the bowl in the river, thinking that if the bowl floated it was a sign that he would achieve enlightenment; if it sank, he would not. The bowl floated against the water current, and then sank. Those who had joined him in his ascetic meditations now left him, disgusted at his taking solid food.

Determined to attain enlightenment, he continued to mediate deeply on the mysteries of life. After a few years of meditation, one evening Mara, the god of evils and death, sent his beautiful daughters to break Sidharta's concentration. When they failed, he sent his army of demons, the personification of human desires. But Sidharta remained steadfast. Mara sent storms, with thunder, lightning and blasts of cold air. Buddha pointed his hand toward earth and said, "Let the earth be my witness that I will attain enlightenment and put an end to the sorrows of mankind". Then the earth shook with a roaring noise and a thunderbolt flashed in the air; the army of ugly demons ran away. Sidharta entered into deeper meditation.

He learnt about his previous lives, acquired divine vision and understood the law of cause and effect; by morning he was enlightened. It was the year 528 BCE. For one week he sat under the Bodhi tree, enjoying the bliss of enlightenment. The second week he spent walking to and fro near the tree, the third week he stood staring at the tree and the fourth week he meditated under the tree. The next three weeks he spent under the banyan tree where Sujata had offered him sweet rice pudding, near Muchalinda Lake where the Naga serpent had protected him from rain and a freezing gale; and the final week under Rajyatana tree where two traveling merchants had offered him honey and cake. By this time he had possibly decided his future course of action. Seven weeks after enlightenment he returned to the Bodhi tree, bowed to the tree in reverence and left for Sarnath (also called Deer Park) near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. There, he gave his first sermon to an audience that included the five ascetics who were his first companions for some time at Rajagraha and Uruvela.

Prasenjit, King of Kosala, Bimbisara, King of Magadha, and his son Ajatashatru became his followers. Anathapindaka, a rich merchant of Sravasti in Uttar Pradesh donated the Jetavana garden and built a vihara for the use of Buddha and his disciples. Amrapali, a royal courtesan of Vaishali, gave the gift of a mango grove. King Bimbisara donated a bamboo grove near Rajagraha. His father invited him to Kapilavastu and donated a banyan tree grove. Buddha turned all these places into residences for monks. He converted his father, his father's wife Yashodhara and son Rahula to Buddhism.

He continued wandering in the Ganges River Valley for fifty years after his enlightenment and preached four holy truths based on psychological (not metaphysical or theological) foundations. These holy truths are that birth, age, sickness and death are the causes of sorrow in life. The second truth is desires and attachment to the pleasures of life cause suffering and result in the chain of rebirths. The third truth is that the extinction of desires is essential to break the chain of rebirths and escape from sorrow in life (nirvana). Lastly, that detachment from life can be achieved by following the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold path was explained as having the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation on the mysteries of life. This doctrine is very different from the doctrine portrait as represented by the ninth incarnation of Vishnu born as Buddha.

Buddha died at the age of eighty on the outskirts of Kusinara (Kushinagar) on the borders of Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. According to his wishes he was cremated, and his ashes and relics were buried in stupas at important cross-

roads. Ashoka reopened these stupas collected some relics, and distributed them all over his kingdom in hundreds of stupas he constructed.

Buddhism enjoyed royal patronage from Bimbisara and Ajatashatru in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. He became well established in the region and survived the Jain dynasty regimes that followed. When Ashoka (272-232 BCE), the third Maurya emperor, became Buddhist, Buddhism spread all over India (except the deep south). Under the Kusanas, early in the Common Era, Buddhism spread to Central and Southeast Asia, the Far East, China, and many other countries of Asia. It finally started declining in India and was confined to eastern India in the seventh and eighth century. Buddhism as an organized force disappeared from India with the Muslim invasion of west India in the twelfth century.

The first image of Buddha was carved in India in the last quarter of the first century CE in north India and it displays some characteristic features. Carvings of Buddha usually show him seated cross-legged upon a lotus, with long earlobes, and a protrusion between his eyebrows and on top of his head. His hands depict four gestures (*mudras*). Both hands laid in the lap with upturned palms placed one on top of the other indicate meditation; one hand in the lap and the other pointing to the earth indicates a witness-calling gesture. In the teaching, gesture the thumb and forefinger of the left hand form a circle, recalling the wheel of law, while the palm of the right hand faces forward. Sometimes the fingers of both hands form a circle. In protection gestures, the right hand is held in front, palm facing out, with fingers pointing up.

Ten years after reincarnation Ashoka (272-232 BCE) visited Bodh Gaya. He is credited with erecting a shrine at Buddha-Gaya, although the present monument is of much later period and bears very little resemblance even to the shrine carved on the Sanchi Gateways. He also erected an Ashoka pillar. Two centuries later a female devotee built a railing around the Bodhi tree, carved with images of life at that time. The extant portions of the stone railing, the stump of the broken Ashoka pillar, and the diamond shaped vajrasana (the stone representing the seat of Buddha) installed by Ashoka are the only antique structures at Bodh Gaya.

Possibly in 120-160 CE, the shrine was dismantled and another shrine was built during the reign of the Kusana king Huviska (by generous donations of the king). The present Mahabodhi Temple with its pyramidal tower, 50m (150 ft.) tall, possibly built in the eleventh century, resemble somewhat the earlier structure. The shape of the tower is alien to India and possibly it was constructed under foreign influence. Contributions from Indian Buddhists and foreign Buddhist nations helped make repeated extensive repairs,

embellishments and renovations over following centuries. These works saved the brick built monument but modified the temple complex. Many new structures appear to have been added around the temple and the date of construction of these structures is not certain.

The 55m (170 ft.) high temple with its tall pyramidal tower, built of bluish brick and covered with plaster, is located in a valley; a long, steep stair descends to it (Fig. 1.20). There are many stupas of all sizes along the passage and a row of small shrines to Buddha and the Bodhisattvas on the left.

The temple itself consists of a two-storied square surmounted by a tall, steep, pyramidal tower. On the top of the tower is a circular bell resting on the neck of an elongated drum.



Fig. 1.20. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Front view. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Brick.

Above, a small, similar bell, pointed end upward, rests on the bell below. The rims of the bells are carved with deep vertical groves. The surface of the tower is divided into several tiers with a number of empty niches. Four 18m (58 ft.) tall pyramidal towers stand on the corners of the temple roof, surrounding the main tower.

The entrance to the temple features two pillars and pilasters supporting the upper storey.

The facade extends above the first story to form a multi-storied pavilion. The lower portion of the façade above the first story is dominated by a large, round niche bearing a large statue of the seated Buddha, in the center, and a door is located above. The entire façade is covered with niches, empty except for a few bearing statues of Buddha. Niches carved on large bells decorated with the seated Buddha are the most common decorative elements (Fig. 1.21).



Fig. 1.21. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Entrance. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Brick.

The entrance passage is flanked by niches decorated with Buddha statues standing serenely on the lotus (Fig. 1.22), and standing Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Vijarapani. There is a delicate, beautifully decorated statue of Buddha wearing jewelry and a crown (Fig. 1.23) in one niche.



Fig. 1.22. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Buddha statue in passage. Ca. 10<sup>th</sup> Century.

By the eleventh century, carved statues of Buddha were decorated with jewelry and a crown. The shrine in the center of the main hall has a 2m (6 ft.) high image of Buddha enclosed in a glass case, seated in the witness-calling posture on a cushion (Fig. 1.24). The original statue dates from tenth century CE. It was removed from the shrine by a Hindu priest who occupied the shrine in 1811, but was reinstalled by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1880.



Fig. 1.23. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Crowned and ornamented Buddha with flanking figures. Ca. 10<sup>th</sup> Century.



Fig. 1.24. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Buddha statue in main hall. Ca. 10<sup>th</sup> Century.

Two steep staircases on each side of the entrance to the hall lead to the upper storey. D.C. Ahir (1994) reported that there is a fairly large shrine in the center of the hall with a wide passage around. Four small towers at each corner add beauty to the floor. There appear to be many changes and rearrangements of materials taking place and it may not have the same appearance in few decades. On the exterior walls the two stories are demarked by mythological lion heads. The walls have many large niches with statues of Buddha

seated on a lotus throne with the wheel of law and two lions flanking the wheel on the base (Fig. 1.25).



Fig. 1.25. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Statues of Buddha and Bodhisattvas on temple walls. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century.

With his gleaming halo and his hands in a preaching gesture, Buddha looks serene. The statue of seated Tara is particularly beautiful. The statues of Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Vajarapani stand in separate niches. The niches are bordered with pilasters decorated with intricate designs, and below a band of delicate peacocks stand face to face holding a pearl necklace in their beaks, with their tails spread in delightful pattern.



Fig. 1.26. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Bodhi tree behind the temple. Planted in 1876 CE.

The sacred Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*) stands about one meter from the back of Mahabodhi Temple on the spot where the original tree stood in the third century BCE (Fig. 1.26). At that time Devanampiya Tissa, a king of Sri Lanka who had accepted Buddhism, asked Ashoka to send a branch of the tree to Sri Lanka. Sanghamitra, daughter of Ashoka, carried the branch to Sri Lanka where it flourished after planting.

Another purpose of her journey to Sri Lanka was to ordain women and girls as nuns in the Buddhist order. King Sasaka of the Hindu Sailodbhava dynasty that ruled Orissa in the seventh century cut down the tree but another tree sprouted from the stump. In 1876, the tree came down during a rain-storm; Sir Alexander Cunningham re-planted a cutting from the same tree on the original spot and it flourished.

Ashoka placed a diamond-shaped throne called the *va-jrasana* between the temple and the tree on the spot where Buddha was enlightened. The red polished sandstone throne is about 2.3m (7 ft.) long, and 1.3m (4 ft.) wide and 0.2m (6 inch) thick, placed 1.3m (3 ft) above ground level. It is carved with a geometric design above and encircled in a frieze of geese. It was rediscovered in 1880 during renovations. Now it is covered with red velvet and is enclosed by a gilded railing.



Fig. 1.27. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Shine marking spot where Buddha meditated during the third week after enlightenment. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.28. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Ratanagraha marking spot where Buddha meditated the fourth week after enlightenment. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Outside the railing under the Bodhi tree a beautiful statue of Buddha is placed in a glass case. The spot near the Bo-

dhi tree where Buddha walked to and fro during the second week after his enlightenment, the path of Buddha is marked with small stones carved in the shape of lotus flowers and arranged in a row on the north side of the temple. Ahir (1994) in his book has mentioned a masonry platform 17m (53 ft.) long 1.1m (3.5 ft.) wide and 1m (3 ft.) high in the vicinity of temple with images of lotus flowers to indicate walk of Buddha. It has disappeared. Possibly the stone lotus flower kept on the side of the temple are copies of the flowers on the missionary platform. Like the Muslims' sacred Mecca, the temple has undergone many renovations in a short period of time.



Fig. 1.29. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Ashoka pillar near the Temple Lake. Ca. 2nd Century BCE. Sandstone.

A shrine in the courtyard marks the spot where Buddha stood gazing at the tree during the third week (Fig. 1.27).



Fig. 1.30. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Statue of Buddha under Muchalinda hood in Temple Lake. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century.

A small roofless shrine, known as *ratanaghara* or the jewel house, marks the spot where Buddha spent his fourth week

in meditation (Fig. 1.28). A small tenth-century shrine in the southeast corner of the temple with Buddha statues in witness-calling pose marks the spot where Brahma appeared before Buddha and asked him to teach Buddhism to the gods.

A section of Ashoka pillar is located near the entrance to the Temple tank (Fig. 1.29).

A large lotus lake in the temple complex holds a statue of Buddha in witness-calling pose in the center. Buddha is seated under the hood of Naga king Muchalinda. The lake represents the Muchalinda Lake (Fig. 1.30). The actual lake was supposed to be about 1.6 km (1 mile) from the temple in Mocharin village (said to have derived its name from Muchalinda Lake).



Fig. 1.31. Bodh Gaya. Naranjana River in knee-deep flood during heavy rains. November 2003.

The river Neranjana, now called Nilajan or Lilajan, near the temple, is a sandy, shallow creek most of the time, but floods knee-deep during rainstorms (Fig. 1.31). A spot on the premises of a Hindu temple on the eastern bank of the river is supposed to represent the spot where Sujata offered a meal to Buddha. Locals refer to a recently-excavated brick mound in the vicinity of Bodh Gaya as "Sujata place". The site of the Rajyatana tree where Buddha spent his seventh week and where two traveling merchants offered him honey and cake has not been identified. However, a Rajyatana tree is growing beside the temple. After his five companions left him, Buddha stayed for some time mediating in a cave called DUNGESHWARI in Pragbodhi hill (now called Dhongra hill). It is about 1 mile (1.6m) towards Rajgir.

Buddhist pilgrims have erected a large number of stupas in the complex at various times. The best are inside the railing on the eastern side. A pyramid is carved all over with figures of the seated and standing Buddha, and shrines (Fig. 1.32).





Fig. 1.32. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Pyramidal tower carved with Buddha and shrines. Ca. 11th Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.33. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Railing around temple. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

To the south of the temple are the foundations of a large stupa supposedly built by Emperor Ashoka. In the seventh century the last descendant of the Ashoka dynasty in Magadha enlarged and rearranged the railing erected around the Bodhi tree by a female devotee two centuries after construction of the temple. Of the sixty-four old sandstone posts only seven have survived. The carvings on the broken posts, kept in the local museum, have been copied on cement posts and installed in place of the broken posts. The railing posts added in the seventh century are of coarse granite. The posts are carved with three medallions, one in the center and two at the ends; most medallions are decorated with carvings. The railings between the posts are decorated with medallion carved

with lotus flower (Fig. 1.33). The carvings on the posts depict animals and life in the village. The animals include elephants and horses. A cow feeding her calf is a marvelous expression of motherly love, similar to the carving at Krishna mandapa at Mamalapurum (Fig. 1.34).



Fig. 1.34. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Railing. Cow feeding calf. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.35. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Men toiling in field. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.36. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Railing. Worshipping tree. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

Village life is represented by men working in the field (Fig. 1.35) and a woman worshipping (Fig. 1.36).

A curvaceous female with slightly bulging belly standing under a tree with her hands spread wide (Fig. 1.37), a man and women with their hands arms around each other's waists (Fig. 1.38) and an embracing mithuna couple (Fig. 1.39) depict love.



Fig. 1.37. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Railing. Female standing under tree. Ca. 2nd Century CE. Sandstone..

Religious symbols include the stupa and wheel of law. Hindu gods assimilated in Buddhism are a standing Lakshmi carved in a medallion, flanked with two lotus buds, and elephants wedged in the upper corners pouring water on her (Fig. 1.40).



Fig. 1.38. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Railing. Loving couple. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.39. Mahabodhi temple. Railing. Mithuna couple. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Surya is carved standing in chariot drawn by four energetic horses (Fig. 1.41). He bears a halo behind his head resembling the rays of sun and is flanked by two female attendants, each holding a bow and possibly bundle of arrows. The post on which Surya is carved appears to be coarse granite, indicating that the pillar was raised in the seventh century.

Carvings in a lighter vein present a horse with human torso and head pulling his own tail and a curvaceous female with a donkey's head pulling a reluctant man.



Fig. 1.40. Mahabodhi temple. Railing. Lakshmi flanked by Elephants and lotus buds. Ca. 2nd Century CE. Sandstone..



Fig. 1.41. Bodh Gaya. Mahabodhi Temple. Railing. Surya driving chariot. Ca. 2nd Century CE. Sandstone.

The Mahabodhi temple, one of the most attractive and colorful monuments in India, stands in pristine glory in spite of all the tribulations it had to undergo over the ages. After the slaughter of some Buddhist monks by Muslim invaders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the temple was deserted by the monks and the temple was forgotten for two centuries. In 1590 a Hindu ascetic occupied the temple and made it his permanent abode.

Slowly the Mahabodhi temple was engulfed by thick jungle. In 1811 Hamilton Buchanan of the Indian Medical Service visited Bodh Gaya. He found the courtyard of the temple littered with broken pieces of sculpture. The first Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Alexander Cunningham, visited Bodh Gaya in 1861 and conducted studies of the temple in repeated visits. Attempts to convert the Mahabodhi temple into a temple to Siva started soon after 1811 and a long legal struggle ensued. In spite of the various acts passed by the state government, with loopholes, effective control of the temple has remained in the hands of Hindus.

Many foreign nations have built monasteries and rest houses at Bodh Gaya for the use of their nationals. King Devanampia Tissa (247–207 BCE) of Sri Lanka was the first foreign king to accept Buddhism. King Meghavana (362–398 CE) of Sri Lanka built the first monastery at Bodh Gaya.

Myanmar (Burma) was the second nation reached by Buddhist teaching, during the times of Ashoka. Myanmar helped with extensive repairs to Mahabodhi temple at various times and constructed a monastery at Bodh Gaya. Other

beautiful structures at Bodh Gaya include Tibetan, Chinese, Thai, Bhutanese and Japanese monasteries.

A large statue of seated Buddha of recent origin stands on the outskirts of Bodh Gaya (Fig. 1.42)



Fig. 1.42. Bodh Gaya. Statue of Buddha in the town. 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



#### 4. JAIN CAVES AT UDAYAGIRI & KHANDAGIRI (100 BCE–100 CE)

The twin hills of Udayagiri and Khandagiri with Jain cave and shelters excavated in first century BCE are situated at a distance of 6 km (3.5 miles) from Bhubanesvara, Orissa in East India. A narrow defile separates the hills. The crests of Udayagiri and Khandagiri are 33.5m (102 ft.) and 37.5m (114 ft.) high. The hills are made of coarse-grained, porous, brittle sandstone outcrop in laterite terrain. The sandstone is easy to excavate but less suitable for fine carving. The color of the rocks is different shades of yellow, grey or mauve. The caves situated near the ancient capital of Kalinga (Orissa) were convenient for Jain monks to reside and make rounds of capital on missionary work or begging. Most of the caves were converted into Hindu sanctuaries.

Mahavir, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara and reformer of Jain faith, born in the latter half of the six century BCE, was contemporary to Buddha. His father was the chief of a warrior clan living around Vaishali in North Bihar. Mahavir was possibly born a few decades after Buddha and died fifteen years after Buddha, in 468 BCE, at the age of 72 years, at Pava, a village near Patna. After wandering and meditating for twelve years Mahavir achieved enlightenment at the age of 42. He gave up all his possessions including clothes, because like all possessions clothes are believed to impede the liberation of self by wrapping the body. A farmer was once strangling Mahavir, believing that he was trying to steal his bullocks. Indra intervened and saved him. Since then Indra became the bodyguard of Mahavir. It is felt now that Mahavir, the attendant of Matanga, whose vehicle is elephant was mistaken to be Indra.

Jainism became influential when Ajatashatru murdered his father Bimbisara, the supporter of Buddha, and became the ruler of Magadha. The Nanda and Maurya dynasties that followed Ajatashatru were followers of Jainism. Chandragupta, the first king of the Maurya dynasty, became disciple of Jain guru Bhadrabahu. It is said that in his old age Chandragupta moved to south India along with his guru and settled around Saravana Belgola, in Karnataka state. Chandragupta's move to the south encouraged many monks to migrate to south. Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, became a Buddhist and North India became less hospitable to the Jains. The monks migrated southward to Karnataka, eastwards to Orissa and westwards to Saurashtra and Gujarat. Mathura in central India and Valabhi in Saurashtra became important Jainism centers between 100 BCE and 100 CE. The oral Jain traditions were written down in a council at Valabhi in 454 CE. In South, the Ganga dynasty patronized Jainism in third century and spread the religion in the Deccan.

The history of Kalinga (parts of Orissa) first came to light in third century BCE when Ashoka conquered Kalinga and Buddhism started flourishing in Kalinga. After conquest by Ashoka, Kalinga history was obscured till the first century BCE when the powerful Jain Chadi dynasty came to power. Jainism became the state religion. Names of only three rulers of this dynasty are known from inscriptions in Udayagiri caves. The third king, Kharavela, was contemporary to Satavahana, the king during whose regime the gateways of Sanchi were constructed. The similar dress style of both men and women and the deep carving of figures at Sanchi and Udayagiri support this view. It is probable that most of the monuments, particularly Cave 1 at Udayagiri, were completed during early first century CE, influencing the sculpture of some other caves. However the carvings of doorkeepers with long legs and broad feet are of Sunga origin. The Sunga,

the successor of the Maurya dynasty, built a stupa at Sanchi before Satavahana from South replaced them. The carvings of doorkeepers on the stone fence of the stupa built by Sunga at Sanchi and on guard cells of Cave 1 are similar. The comparative inferiority of the carvings in other caves suggests the excavation of these caves from second or first century BCE. It is likely that before Chadi rule the hills were honeycombed with caves decorated with sculpture carved under influence of dynasties before Sunga and during the rule of Chadi more carvings under Satavahana influence were added. With the death of Kharavela the influence of Jainism started declining, but Jains retain regional influence around Udayagiri and Khandagiri for some time. In early fifth century Hindu gods were carved in few caves. In eleventh century few caves were converted into Hindu sanctuaries and Jain structural temples were constructed on Khandagiri hill. The only other well-known Jain caves are located at Ellora. Jain mostly built religious monuments at centers of Hindu religion.

The caves are non-homogenous group used by Jain monks for protection from natural elements. There are eighteen caves on Udayagiri hills most in dilapidated condition. Most of the caves on right side of the hill bear exterior columns (Fig. 1.45). Some of these caves are converted into Hindu sanctuaries. Some natural cavities were modified to serve as residences (Fig. 1.46). The Buddhist viharas were used for assembly, residence and had a sanctuary for worship and veranda. These cells lack all the facilities except residence. Some caves have open space in front instead of veranda. Original carvings in the caves depict worship of trees possibly reflecting Buddhist or Hindu influence. In Jainism Tirthankaras are not ultimate gods. Most of the caves are not high enough to stand or deep enough for sleeping.



Fig. 1.45. Udayagiri. Caves on right side of hill. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.

In some caves the floor at the rear is raised to serve as pillow indicating a number of monks used the cave to sleep. Some shelves were cut on the walls of the verandah to keep articles of necessity. The cells are plain but in a few caves their façades and brackets are carved with crude images. In the two storied cave the upper storey is recessed a few me-

ters back. None of the caves have inside pillars, which in a cave are nonfunctional anyway. The doors are small and were probably fixed with single wooden shutter. The numbers of doors vary from one to four depending on the size of the cell and were the only source of light except in cave 1. The pillars of the verandah are square below and above and octagonal in the middle. As there is no river nearby reservoirs were cut on each hill to collect rainwater.



Fig. 1.46. Udayagiri. Natural cavities modified for residence on left side of hill. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.

Due to nature of the substratum and direct exposure to natural elements by collapse of cave sections most carvings on the caves have disintegrated. Some caves still bear faint remains of the sculpture but their subject matter and beauty is not apparent. Sculpture that has survived on caves 1, 3, 6 and 10 is in tolerable condition in spite centuries of dirt, dust and encrustation of mineral deposits from leaching. Though most of the carvings are primitive exhibiting Sunga and earlier influence some carvings are distinct and decidedly advanced surpassing Satavahana carvings on Sanchi gateways in beauty and plasticity. The carving is deep as in Sanchi and few carvings are almost three-dimensional. Most carving depicts non-religious subjects. The female figures are suppler; exhibit more charm and beauty than the figures at Sanchi. The individual figures carved are relatively large in size than at Sanchi possibly thereby enhancing their appearance, but their beauty is marred by centuries of neglect. The emotions are well expressed. Both men and women wear similar dress, rarely covering the upper body, and similar ornaments except for the large and bulky ornaments on women's legs. Women are carved engaged in music, dancing, hunting and occasionally in violent sword fight.

Cave 1 Rani Gumpa is locally called Hati-Gumpa because of its location in a group of small caves carved with elephants on façade. It is two-storied with short right and left wings on both stories and open spacious quadrangle in front (Fig. 1.47).



Fig. 1.47. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Rani Gumpa. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.

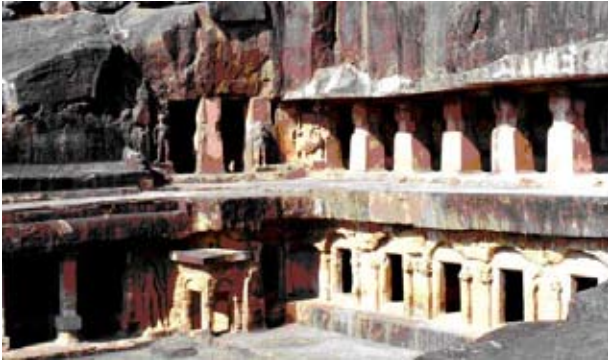


Fig. 1.48. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Front and right wings. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.

The central wing of the lower storey has lost roof of the veranda and all the six front pillars (Fig. 1.48). Guard cells are located on ground floor where the right and the left wings join the central wing. Each guard cell has two decorated entrances similar to the façade of the lower storey. The exterior wall of the guard cells façade are profusely decorated with trees, monkeys, birds, elephants frolicking in a lotus pond, hills and lovely maidens, one fondling a child (Fig. 1.49). The secular scene is somewhat similar to the sculptured cliff at Mamalapuram, without any religious theme.



Fig. 1.49. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Carving on façade of Guard cell. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.50. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Court scene. Carving on façade of right wing.



Fig. 1.51. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Tree worship. Carving on façade of right wing. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.

The central wing of the lower storey has lost the roof of the veranda and all the six front pillars.

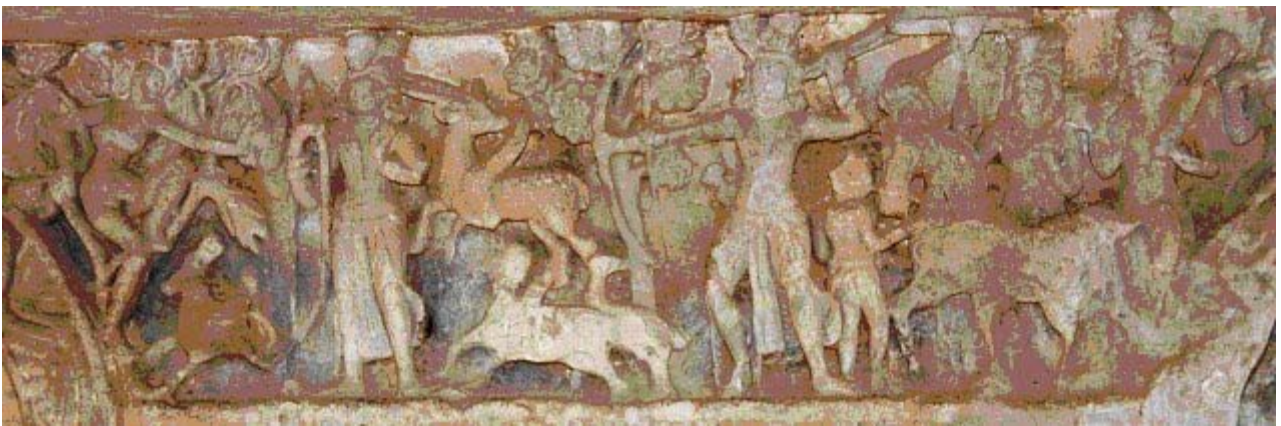
The right wing of the lower storey consists of a single cell with open verandah with two pillars on front and benches in the verandah. Animals are carved on the capitals of pilasters. Entrance to the verandah is flanked with guards carved in distinct Sunga style. On the façade of the central wing, the space between decorated pilasters and arches is carved with friezes. Only four friezes have survived. The first depicts a court scene with king seated with queens (Fig. 1.50). The second carving depicts two lovely pairs flanking and possibly worshipping the tree. The females are holding tray full of flowers in raised hands (Fig. 1.51). A court scene depicts a curvaceous female dancer flanked by seated musicians seen from behind. The last carving depicts a man with folded hands going to worship accompanied with a boy and two females. The left wing has three cells one with a window in addition to doorways. All the pillars have collapsed.

The upper storey is recessed a few meters back on the lower storey. There is an open terrace in front of the upper story. Only three of the nine pillars supporting the verandah of the upper main wing are original. The central wing has four cells with two doors each. Auspicious Jain symbols like



snakes and lotus are carved on top of arches and doorways. The spaces between the arches have been carved with nine carvings each depicting different non-religious episodes.

*Fig. 1.52. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Façade of upper main storey. Elephant at-tack. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone*



Weathering has damaged most friezes. Some of the surviving friezes like gateways of Sanchi are the glories of Udayagiri.

*Fig. 1.53. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Façade of front main storey. Abduction. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone*



The first frieze depicts a flying Vidyadhara in Sunga style with long legs and wide feet. He is elaborately dressed and is holding a big tray full of flowers and garlands in one hand and lotus buds in other hand. His face is expressive. The floating

*Fig. 1.54. Udayagiri. Cave 1. Façade of front main storey. Shakuntala and Dushyanta. Ca. 1st Century BC. Sandstone*

scarf and lower garment indicate flying motion but the feet resting on the ground belies it.



The second relief is carved with one man and ten women in a forest fighting to ward off an elephant attack (Fig. 1.52). The women carved are lovely and charming. The supple body of the female bent down to pick up fallen comrade resembles the body of a beautiful female bent at the feet of Buddha painted on ceiling of cave 2 in Ajanta. Other females also exhibit beauty in all their movement. The group while walking in the forest had come upon a lotus pond where elephants were bathing. One irritated elephant attacked the party. The consternation, panic and confusion caused by the elephant attack are realistically depicted with details. The female standing nearest to the elephants is aiming a round object, possibly a bulky anklet removed from her leg, at the elephant. Another anklet from her leg has hit the hindquarters of the elephant. Possibly the panic caused by the sudden attack of elephants did not give her time to search for other objects. One female is bent to lifting a fallen comrade on her shoulder in front of the elephant while another is dragging a fallen comrade. One female beside is holding a branch and another holding a club have their hands raised in threatening gestures. The man is swinging a large staff. Three frightened females in the rear have formed a group near a tree. The elephant, surprised by the fury of the group, is squatting on his hindquarter trying to pull back with his trunk withdrawn.

The third relief depicts the abduction of a female (Fig. 1.53). A cave with an arched entrance is located in a forest suggested by the carving of a snake beside the arch. A man sitting near the entrance of a cave is resting his head in the lap of the beautiful female sitting beside. The woman has one hand on the shoulder of the man and other hand resting in her lap. Next a woman is carved, advancing towards the couple, leading a man with drawn sword and shield. In the middle of the panel a violent sword fight between man and women is depicted. The lovely female warrior is shown with the sheath of the sword and a braid hanging on her back. The beauty of the female is apparent in all her actions and movements. Next the man is shown physically carrying the vanquished female in his hands.

The next relief depicts the love story of Shakuntala (Fig. 1.54). A king on a deer hunt in the forest has dismounted from his horse. A groom is attending the horse while three attendants are behind king. One is carrying a pot of water, tied to the back end of a staff resting on his shoulder. Another is carrying possibly a spare sword and a third is carrying a Chamara and parasol. After dismounting the king is shown holding bow in his outstretched hand and drawing an arrow with his other hand from the quiver on his back. A herd of deer is running in front, looking back with turned heads at the king. Next the king is shown standing in front of

a tree with his bow drawn near his body in his right hand. A deer is standing under the tree. A supple, curvaceous, lovely maiden is sitting perched on a fork of the tree with her arm extended in a gesture imploring the hunter not to shoot the deer. She appears agitated and, sliding from the tree, is ready to jump in front of the deer. This was the first meeting of Shakuntala with her lover Dushyanta. Kalidasa (ca. 400 CE) the Indian poet, made the rest of the love story renowned. Possibly this is the best carving of a romantic theme. The next panel depicts three women dancing in front of the king and the queen and three women musicians playing different musical instruments.

The wings of the upper story have one cell each. The right wing has a benched verandah with two restored pillars and two pilasters. The pilaster on the right is carved with a Sunga style guard in foreign costume and the left pilaster is carved with a guard in Indian costume with sheathed sword. On the left there is a disintegrated carving of, possibly, a rider on a tiger. An open verandah appears to have existed on the right. Only the stumps of a few pillars, verandah floor and a few disintegrated carving on one wall are remaining.

Cave 3 has carvings of six vigorous elephants and a statue of a guardian. Cave 5 has a carving of a female standing near the entrance. The charming, sparsely draped female is wearing heavy earrings, bands on her hands and beautifully decorated hair. A parrot is sitting at her right hand and her other hand is resting on her waist. By shifting her weight on one leg she has created a beautiful three-body-bend pose.

Cave 10 has a statue of an elephant in front of each corner holding mango-laden branches and lotus flowers in front of the cave. Ganesha is carved on the back wall of the right cell. The carving of Ganesha's image on the cave wall appears to be an assimilation of Ganesha in Jainism during medieval time as suggested by a few scholars. The carving between the arches of the doorways depicts the abduction episode carved in Cave 1, starting with a carving of a lovely maiden sitting by the side of a man lying in front of a cave. One of her hands is resting on the man's thigh, indicating a close relationship. Next an old woman is carved, leading by her hand a stooping man toward the resting couple. The rest of the frieze depicts the violent sword fight and physical carrying away of the vanquished female.

The second frieze depicts the story of the elopement of the Ujjayini princess with the king of Kausambi accompanied by a friend. The carving starts with the hot pursuit of an elephant carrying three riders by a group of soldiers armed with swords and shields. One of the riders is a woman, who is driving the elephant. The second rider shooting arrows at the pursuers is possibly the king and the third throwing

coins at the pursuers from a bag held in his hand is possibly attempting to delay them by stopping to pick up the coins. One soldier is bent over; possibly he is looking for coins. In the middle of the frieze three riders are dismounting from a kneeling elephant. Next the princess is following the king, holding a bunch of mangoes in her right hand and her left hand on the king's shoulder. The carving ends with the king standing in front of the princess half reclined on a bed. The king is standing with folded hands, possibly trying to console the princess who is depressed by separation from her parents. The carvings are damaged by weathering; still they are delightful and artistically superb.



Fig. 1.55. Khandagiri. Caves. Ca. 1st. Century BC. Sandstone.

Cave 12 is shaped like tiger head and cave 14 is a large natural cavern enlarged to form shelter for assembly. The remaining caves are mostly dilapidated. An apsidal shaped foundation of a temple constructed of laterite blocks surrounded by stone pavement of recent origin is located on the crest of hill. It is the earliest apsidal structural temple in East India.



Fig. 1.56. Khandagiri. Jain temple on crest of the hill. Ca. 15th. Century AD. Sandstone.

Fifteen caves are located on Khandagiri hill. Most of them are decorated. Fragments collected have identified a collapsed Jain structural temple. Caves 7, 8, 9 and 10 were carved at later dates with images of gods for worship (Fig.

1.55). Cave 8 has sculpture of a twelve handed figure and 25 Tirthankaras. Tirthankara Parshvanath has been carved twice.

A structural temple was constructed about three centuries back on the crest of hill (Fig. 1.56). In the marble hall of the temple a colossal black marble statue of Mahavir is enshrined. The main shrine has a fifty-year-old marble statue of Mahavir. It also contains a large number of Jain statues. There is a small temple by the side with five statues of naked Jains. From the crest of the hill panoramic view of environ including temples of Bhubanesvara can be seen on a clear day.

## 5. KARLI AND BHAJA CAVES (CA. 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BCE–120 CE)

The largest Buddhist chaitya cave in South Asia is located at Karli, 168 km (105 miles) south of Mumbai. Convenient trains are available from Mumbai to Lonavala Station on Mumbai-Poona Railway line. The cave is located 12 km (7 miles) from Lonavala on a steep basalt cliff. Local transportation is available from Lonavala Railway station to the cave. A road suitable for vehicular traffic leads half way up the cliff, after which it is a hard climb on steep steps, rubbing shoulders with throngs of pilgrims going to a modern temporary Hindu temple occupying more than half the entrance to the cave.

The monuments built by Buddhist are stupas, caves and monasteries. Some monuments were constructed during Buddha's life time but none have survived. The Maurya emperor Ashoka (272-232 BCE) and Sunga dynasty that succeeded Maurya in 151 BCE and lasted up to 71 BCE built many stupas. Ashoka and his grandson Dasaratha excavated seven caves in the Barber and Nagarjuni hills near Gaya in Bihar to provide shelter to the wandering non-Vedic religious sect "as long as the sun and moon last." Ashoka is also credited with construction of a shrine at Bodh-Gaya, but the present monument at Bodh Gaya is of a later era.

During the Sunga reign a number of caves were excavated in the mountain chain of western India in the second and first century BCE, including the chaitya and vihara caves at Pitalkhora. Chaitya caves are apsidal shaped large halls with vaulted roof with a stupa near the apsidal end excavated to provide space for monks to meditate and pray. Residential facilities were not provided in chaitya caves. Viharas were excavated to provide shelter in

the rainy season to monks with usually more than one cell arranged along the periphery. The cells had one or more raised stone beds and niches to keep a burning oil lamp, a shrine excavated in the rear wall for worship and open space in the center for meditation. In later developments the shrine was moved to the center of the cave to allow circumambulation of the shrine. The best preserved of the early caves are at Bhaja was possibly excavated in 100-70 BCE. The two caves at Bedsa in Western Deccan are ascribed to the Sunga period based on the carving style. One cave is a chaitya and the other a modified vihara with apsidal plan. In addition to Vidisha (modern Besnagar), their capital, Patliputra, Mathura, Ayodha, Kusambi and Ahicchatra became famous Buddhist art centers. Satavahana who invaded central India for a short period in the mid first century BCE, replacing the Sunga, excavated some Buddhist caves during their rule at Ajanta and Aurangabad.

The Sakas, a branch of the Scythians living in the area adjacent to the Black Sea, entered portions of modern Afghanistan and Pakistan in 135 BCE and extended their rule slowly to large parts of Bactria in Afghanistan and to Mathura. During this period the area called Gandhara or Bactro-Gandhara was split into small states. A statue of Buddha carved in the first century CE was discovered in the Swat Valley of Pakistan with Buddha sitting cross-legged (Vijraparyankasana) and holding his hand in the *abhaya mudra*, introducing the yoga posture in Buddhist sculpture. Bodhisattvas were also carved.

The Kusanas living in northwestern China entered Bactria in about 135 CE and extended their control over much of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and the Indus River Valley in north India. The Kusanas excavated many stupas but only a few have survived. During this period Mathura became a major Buddhist art center. In addition to carvings of Buddha and Bodhisattvas statues,

beautiful figures of females on the Bhutesvara stupa railing were carved at Mathura, in UP. Many Buddha statues from this time have survived. Pancika and Hariti, the two Buddhist divinities, were also carved. Pancika later became the keeper of wealth or treasurer of enlightenment and Hariti became mother of Buddha. The Kusanas lost control of the region to immigrants entering from the same corridor they entered.

Parallel with these developments by the Kusanas, caves of considerable complexity and grandeur were built in Western Deccan in the second and third century CE. A branch of the Sakas, the Kshaharatas (also called Satrapas), who entered India in 135 BCE, established their rule in Deccan subcontinent and constructed caves in central India. The excavation of Buddhist caves continued during the Satavahana and Vakataka Dynasty feudatories of the Gupta regime at Ajanta from the first century BCE to the end of the fifth century. Later during the Vakataka regime the last Buddhist caves were excavated, during the seventh century, at Ellora.

This largest and the most ambitious Buddhist chaitya cave in South Asia was constructed and dedicated by the Saka King Nahapana Satrapa in 120 CE Karli. An inscription carved on the façade of the cave refers to Nahapana and inscriptions on the inside pillars donated by various satraps corroborate 120 CE as the date of dedication. The cave consists of a front stone screen, large verandah and chaitya hall with three entrances. The cave is set deep into the hill. An enormous mass of hill was cut deep through the bedrock to open a wide passage and obtain the height required for excavation of a cave with such a high façade. The wide passage in front of the chaitya gives a full view of the façade, but a temporary modern Hindu shrine dedicated to a goddess, built in the passage, obstructs the full view of the facade (Fig. 1.60).

The screen wall with two openings to the chaitya verandah is partially collapsed on the left, leaving only the entrance on the right. The upper portion of the screen wall, cut with short pillars designed to admit light and air into the verandah hall, has also collapsed, leaving some upper pillar stubs hanging from top of the façade. Outside the screen wall a tall and heavy column is carved from the hill matrix resembling the Ashoka pillars. The lions carved on the top of the column are not as graceful as those on the Ashoka pillars. The holes visible on the screen wall indicate that considerable wooden structures were erected for the construction of façade.

The verandah behind the screen wall is large. Three life size elephants at the base of the sidewalls of the verandah appear to bear the sidewalls on their backs (Fig. 1.61). The elephants' trunks are gone. Above the elephants Buddha is carved, sitting cross-legged in meditation; he appears to be sitting on the elephants. The sidewalls of the verandah above

elephants are carved to appear like stories (Fig. 1.62). In the first storey loving couples are depicted beside huge blind doorways and balconies. The rest of the stories are carved with blind doorways and balconies. The back of the screen wall entrance is also carved with loving couples similar in stature to the Mamalapurum carvings. The carvings on the right side were lost when the right side of the screen wall collapsed.



Fig. 1.60. Karli. Chaitya. Front View of Chaitya. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.61. Karli. Chaitya. Elephants carrying sidewall of Verandah hall. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.

All three entrances to the chaitya hall are flanked with carvings of the most sensuous females carved on any religious monument (Fig. 1.63), along with their lovers, standing mostly with arms on each others' shoulders. Numerous Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and loving couples are carved all over the walls surrounding the chaitya verandah, but attention is immediately focused on the large carvings of the loving couples carved on the façade of the chaitya hall. These life size voluptuous females, each featuring different costumes and affectionate gestures, have smiling, lovely faces.



Fig. 1.62. Karli. Chaitya. Sidewall of Verandah hall above elephants. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.

anklets on their legs, large earrings, and bands on hands. They are virtually nude and implicitly sexual. Jewelry on the hips and a sash running between the legs constitutes the main adornments of these females. The males are carved with proportional fleshy bodies with heavy folds of diaphanous lower garments between their legs and around their hips. They wear turban with a mushroom-like growth on top and large earrings similar to those of the females. The loving couples look full of life, with slight smiles on their faces and relaxed postures. They represent the concept of individual reintegration with the universal principle.

Both sides of the central entrance are flanked with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and lovely couples. On one side Buddha is sitting on a throne, his legs hanging down and resting on a lotus flower with a long stalk, held by two naga accompanied with attendants (Fig. 1.64). He bears a sweet smile on his face and a halo behind his head. Above the Buddha are two Vidyadharas carrying what looks like a decorated crown. On his right, in the same panel, Avalokiteshvara is standing holding lotus bud with long stalk and chamara.

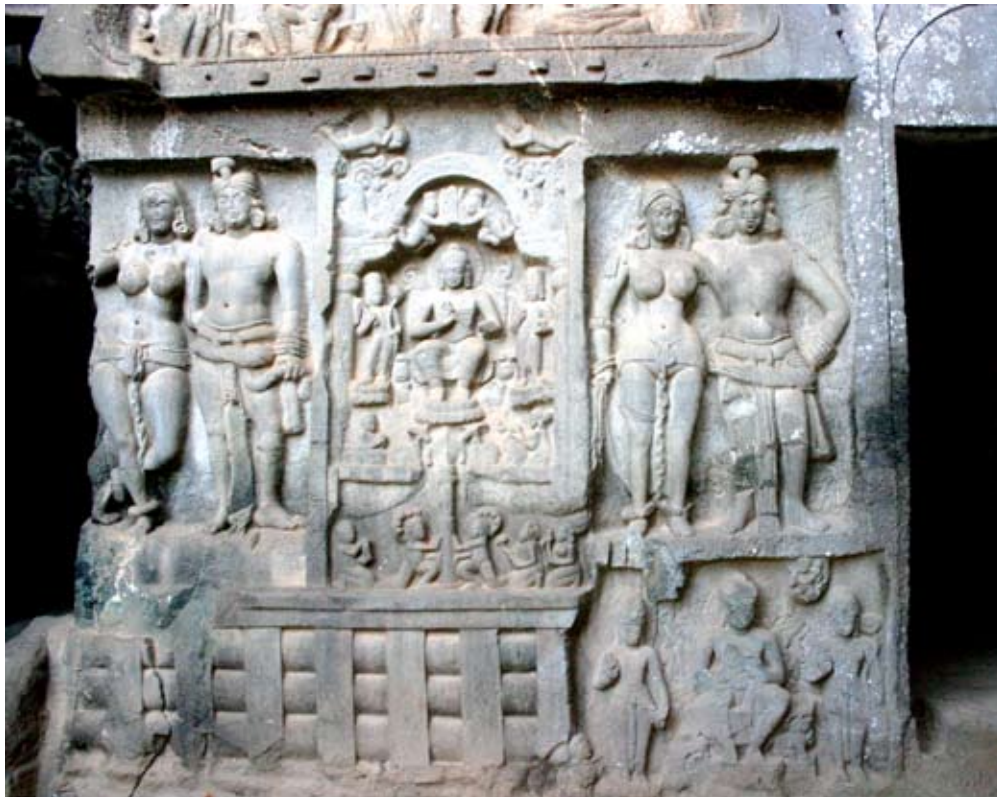


Fig. 1.64. Karli. Chaitya. Chaitya façade wall. Buddha flanked with loving couples. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.

They have soft bodies, full, firm round breasts, narrow waists, and wide hips with soft, full thighs and shapely legs crossed in a different style in each carving. They wear thick

On the other side of Buddha another Bodhisattva, possibly Vijarapani, is standing, holding an unrecognizable object. Lovely couples flank the Buddha in niches. On the other side of the main entrance, Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is carved standing, holding a lotus bud with a long stalk in one hand and his other hand in a protection gesture. He is attended by



Fig 1.65. Karli. Chaitya. Chaitya façade wall. Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara flanked by Loving couples. Ca. 120 CE.

females on each side. Seated Buddhas with teaching gestures are carved in the upper corners (Fig. 1.65). Pairs of loving couples flank the carving of Avalokiteshvara.

A little distance to left of the chaitya a few caves have been hewn from the bedrock of the same hill. A panel in one of the caves is carved with Buddha seated on a throne with hands in a teaching gesture, a few devotees seated at his feet and Bodhisattvas standing beside them. The carving is similar to the carving of Buddha on the façade wall of the chaitya hall but with the addition of Tara, holding a lotus bud, and standing with Avalokiteshvara, indicating the slow integration of female deities into Buddhist sculpture.

Bhaja is located 10 km (6 miles) south of Karli on a road suitable for small vehicular traffic up to the village. Buddhists excavated 18 caves in the hill near the village, possibly during 100-70 BCE. The caves are situated in beautiful and serene surroundings but it is a hard and long climb to each of them. These caves contain interesting early Buddhist sculpture. Cave 12, a large chaitya standing in the center, is flanked by other caves (Fig. 1.70).

The space between the corners of the façade wall and the side entrances is carved with single pairs of loving couples (Fig. 1.66 and 1.67). All these images were carved in the fifth century when the iconographic program of the cave was modified. The large central entrance leads into the nave of the largest chaitya hall with a huge vaulted ceiling carved with rib like beams (Fig. 1.68). The chaitya hall is spectacular

but simple. A row of perpendicular pillars, unlike the slightly inward slanting pillars of earlier chaitya caves, follows the shape of the chaitya hall separating the nave and aisles. The roof of the aisles is flat. The large, thick, six-sided shaft of the pillars sits in a vase of plenty at the base resting on three flat thin square bases of decreasing size. The pillars on the top are carved with lotus bell capitals, a short box with four short pillars, and a round, short, stout pillar. The box supports a circular disc. On the disc, four square plates increasing in size are placed horizontally, one above another. On top of the last square, elephants are carved carrying a loving couple but most prominently a pair of beautiful females. A few elephants carry a single rider. The only animals carved in the cave are elephants. The pillars around the stupa are undecorated at top and bottom. The stupa located near the apsidal end has carvings of two railings on the body, possibly implying two circumambulatory passages around the stupa. The lower railing has niches carved at the base to keep burning oil lamps. On top of the stupa a square neck is mounted with horizontal squares of increasing size, and capped with a large, thick, elongated oval shaped umbrella. In the stupas carved in later chaityas, the superstructure was modified to carry three umbrellas, one above another, to represent three basic tenets of Buddhism: Buddha, the laws, and the monastic order. In the last stages the superstructure was eliminated and the shape of the stupa was modified to look like a dome.



Fig. 1.63. Karli. Chaitya. Chaitya façade wall. Apsara. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.

The chaitya appears to have a small verandah in front, reached by a flight of a few steps (without a front screen). The

façade of the chaitya has collapsed, destroying any carvings, leaving a large opening surrounded by the remaining arch of the chaitya window. The extant protruding façade wall on one side of the chaitya window has a carving of a partially destroyed and extremely voluptuous female. It is similar to the carving at Karli, though not as curvaceous (Fig. 1.71). It

is possible the sculpture was carved when iconographic program at Karli was modified in the fifth century CE, but these carvings are not as sophisticated as those on the chaitya at Karli. Some carving of loving couples on the façade above the arch of the chaitya window have surveyed under small ogee-arches and windows. These carvings appear to be in Sunga style. The large hall of the chaitya has pillars along the periphery, leaning slightly inwards, indicating that the chaitya was excavated before the chaitya at Karli. The vaulted roof of the hall is carved with rib-like beams. A stupa stands near the apsidal end. There are no carvings inside the hall.



Fig. 166. Karli. Chaitya. Chaitya façade wall. Loving couple. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.



Fig. 167. Karli. Chaitya. Chaitya façade wall. Loving couple. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.



Fig. 168. Karli. Chaitya. Chaitya hall. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.



Fig. 169. Karli. Chaitya. Elephants on pillars carrying riders. Ca. 120 CE. Basalt.

The chaitya caves by this time had reached a fair degree of standardization but the use of viharas appears confused. The exterior of the viharas are plain but the interiors are decorated with varied sculpture. The capital of a pilaster in one cave is carved with two short and stocky couples (Fig. 1.72).

The females are loaded with heavy ornaments and their hair is decorated in huge fan-like masses on their heads. The viharas have small cells with raised stone beds for the monks



to sleep on. There are carvings of chaitya windows and stupa railing on the lintel of the cells. Cave 19, raised on a small base-ment, has an open verandah with a very short parapet wall and five pillars and a pilaster on the façade. The tall and lean pillars without brackets are square at the base and top and eight-sided in the middle. The carvings on the top of the pillars have disintegrated. The entrance to the verandah is on the side, be-tween the last two pillars (Fig. 1.73).



Fig. 1.70. Bhaja. Cave 12. Chaitya. Side view 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.71. Bhaja. Cave 12. Carvings on Chaitya facade. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.

The verandah has a half-barrel vaulted roof with ribs at-tached to the central horizontal beam. In a longitudinal niche below the beam, seven stupas are carved. There is a bench in the right corner of the verandah.

There are two entrances and three carvings on the façade of the vihara. The carvings on the facade do not show the so-

phistication of Buddhist art of Sanchi carved in the later part of the first century BCE. These carvings represent early stages of Buddhist art. The first carving, starting from the right, is a male with a slightly oval face (Fig. 1.74). He is wearing a long coat; hair is piled high on his head like thick, twisted ropes. A few ornaments hang from his neck and beaded ornaments are on his hands. He is holding a long club.



Fig. 1.72. Bhaja. Vihara cave. Loving couples on top of pilaster. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.73. Bhaja. Cave 19. Front view of Vihara. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.

The figure in the center, with a narrow waist, has a small-er pile of hair on her head, a round face, large eyes, and flared lips. She is wearing attractive ornaments around her neck. The hands of the figure are broken but appear to have held a long stick. The male in a third carving, near the window, has a very tall arrangement of hair on his head and few orna-ments. A large bow appears to be resting on the wall beside the figure (Fig. 1.175).

On the left side of the verandah a cell is excavated with a central entrance. Indra and Surya flank the entrance of the cell. Indra, wearing a large turban, earrings and large garland, is riding an elephant (Fig. 1.76). He is holding an artifact with

a sharp tip in his right hand. The sharp end is resting on the head of the elephant. The elephant, in a rage, has uprooted a tree and is holding it by his trunk, with men hanging from the branches. He is trampling another tree under his right foot. Men and animals are running, scattered all around the elephant. A small figure wearing a long, twisted pigtail around his face and a short skirt with leaf-like margins is sitting behind Indra. He is holding a banner and two long sticks ending in what appears to be a head of wheat.



Fig. 1.74. Bhaja. Cave 19. Carving on Vihara facade. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.75. Bhaja. Cave 19. Carving on Vihara facade. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.

Surya is carved as a handsome male wearing an ornate head-dress on a slightly oval face with large eyes and flared lips. He is

riding a chariot drawn by four highly decorated horses depicting the travel of Surya across the sky (Fig. 1.77). Two females with facial features similar to Surya's and coiffures resembling thick, twisted ropes, flank him. They are holding chamara and parasols instead of the traditional drawn bows and arrows to drive away the darkness. The horses are trampling a fat, ugly female, representing darkness, under their hoofs. A beautiful female on horseback follows the chariot, on the left.



Fig. 1.76. Bhaja. Cave 19. Indra riding Elephant. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.77. Bhaja. Cave 19. Surya riding chariot. 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Basalt.

## 6. THE GREAT STUPA AT SANCHI (250 BCE–II<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

Sanchi boasts a Buddhist monastery that has been in existence for more than 2300 years, since the golden age of early Indian art.

A small village located at the foot of a 91m (278 ft.) high hill in Madhya Pradesh, central India, Sanchi is accessible via railway but the roads are deplorable and it has the worst possible public bus transportation system of all major cities in the area except Bhopal. The government-run lodge is the only decent place to stay. There is a road up to the stupa complex on the top of the hill. UNESCO declared the reliquary mound, the Great Stupa and associated structures World Heritage Monuments in 1989.

The historical Buddha was the son of a Sakyas tribal chief in Nepal in the Himalayan foothills. He was born in 563 BCE at Lumbini, now in Nepal. After ten years of meditation, at the age of thirty-five he achieved enlightenment near Bodh Gaya in the kingdom of Magadha, the present-day Bihar, south of the River Ganges. He died in 483 BCE at the age of 80 years in Kusinara, a small hill town in Uttar Pradesh.

The most powerful supporter of Buddha during his lifetime was King Bimbisara of Magadha. In its early phase Buddhism faced stiff competition with Jainism and patron kings of Buddhism were replaced by Jain dynasties. About two centuries after the death of Buddha, by gradual expansion Magadha became the kingdom of Maurya, under the first great Indian Imperial dynasty, governing all India except the southern tip. The third emperor of the Maurya dynasty, Ashoka, became a Buddhist. With the imperial patronage of Ashoka, Buddhism became a force to reckon with (from the third century BCE). Early

in the first millennium Buddhism spread to Central Asia, and China and influenced religious thought in the Middle East. Many authorities believe that Buddhism directly or indirectly influenced Christianity.

In the fourth century CE the Gupta, the second great empire of North India, came to power. The Guptas were Hindus and Buddhism slowly started to lose political and social influence in Indian society and by eighth century Buddhism lost most influence and was isolated in western India. By the eleventh century it started merging with body of Hinduism. In the twelfth century the destruction of Buddhist monasteries and libraries in Bengal and Bihar and the expulsion of Buddhist by Muslims drove Buddhism to foreign lands.

Buddhism is based on psychological, not metaphysical or theological, foundations. It is a philosophical doctrine difficult for the common mind to understand.

During 100-200 CE, the Mahayana sect branched off from the main body. Very early Buddhism absorbed the gods of the Hindu pantheon but their functions were different. Indra (Sakra) is still the king of gods. Yama, called Dharmaraja, presides over the hells. Kubera, called Jambhala, is Buddha's bodyguard. Surya assumed the role of providing light and warmth. The goddesses of the Buddhist pantheon are reminiscent of Siva Shakti. The most revered goddess is Tara.

A Buddhist Universe (Chakravala) took shape. With time, some age-old Hindu beliefs crept into the doctrine and popular Buddhism became a mixture of Mahayana beliefs, Hindu pantheon and cosmology.

The region around Sanchi in the Ganges River Valley was part of the Republic of Western Malwa (Madhya Pradesh) during the times of Buddha in the sixth and fifth century BCE, followed by the Mayura Empire from 399 BCE. The Sunga ruled the region from 187 to 75 BCE,

when the Satavahana, intruding from the south, replaced them.

Buddha wandered in the Ganges River Basin for 50 years after his enlightenment, preaching Buddhism through out the year except the four rainy months — but he did not visit Sanchi. The probable reason for Emperor Ashoka to build Stupa at Sanchi was that when he was traveling to Ujjain as Viceroy governing central India he stayed at Vidisha 9 km (5.4 miles) from Sanchi, fell in love, and married Devi of Vidisha. He had two sons and a daughter from this marriage. His daughter Sanghamitta went to Sri Lanka, carrying a branch of Bodhi tree, and ordained women as nuns in the Buddhist order. One son, Mahendra, also went as a missionary to Sri Lanka. Vidisha was an influential Buddhist center and there was a Buddhist monastery at Sanchi.

Buddhist architecture and sculpture dates from the third century BCE to the eleventh–twelfth century. The Stupa at Sanchi is a relic of the era when the place of worship had not yet emerged from the cave to face the destructive forces of nature. Emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty constructed the Great Stupa in 250 BCE as a funeral mound, with burnt brick interior core and mud mortar, to enshrine part of Buddha's relics amidst the community of monks on the hilltop at Sanchi. He erected a 12.6m (39 ft.) high round pillar near the south gate of the stupa. A local landlord later broke the pillar surmounted with four adorsed lions to use as a sugarcane press. A 2.4m (7.5 ft.) high stump of the pillar is still embedded in the ground and two round pieces are on the ground beside the stupa. The broken top of the pillar is deposited in the local museum. The original stone umbrella erected on the top was intentionally destroyed in the second century BCE.

Ashoka built innumerable stupas through out his kingdom to distribute and enshrine the relics of Buddha that were collected by opening eight stupas that had been erected after the death of Buddha. In 185 BCE the Sunga of Magadha in central India replaced the Maurya dynasty.

The survival of the Great Stupa as a freestanding structure is due to the piety of the rich mercantile community of Vidisha and the Buddhist community living on the top of the hill taking care of the stupa. The mound was enlarged and covered with stone slabs cut in the shape of bricks and was given a thick coating of concrete by the Sunga during the first century BCE. During the same period an almost undecorated railing of cream-colored sandstone modeled as an early bamboo fence was constructed to enclose the ambulatory passage around the stupa, with four entrances at the cardinal points. A second ambulatory passage was constructed at a height of 4.5m (17 ft.) on the stupa and the passage was enclosed by a railing. Behind the south gateway entrance, stairways

joining from opposite directions were constructed inside the first ambulatory passages; they provide entrance to the second passage. During the Sunga reign in the second century BCE, Stupa 2, located on the western slope of the hill some distance way from the Great Stupa, and Stupa 3, located near the Great Stupa, were constructed. A three-tier stone umbrella representing Buddha, his teachings, and the community of monks was erected on the top of the Great Stupa and enclosed in a small square stone railing, possibly during the fifth century CE (Fig. 1.80).

The monuments are in relatively good shape, although some intentional damage was done in the second century BCE.



Fig. 1.80. Sanchi. Great Stupa. South Gate. Ca. 250 BC-50 CE. Sandstone.

Four images of Buddha, donated by a lay female devotee, were placed behind the entrances of lower ambulatory passage facing the cardinal points before 450 CE. These carved statues, examples of the mature Gupta art of Mathura, are the only presentation of Buddha in human form at the stupa (Fig. 1.81). Buddha, seated on cushion in meditation, has smooth body contours, downcast eyes and a gentle smile on his face. A lacelike halo is centered behind the head. Celestial flying beings bearing flowers are carved in the upper corners. The attendants flanking Buddha are not the same in all the four statues. Three of these statues are damaged.

Sculpture on stone in India appeared during the second and first century BCE. In that period the carved railing of the stupa situated at the edge of the hill was created in typical Sunga style. These carvings are described as the earliest examples of indigenous relief-work in stone.

In the first century BCE the Satavahana from Krishna and Godavari Valley of southern India, in their brief incursion into northern India, replaced the Kanva (the short-lived successors of the Sunga) governing central India. The Satavahana, by constructing four glorious Gateways of the

Great Stupa, gave the monument recognition, fame and, consequently, protection. The Satavahana also constructed the gateway of Stupa 3 beside the Great Stupa. The gateways were constructed in the latter part of first century BCE. All the gateways were built in a short span of twenty years starting with the southern and followed by the northern, eastern and western gateways. The gateway of Stupa 3 was built last.



Fig. 1.81. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Statue of Buddha in lower circumambulatory passage. Ca. 450 CE. Sandstone.

The present dimensions of the Great Stupa are 16.5m (51 ft.) high (excluding the railing and umbrella on the top) and 36.6m (113.5 ft.) diameter. It is the best-preserved early stone stupa.

The last construction done at Sanchi was a wall surrounding the eastern and southern area of the complex in the twelfth century CE. Like all other monuments in India, Sanchi was forgotten after the thirteenth century. The neglect was a blessing in disguise as it possibly saved the stupa from Muslim invaders. Demolishing the gateways would have erased the beauty and attraction of the Great Stupa.

General Taylor rediscovered the Great Stupa in 1811. Treasure hunters looted the scattered sculpture pieces and Captain Johnson, the British Assistant Political Agent at Bhopal, opened up one side of the stupa from top to bottom, resulting in the collapse of the western gateway, and left it without repair. Alexander Cunningham, the First Director of the Archeological Survey of India, numbered all the monuments on the hill in 1850 and these numbers are retained till today to identify them. Alexander Cunningham opened Stupa 2 and 3 for study in 1851. Major Cole repaired all the stupas and the fallen gateway between 1881 and 1884. The antiquities scattered in the area were collected and deposited in the local museum constructed in 1919.

Both the Sunga and Satavahana were Hindus and did not finance the remodeling of the stupa directly; however,

being tolerant of other religions, they provided grants for the maintenance of these establishments. Common people, lay worshippers, monks, nuns and even carvers financed the remodeling, which was supervised by monastic authorities. The ivory carvers of Vidisha carved a number of sculptured panels and the workers of the Guild of Ivory Carvers donated a carving depicting the celebration of Buddha's turban. It is installed on left pillar of south gateway.

The stupa is a solid mass without an interior chamber. The relics of Buddha are enshrined in the center of the mound. Buddhists come to the stupa to experience the proximity of Buddha by standing near his relics. Buddha attained nirvana by meditation and did not claim to be god in his lifetime. In the early stages of Buddhist art, Buddha was not presented in human body. He is depicted on gateways by symbols like a tree, footprints, an empty seat or a parasol. An empty, long path indicates his walking presence, the stupa his attainment of nirvana, the wheel of law his teachings and the lotus his nativity. A Hindu goddess, Lakshmi, adopted by Buddhists, represents the conception of Buddha.

Statues of Buddha, first carved early in the first century, took some time to spread. As Buddha attained nirvana after 550 rebirths, it was considered improper in early Buddhist sculpture to present him in the human body he discarded.

The artisans who created the sculpture at Sanchi were not stonecutters but were experienced craftsmen in soft media like wood, ivory and silver and they created the carvings on stone similar to delicate carvings on soft materials. There are no carvings on the stupa but all the visible surfaces of the 2000-year-old gateways are carved. Placed in front of the entrances to the ambulatory passage, possibly these gateways introduced the concept of temple gateways. On sandstone quarried from nearby hills, the artisans created delicate, detailed and realistic carvings in deep relief of the life and times of Buddha amidst charming women, plants, animals, and beautiful gestures of humans and a few gods. The carvings are not sermons but a joyful expression of life awakening forgotten memories. They depict scenes of processions and dances watched by people from balconies, women pounding grain and fetching water in the village, and animals and birds frolicking in the forest. Amidst all these joyful activities the presence of Buddha is indicated by symbols like the parasol, empty seat or ceremonial tree. The carvings also recall the spiritual and moral values by depicting events of Buddha's previous lives, his birth, death, and enlightenment. The Jatakas, the collection of memories from Buddha's previous lives, narrate how Buddha gradually acquired greater moral stature and strength as his soul passed from one incarnation to another. The problem of time and space necessary for the carv-

ing of long jatakas was solved by carving from the upper to the lower part of a panel or the continuation of the narrative from panel to panel. Men are carved, stout, fleshy, of medium stature, and wearing mostly turbans and garments wrapped on the legs. The robust but beautiful women are tall, with full, firm breasts, narrow waists, bulging hips and long cylindrical legs and fleshy thighs. They are dressed in diaphanous clothes through which their bodies are visible. The jewelry is worn below the navel, on the legs and arms. Although the figures are small, and carved in deep relief, the body contours, facial features and details of jewelry are carved realistically in minute detail. The naturalistically carved animals are treated like humans. They are carved worshipping the stupa or ceremonial tree. As incarnations of Buddha they are depicted undergoing all the trials and tribulations of life.

The greatness of the carvings lies not only in the beauty, fine finish and details but also in realistic presentation of real world incidents. It is not just the narration of incidence but also the details of the world surrounding it. Sometimes details are omitted for a purpose. These carvings are the finest of Buddhist sculpture, and are masterpieces of early Indian art.

Each gateway consist of 11.2m (34 ft.) two square pillars set 3.3m (10 ft.) apart with three wide, slightly curved architraves longer than 3.3m (10 ft.) placed horizontally one above another with a space between them (Fig. 1.82). The ends of the architrave extend beyond the pillars. Elephants, lions or dwarfs carved on the top of the pillar carry the lower architrave. Square blocks of stone similar to the square pillar below are placed between two architraves, in line with the pillar, making the pillar appear long and solid. In the open spaces between the architraves, small vertical pillars are placed to provide additional support. Additional small vertical columns carved with statues of standing horses or elephants with riders are inserted between architraves. Additional stability is provided by a supporting bracket resting on a square pillar. On the top surface of the upper architrave each pillars ends in Triratna, the holy symbol consisting of wheel of law with a trident above, symbolizing Buddha, his teachings, and the monastic order. A large wheel of law is flanked by two attendants with a Chamara (flywhisk) resting on their shoulders in the center of the upper architrave.

The general design of all the gateways was similar but the loss of certain sections or later repairs has changed the appearance of all of the gateways.

Different parts of the architraves on the gateway are carved with different subjects. The supporting brackets are carved with fertility deities leaning on trees. The vertical small pillars in the space between architraves are carved

with flowering plants and the wheel of law on pointed columns. The four square blocks of pillars placed between the architraves of the gateway are carved on the front and back surface. Eight such carvings in framed panels mostly depict decorated stupas, ceremonial trees or elephants giving a bath to Lakshmi (Fig. 1.83).



Fig.

1.82. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North Gate. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

In Hindu mythology possibly the most benevolent goddess, without any cruel aspect in any avatar except one, is Lakshmi. As wife of the Vedic god Varuna or Sun, she was associated with both good and bad fortune. During the Brahman era she was reborn during the churning of the Milk Ocean and became the wife of Vishnu. She remained the wife of Vishnu in all his incarnations and with Vishnu had a clear hand in the preservation of universe, reinforcing her character as goddess of good fortune and giver of wealth. She is described as a beautiful golden woman, usually sitting or standing on the lotus, which is her symbol. When shown with two hands she is considered the ideal of feminine beauty.

When worshipped alone she is considered the female energy of the Supreme Being and "mother of the world." Possibly because of her exalted position and benevolent nature, she was taken over by Buddhism to represent the conception of Buddha. Zen Buddhist literature mentions that Lakshmi

once appeared in the dream of a follower and told him that she was an enemy of Buddha, but now she is enlightened and is a protector of Buddha. Carvings of Lakshmi depict her seated on a lotus flower in a lotus pond with lotus leaves and flowers surrounding her, while elephants standing in upper corners are pouring water from round pots on her head.



Fig. 1.83. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North Gate pillar block. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

Elephants, like Lakshmi, also emerged during the churning of the Milk Ocean. Lakshmi is carved seated in “Royal ease” with one folded leg drawn near her body and the other leg resting on a lotus below. In one carving on the north gate, the leg of Lakshmi resting on a lotus flower is wide open, exposing the flower of her sex. The elephants are carved smaller than Lakshmi and in some carvings cramped at the back. By altering the scale of physical world the artists have created a world dominated by Lakshmi. Decorated stupas with groups of worshipping men and celestial beings are generally carved on the other square block on the same architrave, possibly recalling the association of birth and death.

After Lakshmi and the stupa, the wheel of law representing the doctrine of Buddha is the object most commonly carved. The wheel is mostly carved above a shrine. It is surrounded by a decorated parasol with hanging garlands, groups of worshippers and flying celestials in the upper corners (Fig. 1.84).

Others subjects include lotus blossoms growing in beautiful vases representing the nativity of Buddha, and the tree behind the shrine decorated with flower or pearl garlands, worshipped by kneeling or standing men. A group of beautiful damsels holding offerings in raised hands in front

of a tree and flying deities above are carved on a block of the south gateway.



Fig. 1.84. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate pillar block. Wheel of law. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The architraves are carved with different subject on different sections. The end of the arm is carved with a spiral and in few cases part of the jataka carved on the side arm is supposed to be wrapped in the spiral. The observer takes delight in identifying the jataka and remembering the part wrapped in the spiral. The body of the arm is mostly carved with part of the Jataka narrated in the mid section of architrave. Statues of standing or resting lions or elephants decorate the upper surface of the extended arms.

Sections of the architrave between pillars are carved on both front and back surfaces with two large decorated robust animals facing opposite directions. These carvings are not part of the presentation carved on the architrave. The animals include standing or squatting horses, camels, elephants, stylized lions, cattle with long or curved horns, majestic mythological lions with or without riders and mythological lions with or without wings. There are twelve such carvings on each gateway.

Carvings on the middle section of the architraves present incidents from history or the life of Buddha, but mostly the jatakas. In some early jatakas Buddha was born in animal incarnations and is depicted as such. After he attained moral stature and strength, his incarnations in human body are depicted by symbols. The most common symbols used are stupas and trees. Each gateway has at least one carving representing Buddhas as a tree or stupa, in its full length. Some gateways are carved with two such carvings. The Sakyamuni Buddha and six Manusi Buddhas that were born before the Sakyamuni Buddha are carved as the different species of trees under which they meditated before enlightenment, or as stu-

pas. The Sakyamuni Buddha is carved as a Pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), with the characteristic pointed leaves, under which he was enlightened. When Buddhas are presented as stupas, the stupas are carved with different decorative designs but are not individually identified. When stupas and trees are used to present Buddhas, on an architrave, the number of stupas and trees are not same in all carvings.

None of the architraves is carved with stupas only. On the rear surface of the east gateway top architrave, all the seven Buddhas are presented as different species of the trees worshipped by a group of men (Fig. 1.85). Two trees not seen on the photograph are on architrave arms. On the same architrave front face, five stupas and two trees are carved (Fig. 1.86). The two missing stupas are on the architrave arms. A tree of Maitreya Buddha (future Buddha) is carved on the front face of the west gateway top architrave arm. The stupa and ceremonial trees are decorated with flower garlands dropped from above and pearl garlands hanging from the branches. These symbolic presentations of Buddha are surrounded with groups of worshipping men and, rarely, women.

The second most often repeated subjects on the architraves are strikingly natural elephants, which are carved on the entire length of the architraves. No other animals are carved with the elephants. Some elephants are comparatively large; all are carved deep, with a fine finish. Similar large elephants are copied on the sculptured cliff at Mamalapuram. The elephants are generally carved in herds passing beside a tree or moving toward a decorated stupa carved in the center of the architrave. The bottom architrave on the east gateway on back is carved with large herds of elephants coming toward the stupa carved in the center from both directions. The elephants are holding lotus buds and flowers in raised trunks or hanging on their tusks (Fig. 1. 87).

On the same gateway the entire surface of the middle architrave on the rear is carved with strikingly natural buffalos, deer, lions, ox, sheep, stylized lions, two cattle with human heads, a large six-headed cobra with open hood and a large bird all moving towards a tree behind the shrine in the center of architrave. Birds are carved on both the side arms of the architrave, taking gifts to the tree. They are holding baskets loaded with gifts or fruits in their beaks. There are no elephants in this crowd (Fig. 1.88). It is said that once Buddha, tired of the quarrels of his tribesmen, went to live in a forest, when the animals came with gifts to worship him.

On south gateway the front face of the upper architrave shows two diminutive elephants giving a bath to a tall Lakshmi, standing in the center of lotus pond. The surface of the pond is covered with lotus stalks, leaves, flowers, buds, and

a few water fowl larger than Lakshmi. The physical scale of the objects is oddly distorted and the carving of Lakshmi is not impressive.

On the east gateway, middle architrave, front face, amidst luxurious vegetation, a finely polished wheel of law decorated with a parasol is carved. Men wearing double crowns are standing, holding hands in salutation. The men standing near the wheel are holding garlands. Deer and cattle are standing or resting on the ground, facing the wheel. The scene depicts the Deer Park where Buddha delivered his first sermon (Fig. 1.89).

The contribution of Emperor Ashoka to Buddhism has been acknowledged on two architraves by depicting his visit to religious places. The lower architrave of the east gateway on its front face is carved with Ashoka visiting Bodh Gaya shrine (Fig. 1.90). In the center of the architrave, a shrine is decorated with chaitya windows. A seat is carved in the entrance of the shrine, reminding us of the presence of Buddha. The shrine bears no resemblance to the existing shrine at Bodh-Gaya. The Bodhi tree is carved behind the shrine. On left of the Bodhi tree is the Ashoka procession with elephants and horses. After descending from a kneeling elephant, Ashoka stands with his entourage, queens, and son. Again he is carved near the Bodhi tree with his wives holding hands in salutation. On the right, a large group of nobles are offering gifts to the tree, accompanied by musicians playing various instruments. It is said that Ashoka was much attached to the Bodhi tree. Once, when one of his queens in jealousy tried to kill the tree by poisoning it, Ashoka fell ill and did not recover till the queen desisted in her effort and the tree recovered.

In one of the carving on the Great Stupa two of his queens are shown supporting an ill Ashoka by his arms on his visit to the shrine.

In the south gateway the middle architrave front face is carved with the pilgrimage of Ashoka to the stupa at Ramagrama with his entourage (Fig. 1.91). The stupa is located with luxurious vegetative growth in the background. Ashoka is approaching the stupa in a horse-drawn chariot, without any female companions, followed by elephants and an army. On the right of the stupa Nagas in human form with five-headed hoods of cobra above their heads are standing with folded arms. Nagins in beautiful female bodies with single hoods above their heads are standing with trays full of gifts in their hands. Some Nagins are touching the stupa while bowing. At the right end two naga couples are sitting in water (identified by lotus flowers and leaves). Nagas zealously guarded this stupa. Another visit of Ashoka to a stupa is carved on Stupa 3, middle architrave, front face.





Fig. 185. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Upper architrave rear view. Buddhas presented as trees.

Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 186. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North gate. Upper architrave front view. Buddhas presented as Stupas and trees. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 187. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Bottom architrave front view. Elephants worshipping Stupa. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 188. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Middle architrave rear view. Animals worshipping Buddha.

Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.89. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Middle architrave front view. Worshipping Wheel of law in Deer Garden. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.90. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Lower architrave. Front view. Ashoka visiting Bodh Gaya. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.91. Sanchi. Great Stupa. South gate. Middle architrave front view. Ashoka visiting Ramagrama Stupa. Ca. 30-20 CE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.92. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Upper architrave rear view. Siege of Kusinara. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 193. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Upper architrave rear view. Malla bringing Buddha's relics to Kusinara. Ca. 30-2 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 194. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Bottom architrave front view. Chadanta jataka.  
Ca. 30 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 195. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Northgate. Top architrave front view. Chadanta jataka.  
Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.96. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Middle architrave. Front view. Great Departure. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone



Fig. 1.97. Sanchi. Great Stupa. West Gate. Front view. Enlightenment of Buddha. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone

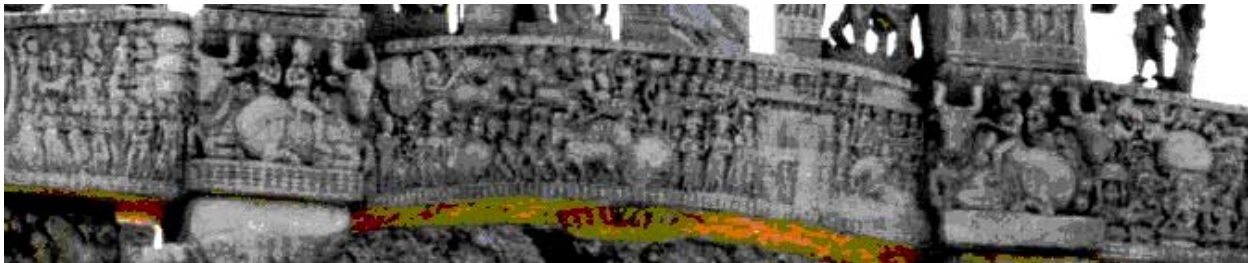


Fig. 1.98. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Lower architrave. Front view. Vessantara leaving palace. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone



Fig. 1.99. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North gate. Lower architrave rear view. Vessantara undergoing trials in forest. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone



Fig. 1.100. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North gate. Middle architrave rear view. Temptation of Buddha.

Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone



Fig. 1.101. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North gate. Middle architrave rare view. Sujata bringing food to Buddha. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone

The siege of Kusinara where Buddha died is carved on two architraves. Malla, the ruler of Kusinara, refused to share the remains of Buddha with others seven regional kings who were devotees of Buddha. On the west gateway, middle architrave, rear surfaces, armies of seven kings with foot soldiers, cavalry, chariots and elephants are carved over the entire length of the architrave. The armies are converging on the fort and the town carved on the right arm (Fig. 1.92). The armies are extended on the left arm of the architrave. Women watch the siege from the balconies of their homes. The siege of Kusinara by the armies surrounding the fort carved in the center is a scene repeated on the rear surface of the lower architrave of the south gateway. The army of Malla is shown defending the city fort (carved in the center of the architrave) with bows and arrows from ramparts, with a few casualties in front of the fort. When Malla consents to share the relics, the attacking armies are shown retreating on the top of the

panel to the right and left of the fort. The siege of the city is depicted realistically.

On west gateway upper architrave, rear face, King Malla is pictured carrying his share of Buddha's relics to Kusinara for interment, on a magnificent elephant, with a parasol over the relics and an attendant with chamara in procession of men, musicians, elephants and horses with riders (Fig. 1.93). A tree and shrine are carved near the town to remind the pilgrims of Buddha. The town and palace shown on the right of the architrave, with men and women watching from balconies, extended to the side arm. The left extended arms of the architrave show spectators standing with hands held in salutation.

The Chadanta jataka is carved on two architraves. Buddha was born as the semi-divine white elephant Chadanta with six tusks. He had two wives. One wife was jealous and prayed to those Buddhas who had attained nirvana to be reborn as a beautiful maiden in the next generation and marry the king of Varanasi to revenge Chadanta for favoring her rival. Her wish was granted and when she grew up as a beautiful maiden she married the king of Varanasi. Pretending to be sick, she persuaded the king to fulfill her desire to bring the fused tusks of an elephant. Chadanta had three tusks, fused into one, on each side. The king hired Sonuttara, the best huntsman in the kingdom, to kill Chadanta and bring his tusks as proof. The huntsman captured Chadanta in a pit and started shooting arrows at him. When asked, the huntsman told Chadanta that the queen wanted him killed and to bring her the tusks. Chadanta understood and accepted his fate; before death he helped the huntsman to climb up to the root of the tusks. When the huntsman found the tusks too hard to cut, Chadanta took the saw, cut the tusks and fell down dead in his own blood. The queen, after hearing how the tusks were obtained, died of remorse. On the West gateway the Chadanta jataka is depicted on the bottom architrave, front face. In the carving the elephant is shown sitting, taking a bath in a lotus pool near a tree in the company of attendants at the left end (Fig. 1.94). The lotus leaves and flowers in the

water are carved in normal size. Ripples indicate water in the pond and the carving is deep. Chadanta is carved again in the center near a pipal tree with all the elephants raising their trunks. The tree is adorned with flower gardens hanging from its branches and pointed pipal leaves. Chadanta can be identified by the three fused tasks. After worshiping the tree, he takes a walk and returns to the pipal tree again for worship. On the north gateway, upper architrave front face, the jataka is repeated (Fig. 1.95). The carving is similar to the previous one but the lotus leaves and flowers are relatively large and the leaves of the pipal tree are less natural. The carvings differ in the technique of execution but both are excellent. Six dwarfs sprouting lotus stalks with leaves, flowers and buds from their mouths are carved on front face of the lower architrave of the south gateway.

All the remaining architraves are carved with incidences relating to the life of Buddha. The episode of the Great Departure is carved on the east gateway, middle architrave front face (Fig. 1.96). On left of the architrave, middle section, Sidharta is emerging from the palace on a horse with a parasol hovering above. Sidharta is not shown actually on the horse. People from balconies are watching the procession. The same riderless horse followed by mourners is carved three times with a parasol above to indicate the progress of the procession. At the left upper corner, footprints on the ground with the parasol above indicate that Sidharta has dismounted. Chandaka, the loyal groom of Sidharta, kneeling before the footprints, indicates his farewell. The return journey by horse, moving in the opposite direction, towards the palace, in the lower part of the panel, indicates the departure of Sidharta on his quest for enlightenment. The story continues from the upper to lower section of panel.

The lower architrave of the west gateway in the rear view is carved with the “enlightenment” episode over its entire length (Fig. 1.97). A large multi-storied shrine is carved with chaitya windows and other decorations in the center of the architrave with Buddha presented as a tree decorated with a parasol with hanging garlands. Mara, the personification of human desires and the god of death, seeking to prevent Buddha from attaining nirvana and becoming free of desires and death, sent his army of ugly dwarf demons with thick lips and bulging stomachs, some riding horses and elephants, carrying various weapons to frighten and disrupt the meditation of Buddha. When they realize that they cannot distract Sidharta from his meditation they retreat in despair and disarray, with panic on their faces. In the commotion some demons have fallen down. Retreating, the carving shows Mara’s army continuing on the right arm of the architrave. To the left of Buddha, serene and rejoicing gods, standing upright,

are shown applauding Sidharta and offering salutations, accompanied by music. The assembly of gods is continued on the right arm of the architrave. The contrasts in facial expressions and stature between the gods and dwarfs flanking Buddha are overwhelming.

The Vessantara jataka is carved on both surfaces of the north gateway on the lower architrave. Buddha in his last incarnation was born as Prince Vessantara, who wanted to attain perfection in giving. His father, King Sanjaya, had a white elephant whose presence brought rain to his people. On learning that the neighbor kingdom was suffering from drought, Vessantara gives the white elephant to the neighboring king. The people, thinking that Vessantara was not concerned with their welfare, demanded that his father banish him from his own kingdom. To satisfy the people Vessantara leaves the kingdom, with his family. Vessantara’s journey starts on the lower margin of bottom architrave on the front face (Fig. 1.98). He is carved emerging from the palace, riding a chariot with his family. On the way, a group of Brahmins ask for the chariot. He gives them the chariot with the horse, and walks with his family. Further up, a prince comes and begs Vessantara to give up these hardships and return to the palace; he refuses. The jataka continues on the back surface of the bottom architrave (Fig. 1.99). Vessantara, his wife and children enter the forest on the left arm of the architrave and decide to stay in a hut. He is carved sitting with his wife in front of the hut in the thick forest beside a lotus pond with a fire burning in a pot in front. An elephant is taking a bath in the pond amidst lotus flowers. The jungle is full of wild animals and fowl, including geese and peacocks. Beside the hut Vessantara is shown sitting with his children and listening, possibly to Indra. Further along, Vessantara is shown sitting in front of another hut. One day his wife was delayed from returning to the hut after collecting food in the forest; a pair of lions obstructed her way. The lions are carved near the thatched hut roof. A Brahmin approaches Vessantara and asks for his children. In the absence of the mother, the children are handed over to the Brahmin. On his way, the Brahmin meets a procession with riders on horses and elephants and sells the children into slavery. An archer sent by the prince who begged Vessantara to give up his hardships is shown with drawn bow, aiming an arrow at the Brahmin. But the Brahmin escapes after selling the children into slavery. Vessantara ends up giving away everything that belonged to him. The jataka ends on happy note. The gods, satisfied by Vessantara’s lack of ego and perfection in giving, restore his wife and children. They are shown in the balcony of the palace with a beautiful garden on the right arm of the architrave.

The remaining part of the architrave is carved with the Alambusa jataka on the right arm. The carving depicts a sage sitting in front of a hut. His son Isisinga, with one horn, was born to the doe; he is standing with clasped hands. Below a doe is carved near the feet of the sage; she is looking at him, twisting her neck. Buddha in one of his previous lives was a young ascetic living in the forest. A doe fell in love with him and swallowed some of his seed together with grass and water. She became pregnant and gave birth to a boy with a horn in the middle of his forehead. The child grew up so virtuous that the gods became jealous of his merit. Indra, the king of the gods, sends a heavenly dancer, Alambusa, to seduce the youth. She succeeds and lives with the youth for three years, after which she disclosed her identity and returns to join the kingdom of Indra.

The temptation of Buddha is carved on the west gate, lower architrave, front face (Fig. 1.100). Mara, the god of human desires, sends his beautiful daughter to tempt Buddha and distract him from meditation. Mara is sitting on his throne in the center of the panel. Buddha is carved as a tree worshipped by men and women. The thick-lipped potbellied ugly demons of Mara's army (personifications of human passions) are waiting on his left to pounce on Buddha when he succumbs to the temptation. On the back of the tree, Sujata is carved holding a water pot and sweet rice in a tray that she prepared to offer to the god of the Banyan tree when her wish for a son was fulfilled. This was the first solid meal Buddha ate after six years of mortification (Fig. 1.101).

The east gateway was possibly erected during the last quarter of the first century BCE (Fig. 1.102). The strong plastic character of Indian sculpture, emphasizing supple, fluid bodies without rigid lines, is fully developed on this gateway. Beautifully decorated elephants carved in three dimensions with riders carrying banners and flags support the lowest architrave. The space between the pillar and first architrave on the right pillar is decorated with framed sculptural decorations and on the left with a flag-bearing skull.

The extended arms of the lower architrave in the front view displays a pair of finely carved peacocks. Facing opposite directions, the peacocks turn their long necks to look back at each other. The graceful twist of the necks looks natural and realistic. On the right arm a shrine is carved between the necks of the peacocks. On the upper surface of the arm a majestic lion is resting. On the left arm, a loving pair is carved between the twisted necks of the peacock. On the upper surface of the arm a statue of a majestic walking elephant is decorated on the back with drapes and bells. The upper surface of the middle architrave arm on the left has a statue of standing elephant. All the decorations on the top of the

upper architrave are lost except Triratna and the decorated elephant on the left.



Fig. 1.102. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Front view. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone

The small square pillars between the spaces of the upper architraves are carved with trees and the wheel of law mounted on a pillar on the front façade. The supporting bracket of the lower right arms is carved with a tree and Yakshi (the fertility deity) standing on a mango tree in front view (Fig. 1.103). The yaksis on all the supporting brackets are lost except on the left arm of upper architrave.

The earlier restraint in the presentation of feminine beauty in Buddhist art gave away to provocative presentation of females. The Yakshi on the left bracket is strikingly beautiful, stunningly voluptuous, wearing diaphanous clothes through which her private parts are visible. She is wearing jewelry and scarf tied round her hips. The sensuous, provocative and curvaceous female with large firm breasts is carved with three body bends. She is hanging languidly on a mango tree with one hand wrapped around a branch and other holding a fruit-laden branch. A sense of swinging motion is suggested by the manner of placement of her feet on the branch. It is a highly sophisticated and provocative pose. She does not look semi-divine but like a living and moving person in flesh, swinging towards the observer. It is interesting to note that the females carved in frontal pose wearing diaphanous dress exposing their nude bodies are carved with beautifully designed dresses on their backs.

The three-body-bend pose of the female and the sensual quality depicted here become a standard in Indian sculpture.

A similar presentation with a different theme appeared in a seventh century carving of a dancer in Cave 7 at Aurangabad. The artists at Sanchi also excelled in modeling the female torso. A broken statue of a Yakshi with model torso is on display at the Boston Museum.



Fig. 1.103. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Lower bracket. Yakshi. Ca. 30-20 BCE

The pillars of all the gates are carved on three sides, all except the back, attached to the entrance. The base of all the gateway pillars facing the entrance were carved with males, some wearing foreign garments, and jewelry, mostly without weapons. They are considered to be guardians of the stupa but some viewers believe they are bodhisattvas. Most of these carvings are lost now. The outer surface of the east gate left pillar is covered with a delightful, decorative lotus vine with flowers and buds issued from the mouth of a crocodile with a fish's tail. There are water fowls amidst the lotus vines. The top panel on the front face is carved with two rows of gods with a blank strip in between — indicating Buddha walking between the rows (Fig. 1. 104).

The panel below depicts a shrine with two stories. The lower story of the shrine is carved with a shrine with Triratna on top. Two men standing on each side of the shrine are posed in gestures of worship. On the upper story a magnificent Bodhi tree has burst open from under the door and win-

dows the shrine, decorated with a parasol with hanging garlands. Two huge garlands are flank the tree. A parasol is carved above the tree and two *kinnaras* (birds with a human upper body) are carved holding garlands and a tray with gifts in their hands. The panel is said to present the enlightenment of Buddha.



Fig. 1.104. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate right pillar. Buddha walking between row of gods and Enlightenment of Buddha. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone

The third panel depicts the Miracle of Buddha walking on water that converted the disbelieving but influential Kasyapa brothers, who were fire worshippers (Fig. 1.105). The carving is framed with a pillar on one side with a winged lion sitting on top and on other side with a band of vine with leaves, calyx, buds and flowers. A bamboo fence borders the upper and lower margins. On top of the carving two oval-shaped plants with different shaped leaves and flowers flank a course of slow-moving water with ripples. The water is filled with fishes, crocodiles, and geese. One goose is swallowing a fish. Broken lotus leaves, calyx, buds and open flowers are floating in the water. In the center the river is raging in flood, with big waves. The stems of the two different kinds of fruit trees beside the river are almost engulfed by waves. Monkeys are picking fruit on one tree. On other side broken lotus leaves, calyx buds and flowers are floating in flooded water.





Fig. 1.105. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Right pillar. Buddha walking on water. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

On learning that Buddha was crossing the flooded river, the Kasyapa brothers, concerned for his safety and searching for him on the river, riding in a boat, saw him walking on the turbulent water in front of them. A blank space in front of the boat in the center of the turbulent stream represents Buddha walking on the water. The Kasyapa brothers, after witnessing the miracle, become believers in Buddha. At the bottom of the panel the Kasyapa brothers are seen standing amidst a row of plants on the ground, worshipping Buddha beside the river; he is symbolized as a tree behind the shrine, with pointed leaves and hanging garlands. On the other side of the river, beside a submerged tree, broken parts of lotus plants are floating in the water; ripples indicate that the flood is past.

The panel below is carved with the procession of King Bimbisara of Magadha passing through the streets of Rajagaha, his capital, on way to pay homage to Buddha (Fig. 1.106).

On the top corner Bimbisara is shown taking leave of a dignitary and emerging from a palace on an elephant, with a dignitary on horseback leading the way. The procession is watched by men and women from the palace balcony and street windows. Below, he is shown riding through the street in a chariot drawn by two horses, holding his hand in a protection gesture, accompanied by the queen. In front of the procession three men are walking, carrying gifts, followed by marching soldiers and the king's chariot. The large procession is accommodated in the panel by winding it through the street from top to bottom.



Fig. 1.106. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Right pillar. Procession of Bimbisara. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The inner face of the left pillar at the top depicts Buddha as a decorated Bodhi tree with hanging garlands surrounded by worshippers (Fig. 1.107).



Fig. 1.107. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Left pillar. Indra requesting Buddha to teach religion. Ca. 30-20 BCE.

Buddha, after enlightenment, had not yet decided to preach. The gods, wearing crowns and led by Brahma and Indra, appeared before Buddha requesting him to teach his doctrine. The upper corners of the panel are carved with flying mythological lions with riders.

A small panel below depicts Maya, mother of Buddha, sleeping in the palace when she dreamed of a white elephant entering her womb at the time she conceived Buddha (Fig.

1.108). A male head is carved near the head of sleeping Maya. The elephant symbolizing Buddha is shown standing on the moon. In Hindu mythology, one of the mighty gods of the second triad of gods was Vivasvat, eighth son of Aditi, the mother of gods. He was born as a shapeless lump and was thrown away by his mother. The divine artificer picked him up and molded him into Vivasvat. The unused parts fell to earth and became elephants. Thus elephants are made up of the stuff of gods and partake divine nature.



Fig. 1.108. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Left pillar. Maya, dreaming of a white elephant standing on the moon. Buddha visiting Kapilavastu. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The panel below depicts Buddha visiting Kapilavastu. Seven years after enlightenment Buddha visited Kapilavastu at the invitation of his father. His father came out of town to

greet Buddha, riding a chariot, with his kinsmen on horses and elephants, followed by soldiers and musicians on foot going before. Men and women from balconies are shown watching the procession. When they reached the outskirts of the town they saw Buddha carved as a tree. His father faced a dilemma. He was father of Buddha, as well as king, but Buddha was sovereign of the universe. Who should honor whom first? Buddha saved the situation by walking on the air, shown as a blank strip watched by his kinsmen. All were impressed by the miracle shown by Buddha. Buddha is repeatedly carved as a tree moving with the procession. The panel ends with the tree enclosed in a low railing with a group of men standing in adoration before the tree. The bottom panel shows a stout door guardian wearing an eye-popping load of jewelry and holding a flower in his hand.

The front face of the right pillar shows a part of the Buddhist heavens occupied by gods of various ranks. The Buddhist universe Chakravala has three planes: above, around and below Mount Meru. The lower plane has 136 hells, the lowest called Avici, where abusers of Buddha and of the law are sent for a time before reborn into the world. The plane around Mount Meru contains the world of animals, ghosts, demons and men. Above the peak of Mount Meru are heavens, arranged one above other. In the lower heaven guardians of the east, south, west and north reside. Further up is the "Heaven of Thirty-three Divinities," the heaven where Indra resides. It is followed by the heaven without day or night, where Yama, god of death, resides. Next is the Tusita heaven where the Bodhisattvas reside before they appear on earth as Buddha. The Maitreya Buddha is awaiting here to be born as the next Buddha on earth. The top two heavens are the heavens of higher gods.

Above these heavens on Mount Meru are the Chyana Lokas (regions of abstract meditation) and Arupa Lokas (formless worlds), reserved for spirits of high order such as Buddha. Six of the heavens, called Devalokas, shown in the carving, are inhabited with those that enjoy the pleasures of the senses (Fig. 1.109). (Two of the lower heavens have been destroyed in the carving.) The façade of each heaven is carved with four pillars. The pillars of the top heaven are decorated with lions, below the cornice, and some heavens are carved with chaitya windows on the cornice. In the topmost panel a beautiful couple, probably Indra and his wife, sit looking at each other while eating fruit. The female is holding possibly a baby near her breast. Beautiful females are standing behind. Females in all the heavens are carved with soft, well-proportioned bodies dressed similar to the Yakshi on the gateway brackets. In all the heavens the gods are sitting in a regal, easy pose in the company of beautiful females and female attendants holding

parasols. All the gods are enjoying the ladies' dancing and drum music. Some gods appear to be holding a musical instrument in hand. Some appear to be holding a pot in one hand and possibly eating fruit with the other hand.



Fig. 1.109. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Left pillar. Heavens of lesser gods. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The top panel on the inner surface of the right pillar depicts village life in the morning (Fig. 1.110). At one end a lotus pond is full of large flowers, leaves and buds, and a buffalo is submerged up to the neck. Some buffalo are standing in the water and some are sitting beside the pond. Some cow, sheep and goats are standing near the pond, possibly waiting for their turn to drink. A woman is bending down, filling a water pot. Another woman is standing behind, with a pot on her hip, awaiting her turn. A shrine in the center of the panel is decorated with a parasol with hanging garlands. Two men stand beside the shrine, worshipping. A beautiful woman on her way to the pond with a water pot is standing cross-legged, gossiping with a man carrying a plow on his shoulder. One woman, above, is churning milk; another is grinding grain on a stone slab with a stoneroller on a table and another is winnowing grain. In corner of a house a couple sits in intimate discussion. The woman is possibly serving breakfast on a stone slab and the man is watching her, lovingly. From beautifully decorated balconies and windows of their residences other people are enjoying watching the village. Behind the residences is another shrine. Behind the shrine a man is carrying a pole on his shoulder with a bundle tied to it; he is accompanied by a woman driving cattle. On the left a beautiful damsel is emerging from her residence carrying a bag on her shoulder to follow a man on some errand.



Fig. 1.110. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Right pillar. Village life in the morning. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone

The panel below is carved with a shrine in the center of Kasyapa village (Fig. 1.111). Kasyapa and his kinsmen were fire worshippers whom Buddha wanted to convert. Once when Buddha wanted to stay in Kasyapa hermitage, the cobra occupying the hermitage attacked him, spitting fire and smoke. But Buddha subdued him and the cobra took refuge in Buddha's bowl. In the carving behind the village is a luxurious

growth of trees. Monkeys are picking fruits all over. There is a two-storied shrine in the center with fire leaping out of chaitya windows on the story above. The ascetics flanking the hermitage are wearing clothes decorated with vertical stripes. Behind the altar in the shrine is the cobra with his expanded five-headed hood. In front of the altar, a fire is burning in a pot. Below is a mixed herd of buffalo, goats and an elephant. In one corner Kasyapa is sitting in a hut with a leaf-thatched roof, with a ceremonial fire burning in a pot and a ladle for pouring oil on the fire. A man is standing in front of the hut; his folded hand indicate the status of Kasyapa. At the other corner is a river with choppy waves. There are waterfowl, lotus leaves, buds, flowers and calyx in the pond. Two boys are standing in front with raised hands to jump in the water to swim. An acetic is bathing in the pond and a woman is bent over to fill a pot with water, at the same time drinking from the river surface.



Fig. 1.111. Great Stupa. East gate. Right pillar. Kasyapa Hermitage. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

In the panel below, the shrine is shown enclosed in bamboo railing (Fig. 1.112). Kasyapa and his kinsmen want to worship the fire. Kasyapa, sitting below the shrine, is pouring oil from a container and blowing on it while another person is fanning the fire; but the fire does not catch. Two devotees are trying to split wood, but the wood will not split. A third person is trying to offer his obligation to the fire by pouring oil with a ladle, but the fire does not respond. Two men are standing beside the hermitage, one carrying a load tied to the ends of a pole on his shoulder and another carrying a tree trunk on his shoulder — possibly to split more wood; but they cannot accomplish their worship.

At the bottom of the pillar a guardian is standing, wearing Indian dress, decked in jewelry and holding a lotus flower in hand (Fig. 1.113). The entire outer surface of the pillar is covered with decorative motifs similar to the motifs of the left pillar.



Fig. 1.112. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Right pillar. Kasyapa performing prayer. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.113. Sanchi. Great Stupa. East gate. Left pillar bottom. Guard at the entrance. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.114. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Rear view. Ca. 30-20 BCE Sandstone.

The West Gate was constructed in last quarter of first century BCE (Fig. 1.114). The lower architrave of the stupa is carried by the pot-bellied Dwarf's associated with earth — precious stones and metals subordinated to Buddha. The fat and fleshy dwarfs with bulging belly folds appear to be holding the base of the mountain in their hands, raised above their heads. Each dwarf wears a different costume and facial expression. All the supporting brackets of the arms and the decorations on top of all the arms and upper architraves are lost except the base of the wheel of law on the center of the upper architrave. Three small plain and rectangular pillars of later origin are installed between the architraves spaces.

The front face of the left pillar on the top depicts the Mahakapi Jataka, the story of Buddha when he was monkey king (Fig. 1.115). At the lower right corner the king of Benares is carved arriving in the forest on horseback, with a parasol above, accompanied by soldiers and musicians, in search of the mango tree from which a fisherman had fetched him a particularly tasty fruit. Noticing that monkeys are devouring the mangoes, the king orders the soldiers to shoot them. A soldier carved above the head of the king's horse is aiming an arrow in the direction of the monkey-king near the top of the panel. The monkey king, holding the branches of the trees on the opposite bank, has stretched across the river, forming a bridge to allow the monkeys to escape to the calm on the other side of the river, where some monkeys are frolicking and deer are sleeping peacefully. An enemy of the monkey-king, while crossing the river, jumps hard on the back of the king, mortally wounding him. Seeing that the monkey-king is injured, the king orders his soldiers to hold a stretcher below to break the king's fall. The stretcher is shown in the carving below the monkey king. At the top left corner, the king is seen sitting with a monkey under a tree, discussing the moral greatness of the king who sacrificed his life for his subjects. The comparative scale of elements, such as the trees, the men bathing on the right shore, and the river (shown as a narrow strip with fishes and the monkey king stretched over the river) is freely adjusted to narrate the story, distorting the physical world. Neither the sequence of the narrative nor the full story is evident in the panel. But for a pilgrim who knows the story, searching the scenes that are presented and filling in missing details from memory is a joyful experience.

The panel below depicts Buddha preaching religion to his mother and the gods in the "Heaven of Thirty-three Divinities." Buddha is depicted as tree surrounded by gods.

Other panels below depict the adoration of Buddha (shown as a tree with hanging garlands) by groups of two men standing on each side and *kinnaras* (half-bird half-human) hovering above. Below a row of men with hands folded

in gesture of worship and men flanking the shrine are carved in two panels. The major difference between the panels is different type of trees. One panel shows the Bodhi tree with its distinctive leaves. The tree in the other panel bears flowers, possibly depicting one of the Manusi Buddha. The bottom panel features three lions springing up in a delightful design. The entire outside panel of the left pillar is decorated with delightful, similar units consisting of two stylized beasts, with or without horns, carrying riders, surrounded by vines, large flowers, buds and leaves. Large hanging flowers are carved at the top of the unit with tendrils bearing buds and half-open flowers at the side.



Fig. 1.115. Sanchi. Great Stupa. West Gate pillar. Front face. Mahakapi jataka. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The inner surface of the pillar on the top is carved with a tree under a parasol behind a shrine. Flying gods are dropping garlands on the tree. On both sides of the shrine, at a slightly lower level, two men are worshipping two small trees. Under the tree, seven men stand, carved in frontal profile with hands folded. The bottom panel is carved with a guard standing under a mango tree, wearing foreign garb, holding a spear in his left hand and his right hand on his hip. A large necklace hangs around his neck and his hands are covered with jewelry. A sword sheath hangs behind his right arm.

The right pillar on its front face may depict the paradise of heavenly love, in the top panel which is divided into two levels with a passage to the lower level (Fig. 1.117). In the upper level two *mithuna* couples are seated on a couch in each corner. A *mithuna* couple is standing near the stepped pas-

sage, talking. The female has hidden her face in hands, possibly feeling bashful about something whispered by the man. Two mithuna couples are seated on couches on the lower level in front of a lotus pond. The panel below, which may



Fig. 1.117. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Right pillar. Front face. Paradise of Heavenly love. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

have been carved with similar scenes, is damaged. The space below was possibly not sculpted. On top of the inner surface facing the entrance is the story of young Sama, whose parents were blinded by a poisonous snake who shot venom into their eyes (Fig. 1.118). Various species of cobras that can shoot neurotoxic venom causing blindness are still found in Africa and parts of Southeast Asia. Sama was a model of parental devotion. He attended to all their needs, living with them in a hut on the banks of a river in the forest. A king who was out on a hunt saw the youth coming to the river to fetch water and shot an arrow at him, not knowing the identity of Sama. The arrow struck Sama and he dropped, mortally wounded. Learning about the helpless parents and the dutiful devotion of the youth the king was overcome with remorse and attended to the blind parents. The story ends on a happy note when the youth is miraculously cured and the parents recover their sight. In the carving on the right upper corner the residential huts of Sama and his parents are carved with the parents seated beside the entrance. A hearth with a sacrificial fire burning, a ladle and pot of oil are located between the huts. There are a few deer grazing in the center amidst a lush growth of plants. In the river lotus flowers, buds and leaves are floating and a few buffalo are wallowing. In the bottom corner the king is standing beside the lotus pond with his

bow drawn. Next, Sama is carved, fallen in the pond, pierced by the arrow. Beside him stands the remorseful king, his bow slack. Next the smiling king — without his royal robe — is standing with Sama, who has recovered sufficiently to carry a pot of water on his shoulder. In the upper left corner the parents of Sama and the king are shown standing with Indra, who came to unfold the happy ending.



Fig. 1.118. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Right pillar. Front face. Sama jataka. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The panel below depicts the episode of Naga-king Muchalinda (Fig. 1.119).



Fig. 1.119. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Westgate. Right pillar. Front face. Naga king Muchalinda and Buddha. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

Buddha, while experiencing the bliss of enlightenment, sat in meditation under the tree for seven days. Beneath the tree in a vast hollow lived the naga-king. During this meditation a thunderstorm arose, with pouring rain followed by a freezing gale and terrible darkness, sent by Mara. At the onset of the thunderstorm the naga-king came out of his dwelling and to protect Buddha wrapped himself around the body of Buddha seven times and spread his hood above the head of Buddha like an umbrella. The naga-king disappeared after the storm was over. When such services were not required, the Nagas appeared before Buddha as humans.

The panel depicts Buddha as a decorated tree under a parasol decorated with garlands. In the upper corners two females riding mythological lions are approaching the tree. Two men adorned with jewelry and holding garlands stand flanking the tree. To the right of the tree stand two women with a single cobra head behind their heads; one is holding a round pot and another is holding a chamara. On the left a woman accompanied by a group of female musicians playing various musical instruments is dancing. Nagas are carved with five-headed cobra hoods behind their heads and nagins with a single hood behind their heads. The hood of the cobra originates from the hips above the legs and reaches above the head from behind. Below the tree the five-hooded naga-king is seated in royal ease. On his right three females with single cobra hoods, their hair elaborately coifed and their legs ornamented with jewelry, are seated on cushions. Perhaps they are the naga-king's wives. The damaged panel below depicts a royal couple riding a boat carved with a lion head at the bow and a fish tail on the stern. The surface below may not have been decorated.



Fig. 1.120. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North gate rear view. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The north gateway, constructed in 20-30 BCE, excels in the plasticity of sculpture — like the east gateway (Fig. 1.120).

Four jatakas are carved on this gateway. Most of the decorative statues are intact. The lower architrave is supported on decorated elephants. In the spaces above the elephant heads, decorative sculpture is carved. A damsel is driving one of the elephants. The supporting brackets of all the outer arms, carved with fertility deities, are intact. The Yaksis, wearing diaphanous dress, wear jewelry about the hips. The yaksi on the lower bracket is leaning back on a tree branch. The legs and one hand of the statue are broken. She does not exhibit the characteristic sophistication and beauty. The top surface of the middle and upper architrave arms bears statues of winged lions of Iranian origin sitting on their hind legs with open mouths. The upper architrave in addition to lions displays Triratna, the holy symbol, on both ends. There is a chamara bearer in attendance on the left. The chamara bearer on the right is lost. The broken wheel of law in the center is indicated only by part of the outer rim that remains. The space between the architraves bears small pillars with a tree or wheel of law carved above the pointed pillar. The space between the small pillars is decorated with elephants and horses with riders to give stability to the architraves. The arms of the middle architrave in rear view are carved with a pair of peacocks facing opposite directions but looking at each other with curved necks. A tree is carved between their necks. The shrine represents Buddha and the peacock was the emblem of the Maurya dynasty.

The front face of the left pillar in the top panel depicts Buddha visiting the “Heaven of Thirty-three Divinities” to instruct the gods and his mother (who was reborn in heaven). He is descending from the heaven after a stay of three months in the company of Brahma and Indra. Buddha is symbolized as a tree in the company of the gods at the top of a ladder and in the company of men at the bottom of the ladder.

The second panel depicts prince Sidharta visiting Kapilavastu city in a chariot drawn by horses and watched by women from the balconies. He is not seated in the chariot. During these visits he witnessed the death and sufferings of men that made him seek enlightenment. The third panel depicts Buddha carved as tree behind a shrine preaching his kinsmen in Kapilavastu. The carvings below this panel are badly damaged. The outer surface of the pillar is covered entirely with repeating units of decorative carvings with Triratna on top.

The top panel on the surface facing the entrance in the upper half space depicts kinnaras coming from four directions bearing garlands to a richly decorated stupa with a cir-

cumambulatory passage enclosed in a bamboo railing with a front entrance. Men carrying garlands occupy the ambulatory passage. Below, a group of men is coming towards the entrance bearing flags, garlands and gifts. Another group is standing with hands held in a praying gesture. One person carved in rear profile is holding his hands joined above his head in salutation. Next a group of musicians is playing music with drums, horns with serpent-like ends, double pipes and string instruments. The curly hair and different style of dress and headgear suggests that the worshipers are visitors from south Asia. The panel below depicts the story of a monkey who took the begging bowl from Buddha, filled it with honey, and offered it to Buddha. When Buddha (symbolized as a tree) accepts the offering, the same monkey is carved a second time expressing joy with raised hands. Next a group of two men and two women are shown worshipping the tree. The women are carved from the side, seated on their heels, with bent knees on the ground before the tree, their hips spread on their heels presenting beautiful side profile.

The panel below depicts the visit of Buddha to Kapilavastu. Buddha is symbolized as a tree with hanging garlands. Two kinnaras and a *karita* (half-man and half-beast) are dropping flowers from above. Beside the tree a royal couple, attended by two females (one holding an umbrella above them and another holding a *Chamara*) are greeting Buddha. Perhaps they are the parents of Buddha. The queen and another female wearing jewelry are presenting offerings to the tree. The last panel depicts a guardian wearing jewelry and holding flowers in his hand.

On the front face of the right pillar the mango tree is carved that Buddha caused to grow overnight and under which he preached. In the center of the panel an empty throne under the mango tree bearing fruits symbolizes Buddha. Four men are seated in front of the tree. Above the tree a group, possibly gods, is carved. At the top two men are beating big drums and Vidyadharas are hovering in the corners. The panel below depicts the Jetavana garden, the favorite resting spot of Buddha. It was purchased by a rich merchant, Anathapindika of Sravasti, and was gifted to Buddha. The prominent carving in the panel is that of the merchant. Below a building with wagon-vaulted roof is carved with four openings under chaitya arches. Few people are standing in the doorways. Possibly it is the Jetavana monastery. Below is a blank strip indicating Buddha walking on air while a row of people stand below, looking at Buddha. The panel below shows King Prasenjit of Kosala going out of his capital, Sravasti, through the city gate, in a procession to visit Buddha. The last panel depicts mithuna couples, royals riding elephants, and a lotus lake below. The outer surface of the pillar is carved with

beautifully-sculptured narrow elongated leaves arranged in various designs and flowers in repeated units. Near the top of the pillar a decorated medallion and near the bottom a pair of Buddha footprints embossed with the wheel of law indicate the universal sovereignty of Buddha.

The surface of the right pillar facing the entrance is carved on the top with a rock-cut structure, possibly an early Buddhist cave, with a decorated entrance in front. There is an altar beside the entrance of the cave (Fig. 1.121). In the center of the cave a large decorated pipal tree is carved behind a shrine. A rock-cut structure with two stories is carved to the right of the tree. On the other side of the tree, the heads of a buffalo, lion, elephant and other animals are carved. Rows of well-dressed devotees wearing large turbans and earrings are standing on side and in front of the tree with hands held in praying gestures. Some devotees are holding gifts in their hands. Two beautiful females are standing in front, wearing beautifully designed dresses on their backs. Possibly the carving depicts the Indra-Sheila cave near Rajagraha. The panel below depicts a royal procession passing through the city gate while residents of the town look on. Below is a tree behind a shrine surrounded by beautiful female worshippers and men. The last panel is carved with a guardian.



Fig. 1.121. Sanchi. Great Stupa. North gate. Right pillar. An early Buddhist cave. Ca. 30-20 BCE. Sandstone.

The south gateway was the first gateway constructed. It may have been the main entrance to the stupa. A stump of an Ashoka pillar is embedded in the ground near the entrance. Two long circular sections of the pillar lie nearby. The broken top of the pillar is kept in the local museum. Four adorsed lion standing on the decorated circular dais on top of the pillars support the lower architrave (Fig. 1.80). This motif is copied on the official seal of the Republic of India.





Fig. 1.122. Sanchi. Great Stupa. Southgate. Right pillar. Front face from top - Mounted Wheel of law in Deer park. Ashoka and below Indra visiting Deer Park. Other face from top - Buddhist shrine. Sick Ashoka visiting shrine. Ca. 30 BCE. Sandstone.

All the supporting arm brackets and ornamental statues on the upper surfaces of the architraves are lost. Rectangular plain small pillars of later origin have been installed between the architraves for stability. The mostly damaged sculpture on the architraves has lost its charm and shows more weather damage than others. On the front and side of the right pillar, few panels show carving (Fig. 1.122). The top panel on the front face is carved with wheel of the law mounted on column in Deer Park where Buddha delivered his first ser-

mon after enlightenment. Men and women are flanking the column to worshipping the wheel of law while deer are rubbing their heads on the base of column and some are licking the column. The dignitary standing beside the column could be Ashoka and his queens. The panel below depicts a king, possibly Ashoka, in a chariot with his queen and below that Indra with his wife on elephants visiting Deer Park to pay homage to the wheel of law. All the other panels below are obliterated.

The surface facing entrance in the top panel is carved with a large bodhi tree decorated with garlands. Below the tree is a realistically carved shrine with two stories. The upper story is decorated with chaitya windows. The lower story is carved with four pillars with round bases and two pilasters supporting the front porch. There is an altar in the porch. The entrance to the shrine is crowded with people. The panel below depicts the ailing Ashoka visiting the pipal tree supported by his queens. Attendants carrying an offering and holding a parasol above the king flank the queens. It is said that Ashoka was so attached to the pipal tree that he fell ill when one of his wives tried to harm the tree out of jealousy. Another panel below shows a shrine with an arch on the upper storey occupied by a few people. It represents the Heaven of thirty-three gods where Indra and other gods are worshipping the hair cut off by Buddha when he embarked on his journey for enlightenment. The gods picked up the hair and took it to heaven to worship.

The fourth panel depicts the celebration of Buddha's turban, donated by the Guild of Ivory Carvers. In the panel a turban is placed on a dais in the center with a devotee holding a parasol above it. Men wearing jewelry and decorated headwear are standing in a half circle in the back with hands folded. A few men and two women with braided hair are sitting in front of the turban. The entire gathering in the front row is carved from behind while one beautiful female is carved in side profile. In the upper left corner is a group of four females. One woman with a braid down her back is playing a drum while another is dancing. The beautiful, supple body of the dancer is wrapped below the naval with a garment. This may be the second most lovely carving of a female in Sanchi after the carving of the Yakshi languidly hanging from the mango tree. Two females wearing large earrings and beautiful hair ornaments are standing in front of the dancer. All the females in the carving have a garment draped over their lower bodies. It is said that during his Great departure to search for enlightenment, when Sidharta reached the outskirts of Kapilavastu, he sent his personal attendant back to the palace with his jewelry and all other personal belongings, removed his turban and tossed it into sky, telling himself that "if I am to become Buddha, it will remain in the air." The gods caught

the turban and took it to heaven to worship. The scene possibly depicts the adoration of the relics of Buddha.

The left pillar is a replacement and has no sculpture. The original pillar, kept in the museum, is carved on one side with Muchalinda protecting Buddha from the freezing gale, Buddha turning the four bowls offered by the guardians of the cardinal points into one to receive the offering of food from two merchants, and a bullock cart traveling through a village carrying the two merchants who offered food to Buddha. The other side is carved with a bodhi tree, the jewel house built by the gods on the spot where Buddha meditated for one week after enlightenment, the grass cutter offering Buddha grass to sit on, under the bodhi tree, Sujata offering food to Buddha, and a blank strip to symbolize Buddha walking to and fro after enlightenment.

The stupa presents a sublime world full of loving and caring gods, a kind world full of grace and beauty with enchanting females and animals filling the heart with joy.

A magnificent stupa at Amaravati, the capital of Satavahana in the northwest Deccan, was built using local marble-like limestone in the second century CE (Fig. 1.123). A fragment of a polished pillar bearing Ashoka's edict, discovered at Amaravati, suggests that the foundation of the stupas were laid during the Mayura period. Shortly after the erection of the stupa a stone railing was erected but most of the elements were left plain, except a donatives inscription from the second century CE.



Fig. 1.123. Amaravati. Ruins of Stupa. Ca. 200 CE.

In the succeeding years the stupa was enlarged and decorations were added, reminiscent of the Sunga style. Buddhism ceased to be the dominant religion in Andhra after the fourth century but the stupa was kept in good repair till 1344. From the fourteenth to eighteenth century, it was totally neglected and the jungle partially reclaimed the stupa. Locally known as the Hill of Lamps, it became a quarry for limestone. In 1779, a local land owner started removing stones from the hill. The Surveyor General of India, Colonel Colin Mackenzie, visited Amaravati that same year upon learning that sculptured marble slabs were discovered in the hill. In 1818 he revisited the site with his draftsman to make drawings of the monument. By then the hill had been much excavated and the land

owner was constructing a tank on the top. Representatives from various museums started removing the sculptures.

In 1846, Sir Walter Elliot reported it as a simple round mound with a shallow depression on the top, without any indication that a magnificent stupa had once stood there. Bits and pieces of the monument are scattered in various museums. The last remaining fragments were collected and burnt to obtain lime. The stupa exists now as grass-covered flat mound surrounded with a 1m (3 ft.) high wall of recent origin. The local museum near the site has cement casts of some of the beautiful carvings that once decorated the stupa, arrayed in a sunny yard surrounded with a high wall. Photographing these casts is not permitted.

Stupa 3 was built in the second century BCE during the reign of the Sunga near the Great Stupa to transfer the relics of two of Buddha's disciples who died a few years before Buddha (Fig. 1.124). It is 8.1m (25 ft.) high with 15m (46.5 ft.) diameter with a stone block core. It is similar to but smaller than the Great Stupa. The hemispherical dome has a polished stone umbrella on the top enclosed in a stone railing designed as a bamboo fence. An ambulatory path surrounded by a stone railing is about 3m (12 ft.) above the ground. Entrance is given to the ambulatory path by stairways from opposite directions joining at the entrance to the railing. Satavahana constructed the gateway during last quarter of first century BCE. There are no supporting brackets for the arms of the architraves and no decorative statues on the top surface of any architrave. The lower architrave of the gateway, supported by pot-bellied dwarfs, is carved with the palace of Indra in paradise. In the palace, Indra is sitting with Indrani under a naga hood at the right corner, and in the left corner he is sitting with his spouse on coils of naga. Nagas, the serpents in Buddhism, were assigned the role of protectors of the teachings of Buddha. Like yaksis they are associated with fertility, wealth and abundance of nature.



Fig. 1.124. Sanchi. Stupa 3. Ca. 150-50 BCE. Sandstone.

The middle architrave is carved with an image of Ashoka's visit to the stupa with his entourage. The top architrave is carved with decorative motifs intermingled with dwarfs, demons, floral forms and a woman. Other carvings on the architraves are decorations and symbols similar to those on the Great Stupa. Cunningham in 1851 opened the stupa and found relics of two close attendant of Buddha under a large stone slab in the center of the stupa. These relics are in London now.

Stupa 2 lies on the western slope of the hill some distance away from the Great Stupa. It was constructed in the last quarter of the second century BCE during the reign of the Sunga to enshrine the remains of Buddha's priests. The top is almost flat without any crowning element. An elliptical stone railing designed as a bamboo fence encloses ambulatory passage surrounding the stupa. There are four entrances at each of the cardinal points, formed by the overlapping of the outside railing ends. There are no gateways. The posts at the entrances are elaborately carved. The railing posts are carved both inside and out in shallow relief with full medallions in the center and half medallions on top and bottom. The medallions are carved with images of men, animals, birds, plants and flowers. The human figures are depicted as awkward, with long legs, oversized feet, bulging shoulders and rough facial features. These carvings are described as the earliest examples of indigenous relief-work in stone. Captain Johnson, the British Assistant Political Agent in Bhopal mentioned earlier, almost destroyed it during his looting spree.

There are ruins of many monasteries, viharas, stupas and temples around the Great Stupa that were constructed at various time. But none are as outstanding as the Stupa. A big stone bowl is located near the ruins of one monastery. Halfway up the Sanchi hill is a small stupa with the railing dominated by carvings of a lotus medallion. By the end of the twelfth century all this construction activity ceased at Sanchi.



Fig. 1. 125. Sanchi. Temple 17. Gupta temple. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

A few of the Buddhist temples in the complex were constructed from the Mayura era to the eleventh century. Temple 17 (referred to as the Gupta temple), near the Great Stupa, was constructed during the Gupta reign in the mid-fifth century (Fig. 1.125).

Major Cole refurbished the temple in 1850. It is considered one of the most logically designed structures, providing the basic plan for the development of future temples. This small and unimpressive temple sits on a low plinth. It consists of a front porch and square sanctum. These units are not joined properly like the sanctum in the mandapa of the early Hindu temple at Aihole. Massive stone slabs placed end to end across the sanctum and mandapa forms the flat roof, recalling a cave. The open porch is supported on four pillars placed at a uniform distance on the front of the mandapa and two pilasters in the back. The pillars are square at the bottom and octagonal above, ending in a sixteen-sided column with a bell-shaped lotus above. The abacus is mounted with a square capital crowned with ad-dorsed lions at each corner of the abacus. Each ad-dorsed lion has two bodies and a single head.

The entrances to the temple, unlike the front entrance of Hindu temples, go through the side of the porch. The door-jambs of the temple entrance are decorated with a band of foliate and rosette designs. The temple bears little similarity to the stupa. There is an absence of elaborate ornamentation on the temple façade, except some sculpture on the columns and doorways, no foundation, and the walls are constructed of rubble faced with stones.

In 1850 an image of Buddha seated on a lion throne was reportedly found in the sanctum. The sanctum is empty now. It is interesting to speculate what would have been the result if the front porch had been enclosed and partitioned. The builders of this temple would have created the early design of the modern temple ahead of the Chalukya, who were struggling with the open mandapa to develop the design of the Hindu temple at Aihole in southern India. Perhaps the needs and ideas of the builders of this temple were different.

Temple 18 was originally constructed of wood during the Mayura period (contemporary to the Great Stupa) (Fig. 1.126). Additions were made during the Sunga and Gupta eras. When the timber superstructure was lost in fire, a temple with Hellenistic pillars and pilaster was built on the same spot during the reign of Harsha.

The temple, built on raised platform is apsidal in shape. A flight of a few steps with a moon (semi-circular) stone in front leads to the platform. The apsidal hall had twelve imposing pillars in front; nine pillars and one pilaster are still intact. In 1912 Sir John Marshal reset the leaning 5.18m (16 ft.) tall pillars. The pillars are decorated near the top and have round edged brackets carrying architraves. A solid masonry wall surrounded the hall. The hall and the pillars were

enclosed in an outer stone wall providing a circumambulatory passage around the hall. The roof may have been covered with baked tiles, as some of these were found in the rubble along with many other Buddhist relics discovered in the seventh and eighth century and in 1912. It was in use possibly till the medieval period.



Fig. 1.126. Sanchi. Temple 18. Temple ruins. Ca. 2<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. Sandstone.

Temple 13 built in the sixth–seventh century was reconstructed in the eleventh century (Fig. 1.127). The image of Buddha in the sanctum has an elaborately carved halo. The Nagini statue standing at the right end of the platform dates from the fourth century CE. It may have been transferred here from an unknown place.



Fig. 1.127. Sanchi. Temple 13. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A little distance away from the Great Stupa amidst the ruins of the monasteries are the remains of temple 45, constructed during the seventh or eighth century (Fig. 1.128). It was refurbished in the tenth century, after fire damage, incorporating some original cells. The courtyard was raised 0.76m

(2.6 ft.) above ground level and a 1m (3 ft.) high platform was added, with a molded base decorated with female figures and a few amorous couples. The temple is flanked with verandahs on three sides. The missing flat roof of the verandahs may have been supported by pillars obtained from other structures.



Fig. 1.28. Sanchi. Temple 45. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

At the end of the verandah on one side is an enclosed cell. A statue of Buddha seated in meditation with an oval halo behind his head is attached to the sidewall of the first cell verandah (Fig. 1.29). The legs and hand of the statue are partially broken.



Fig. 1.29. Sanchi. Temple 45. Statue of Buddha in Verandah. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The highly decorated door jamb of a side cell is carved with standing mithuna couples engaged in explicit sexual acts, while a third female holds the active female from behind (Fig. 1.30).

The main temple stands in the center of the platform (Fig. 1.131). The highly decorated façade of the antechamber has a moonstone carved with lotus, conch shells, deities, decorative designs and mythological animals carved on the base. The females in three-body-bend poses and the decorative designs carved beside the entrance are very attractive, although some of the carvings of women show a decline in the quality of sculpture.



Fig. 1.130. Sanchi. Temple 45. Carvings on door jam of a side cell. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Temple 40, a wooden structure with apsidal shape, was built contemporaneous with reminiscent of the shape of a water jug, symbolizing a state of plenty or bounty Great Stupa. The temple burnt down in the second century. A mandapa, or pillared outdoor hall, was constructed on the site and a small shrine was constructed in the seventh century.



Fig. 1.132. Sanchi. Temple 45. Sanctum. Buddha in meditation. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.



Fig. 1.131. Sanchi. Temple 45. Temple entrance. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

In the square sanctum an image of a meditating Buddha is enshrined, seated on a lotus, with an oval halo behind his head (Fig. 1.132). The northern-style hollow *sikara* tower was possibly decorated with chaitya windows, *amalaka* (symbolic fruit of a tree) and *kalasa* (shaped like a water jug, it symbolized a state of plenty). The remains of a huge fragmentary *amalaka* and a *kalasa* in the shape of a stupa were found in the rubble.



## 7. BUDDHIST CAVES AT AJANTA (200 BCE–600 CE)

Four of the Ajanta caves date back to as early as the first century BCE; there are some 29 in all. They are located 101 km (61 miles) from Aurangabad, a city which is connected to major cities of India by airways, railways and roads. It is 415 km (250 miles) from Mumbai, Central India, and has boarding and lodging, and frequent bus services to the caves.

The caves themselves are in an isolated, barren, brown, hilly region without any local facilities, except a government-run Guest House facility 5 km (3 miles) from the Ajanta caves at Faridpur, a sleepy little village. UNESCO declared the Ajanta caves Human Heritage Monuments in 1983.

The Deccan plateau is extensively covered by basaltic lava flows associated with the volcanic activity caused by continental divergence during the Mesozoic era 248 million years ago. The traps sloping from west to east have a thickness of about 2000m (6200 ft.), without inter-trap sedimentary beds; they have not undergone major deformity since the Mesozoic eon. The rock beds in the region, with its sharp vertical drop, are eminently suitable for the excavation of caves.

Buddhist caves in India were excavated for more than a millennium from the third century BCE to the eighth century. Most of the caves are located in the Sahyadri hills separating the west coast from the inland. The sub-ranges of the Sahyadri hills also run on an east–west axis. In the third century BCE, Ashoka and his grandson Dasaratha excavated the first seven caves in the Barbara and Nagarjuni hills, sub-ranges of the Sahyadri hills, near Gaya, in Bihar, to provide shelter in the rainy season for

wandering non-Vedic religious sects, “as long as the sun and moon shall endure.”

The first type of cave excavated by Buddhists was probably a chaitya cave. The chaitya is essentially a large hall with an apse-shape at one end, with a stupa, for the monks to mediate by. A stupa is a burial mound for the deposit of the mortal remains of Buddha or his followers. Mostly stupas represent the demise of Buddha.

In the second century BCE, the excavation activity shifted to what is now Maharashtra, in the coastal region, and caves were excavated at Bhaja. Buddhists excavated 29 caves at Ajanta from the first century BCE to the fifth century CE on a 76m (236 ft.) high hill in the western coastal hilly region of central India. The caves were excavated in the wall of a narrow horseshoe-shaped gorge hewn out of the bedrock by the Waghora River (Fig. 1.135). The river is now mostly a dry sandy bed except in the rainy season.

Buddhism underwent profound changes after the death of Buddha. Most of these changes can be seen in the Ajanta caves. Buddha ordained monks to roam in countryside, preaching; they were to use shelters for meditation in the rainy season. In addition to protecting shrines from natural destruction, caves were suitable residences for monks, who are the essential pillar of Buddhist faith — after Buddha and his teaching (The Law). Soon residential cells were dug out of the sidewalls of the cave by elimination of a stupa, and the caves started serving as a sanctuary for the monks. A small shrine on the rear wall was provided for worship. Such caves are known as *vihara* caves. These caves also had an assembly hall in the center where monks could mediate or receive instructions.

In its early stages Buddhist sculpture considered it improper to present Buddha in a human body, since he had discarded his after 550 births, described in the Jata-

kas (the stories of the previous lives of Buddha). He was presented as a stupa, footprint, or parasol, or other symbols.

In the second century BCE, a people of Central Asia, collectively called the Kusanas, invaded and settled in India. Their migration continued over a period of 200 years. Iranian and Western influences grew stronger. Possibly under this influence the desire to revere Buddha in human form surfaced. The first image of Buddha in India with a few characteristic features was carved during the last quarter of the first century CE. The image spread slowly all over the country.

The image of Buddha reached the Ajanta region during the first phase of excavation and was carved in chaitya caves 9 and 10, but images of the Bodhisattvas were not carved. In later developments, a sitting or standing Buddha was carved in deep relief on the stupa facing the entrance. In the vihara caves an image of Buddha was carved in the shrine for worship.

The split that occurred in Buddhism one century after his death, during the first council of the Buddhist order, resulted in Buddhism branching into two traditions which brought the most profound change in Buddhist philosophy.

The essential difference between Theravada (Hinayana) and Mahayana Buddhist tradition is in the doctrine of Bodhisattva. In Theravada tradition, the emphasis is on attainment of nirvana and escape from the cycle of births and deaths. In Mahayana, the aim is to attain Buddhahood but to take birth again, forgoing nirvana to help others to achieve salvation. A new group of divine beings called Bodhisattva, the Buddhas-to-be, appeared. Bodhisattvas first appeared as attendants of Buddha. The most popular Bodhisattva is Avalokiteshvara, protector of travelers from the eight great perils of mankind: lions, elephants, snakes, fire, thieves, water, shipwreck and demons. Another Bodhisattva, Vajrapani, associated with the thunderbolt, gained importance. He carries a totem in his hand which is considered by some to be a phallus.

There may be no limit to Bodhisattvas. They can appear any time and their functions may vary. Buddha did not ordain women in the Buddhist religious order but female Bodhisattvas slowly appeared as spouses of male Bodhisattvas, and later attained independent status equal to that of their male counterparts. Some attained the status of goddess, like Mahamayuri, the goddess of learning, and Tara, the spouse of Avalokiteshvara.

The next to-be-born Buddha, Maitreya, and Manusi Buddhas who attained nirvana before Sakyamuni Buddha appeared, were carved in both the chaitya and vihara caves at Ajanta.

Caves were excavated here in two phases. The early phase of cave excavation occurred from first century BCE to first century CE when the Satavahana ruled the region. They had invaded central India for a short period from the south and replaced the Sunga. During this early phase two chaitya caves, 9 and 10, and two vihara caves, 12 and 13, were excavated near the center of the existing row of caves.

Buddhist imagery had reached central India by this time and his picture was carved in these chaityas. But there are no carvings of any Bodhisattvas, possibly because Bodhisattvas were not very popular yet or their presentation was still resisted by Theravada traditions. Building activity ended abruptly after excavation of these four caves and silence fell over Ajanta.

The second phase of excavation started with a burst of activity in the fifth century during the reign of the Vakataka dynasty. The Vakataka were feudatories of the Gupta dynasty that ruled northern India and were also related to the Gupta by marriage. After the fragmentation of the Gupta empire, they emerged as the rulers of central India. Harishena ascended to the Vakataka throne in 460 CE, inheriting a huge empire in central India with a stable economy. The second phase, which lasted for short period, started with the regime of Harishena, during which almost all the remaining caves were constructed in a span of about fifteen to twenty years from 460 CE to 475 or 480 CE. Some minor work continued for one more century.

Out of a total of 25 caves excavated during the second phase, only two caves, 19 and 26, are chaitya; the remaining caves are viharas. Nine of the caves were partially excavated. The spurt of activity during the second phase was due to the patronage of ministers, princes, and high officials of the court of the Vakataka kings, particularly Harishena. The emperor himself was the sponsor of vihara Cave 1. The prime minister of Harishena sponsored the excavation of vihara Cave 16. The King of Rishika, a feudatory of Harishena who was actually governing the Ajanta region at the time, sponsored chaitya Cave 19. An official of the court of Asmaka, another feudatory of Harishena, sponsored chaitya Cave 26. The caves began to be painted in 462 CE and by around 500 CE the painting of all the caves was completed.

Soon after the death of Harishena, in 480 CE, his son was killed in internal strife. His grandson fled to an adjacent regime and the Vakataka era ended. After 483 CE, not a single image was carved at Ajanta. The Vakataka sculpture and paintings in these caves show the influence of the Satavahana tradition.





Fig. 1.135. Ajanta. Caves. Ca. 100 BCE-500 CE. Basalt.

The general layout of the vihara was standardized in the second phase under the Mahayana influence. All the vihara caves excavated during the second phase have a similar basic plan providing a small verandah, single or multiple entrances and an assembly hall with pillars arranged in square. The shrine on the rear wall featured a pillared portico, vestibule and sanctum with a statue of a sitting or standing Buddha flanked by Bodhisattvas. Residential cells for monks were cut into the sidewalls with a raised rock bed and head rest. A niche was provided in the cell wall for an oil lamp. Most vihara caves accommodated six to twelve monks. Cells cut on the rear or side walls were converted into additional shrines as the complexity of the religion increased.

Chaitya caves were excavated with a window above the entrance facade imitating the wooden windows of the time. The windows were covered with wooden screens to filter sunlight into the caves. Some caves were excavated with a verandah in front. Allowing additional exterior space for carving.

The craftsmen employed in the second phase were inexperienced; large-scale cave excavation was not undertaken in the region from the second to the fifth century CE. A few simple Hindu one-chambered caves were excavated a few

hundred miles away at Udayagiri some fifty years before the excavations were started at Ajanta. The caves excavated at the initiation of the second phase are ambitious but do not stand out. The emphasis was on decoration rather than grand execution, at least in the early caves. For the decoration of the caves, painting was preferred rather than sculpture by inexperienced craftsmen.

The plans of many caves were altered after start of excavation. The work may have abruptly stopped in all the caves for some time with the end of Harishena lineage. A fragmentary record on cave 26, left by the Rashtrakuta dynasty ruling from Ellora, indicates some activity at Ajanta in the eighth and ninth century. When the works stopped after the death of Harishena, the craftsmen and their descendants moved to Elephanta Island in the sea of Oman near Mumbai, where they excavated Siva Cave. After Siva Cave they went to Ellora, where they excavated and painted the Ellora caves. Finally, the craftsmen may have moved to northern Karnataka to construct structural temples. By this time the creative impulse of the sculptor had died.

A few centuries after the work stopped at Ajanta, the caves were forgotten and neglected except by a few monks; they were soon engulfed by the forest. Fortunately the damage done by the overgrown forest was not as severe as that wrought by the huge roots embracing the freestanding mon-

uments at Angkor, Cambodia. In 1817 a group of soldiers on a tiger hunt rediscovered the caves at Ajanta, and the caves were given identity numbers before the date of excavation of each cave was determined.

The Satavahana and Vakataka kings were Hindus but they provided grants of lands and endowments for the maintenance of monasteries out of political expediency and religious tolerance. Harishena and his Hindu feudatories sponsored a few caves, but the excavation and painting of most caves was made possible by donations from lay worshippers and Buddhist merchants.

These caves are the product of sculpture on a grand scale, but are not rock-cut architecture. Few or no architectural principles were involved in cave excavation. The technique for hewing caves in basaltic lava, sandstones and granite is described in the chapter on Religious Monuments. The absence of faults and deposits of sedimentary rocks in basalt lava was a divine bonus. These caves are carved in imitation of thatched roofed huts of central India with non-functional accessories.

Ajanta is renowned for wall paintings. Ample talent for painting was available in the persons of those local craftsmen who were decorating local monuments constructed of more perishable materials like wood and bricks. The walls and ceilings of 25 caves at Ajanta were covered with lavish paintings narrating the jatakas, the legends from previous lives of Buddha.

The earliest paintings created in the first century BCE during the time of Satavahana rule, in cave 10 exist in patches. Unfortunately the paintings created during second phase have survived only in caves 1, 2, 16 and 17. All the remaining paintings have faded to a large degree and most have chipped and peeled. One can imagine what a paradise Ajanta was when all the paintings were visible. In 1984 the caves were not fully electrified and the guides use to show the paintings by kerosene light. In a cave they use to turn off the light and the pearls necklaces worn by females would come to life possibly due to a radioactive element in the pigment. These paintings are full of life and rich in composition.

The late fifth century paintings in caves 1, 2, 16 and 17 are the glory of Gupta era. The artists have used females as their best decorative asset, like the sculptors of later Hindu temples. It is said that modern art has not succeeded in paying tribute to women as successfully as it is paid at Ajanta. Paintings in cave 1 and 2 are sensual and restless. The paintings on the ceilings are generally flat, like designs on textiles.

The surface to be painted was prepared by applying two layers of mud plaster mixed with sand, paddy husk, grass and rock-powder over unpolished stonewalls to smooth the surface and this was overlaid with lime wash. After the wash dried, the outlines to be painted were sketched using red paint. Pigments were applied in a binding medium of glue or gum. Color was applied using brushes made of animal hair.

Except for lapis lazuli imported from Afghanistan for the color blue, local minerals were used. White was used to reflect light. Blue was sparingly used. Light pigments were used to give body to the figures. In cave 1 and 2, white pigment was used to highlight and to pick out the subject. The paintings are dominated by scenes from the jatakas.

Cave 1, excavated under the patronage of Vakataka King Harishena (460-478 CE), has a pillared verandah. The top of the columns and cornice of the cave roof are decorated with sculpture (Fig. 1.137). The entrance door jambs are carved with females standing with body bends, loving couples, and decorative sculpture. The interior of the cave is rectangular. The large hall excavated in 468 CE has twenty decorated pillars arranged in a square. There are twelve residential cells on the sidewalls and five cells on the rear wall. The central cell on the rear wall is the shrine, with an antechamber. The paintings were completed in 477-478 CE.

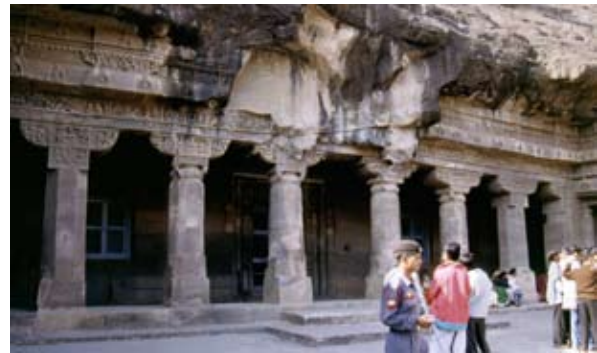


Fig. 1.137. Ajanta. Cave 1. Facade. 460-478 CE. Basalt.

The sixteen-century-old paintings in the cave have mostly faded. The dim light of the cave and a ban on flash photography makes it difficult to capture the remaining splendor. The most attractive painting on the walls depicts Bodhisattva Padmapani standing in three-bend body poses. He has a well-proportioned torso, broad chest, thick arms and beautifully arched eyebrows, and wears rich pieces of jewelry; he holds a blue lotus (Fig. 1.138).

His expression is one of remoteness and calm in the midst of a crowd. On the right of Padmapani a curvaceous, sensual, naked black female with a flowing plastic body and bulging breasts is drawn sitting leaning on a man (Fig. 1.139).



Fig. 1.138. Ajanta. Cave 1. Bodhisattva Padmapani. 460-478 CE.

On left wall is the Nanda jataka. Prince Nanda is surrounded by a queen and the beautiful ladies of the palace (Fig. 1.143).

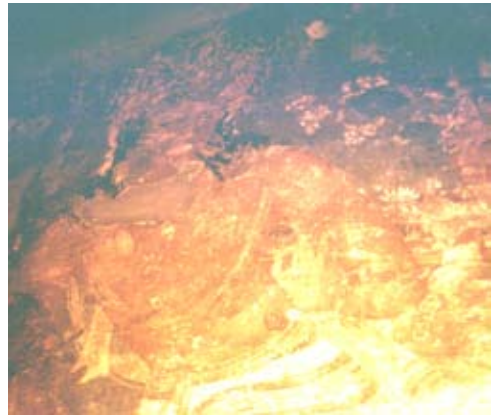


Fig. 140. Ajanta. Cave 1. Bodhisattva Vijarapani. 460-478 CE



Fig. 1.139. Ajanta. Cave 1. Lovers. 460-478 CE

At the right of the antechamber entrance an elegant Bodhisattva Vijarapani with a narrow waist, strings of pearls looped around the chest, a beautiful decorated crown, sleepy eyes, bow-like eyebrows and lotus-petal lips is created by modulation of colors rather than use of lines (Fig. 1.140).

The beautiful consort of Bodhisattva is drawn with large half-closed eyes, a narrow, pointed nose and lotus-petal lips (Fig. 1.141). The jatakas painted in the cave depict the splendors of royal courts, pious rulers and naga kings. In the painting of the Mahajanaka Jataka, a shipwrecked prince is sitting with a beautiful queen on a throne on the star studded floor of a palace with female attendants staring at the couple. The queen is trying to seduce the prince, but he is unmoved (Fig. 1.142).



Fig. 1.141. Ajanta. Cave 1. Consort of Bodhisattva. 460-478 CE

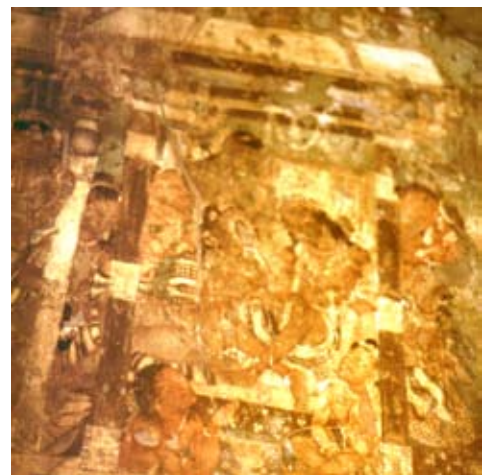


Fig. 1.142. Ajanta. Cave 1. Mahajanaka Jataka. 460-478 CE

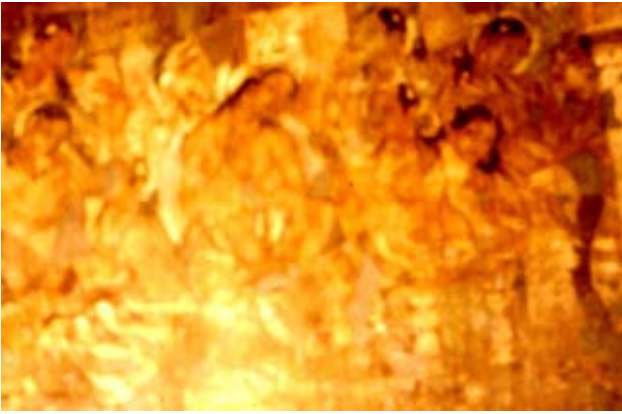


Fig. 1.143. Ajanta. Cave 1. Conversion of Nanda. 470-478 CE.

The handsome prince wearing a crown and a band of pearls on his arms is drawn with large half-closed eyes sitting beside his beautiful wife Sundari. The prince has decided to leave the luxuries of the princely life, palace and beautiful wife behind, to join the monastic order of Buddha. He is disclosing his intention to his wife, who sits beside him, her right hand raised as though to caress him. Her lovely almond-shaped eyes under arched eyebrows gaze at the prince, full of love, sympathy and sadness. She is wearing a beautiful crown and pearl jewelry on her arms. Her flowing, supple body, narrow waist, delicate hands, full hips and thighs are bursting with radiant beauty. Her bosom is accentuated by the strands of jewelry that have disappeared between the breasts and reappeared below. Expressions of shock can be seen in the eyes of other queens standing behind them. The surrounding court ladies, with sorrow in their eyes, drawn according to the Indian ideals of feminine beauty, show the mastery of the Ajanta artists.

Many other scenes depict the luxuries of court life, fully exploiting the beauty of the female form. A dancing scene depicts an exquisitely charming dancer with a long, slender neck and attractive headdress wearing jewelry on her delicate body and dancing amidst the musicians playing drums and flutes. She is wearing an apron-like robe cut to expose the sides of her narrow waist. The long sleeves made of a textile printed with flowers add drama to her form. Another scene depicts the interior of a palace filled with beautiful women in different costumes, hairstyles and poses.

In another painting a beautifully decorated princess is sitting cross-legged in the company of other attractive women. A sensual black female standing beside is holding Chamara (Fig. 1.144). A tall, finely built female is standing with a prince under a royal umbrella amidst royal ladies (Fig. 1.145).



Fig. 1.144. Ajanta. Cave 1. Palace scene. 460-478 CE.



Fig. 1.145. Ajanta. Cave 1. Palace scene. 460-478 CE.

A sensual black female standing beside them is holding a chamara. Above, in the balconies, women are standing watching the royal pair (Fig. 1.146). Among them a beautiful black female with full hips, narrow waist and a striped cloth hanging from her hips to her knees stands, leaning on a wooden pillar (Fig. 1.146). She is wearing pearl jewelry on her hips, thighs and neck. The woman mixing a sandalwood paste for the princely bath is remarkable for the rhythmic bend of her seductive body.



Fig. 1.146. Ajanta. Cave 1. Palace scene. 460-478 CE.

On the left of the main entrance the Sivi jataka is depicted. In a previous life Buddha was born as a prince in the neighboring kingdom of Sivi; he offers his own flesh in weight to save a pigeon from hawk. On the right the pigeon is shown nestling in the lap of the prince. Beyond a pavilion, the prince is shown standing beside a pair of scales. Three jatakas, the Sankhapala, Champaka and one with unknown name, depict stories of the naga kings. Harishena traced his genealogy to the Naga kings. In the Champaka jataka a Naga king caught by a snake charmer is released on the intervention of the Benares king. The king is shown seated in the palace, watching a dance, then talking to the cobra king who has assumed human shape, and finally with the gifts given to him by his new friend. The center of the ceiling is painted in a grid-like pattern with seated males and females, abstract motifs, playful elephants in a lotus pond, birds touching beaks and lotus flowers (Fig. 1.147). White is abundantly used on the ceiling, possibly to reflect light, in contrast to the earth tones of wall paintings.



Fig. 1.147. Ajanta. Cave 1. Painting on ceiling, 460-478 CE.

Cave 2, a vihara excavated in the second half of the fifth century, is smaller than Cave 1; it has a pillared verandah. The verandah, interior walls and hall ceiling were painted. The cave entrance door is carved with females in three body bends and loving couples (Fig. 1.148).



Fig. 1.148. Ajanta. Cave 2. Entrance. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

In the verandah only fragments of the painting on the ceiling have remained. The hall has twelve lavishly carved pillars arranged in a square. There are ten cells in the side-walls and three cells on the rear wall. The central cell in the rear wall is the main shrine with a seated Buddha with hands in preaching gesture (Fig. 1.149).

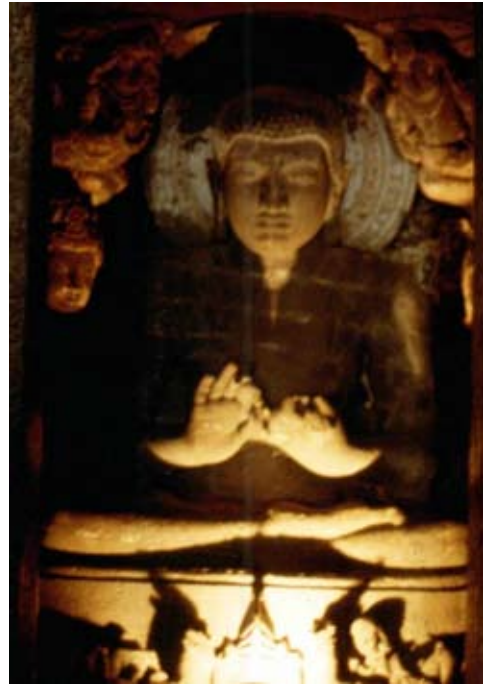


Fig. 1.149. Ajanta. Cave 2. Buddha in main shrine. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

Profusely ornamented Bodhisattva flanks him and two flying apsaras are hovering above, carrying garlands in their hands. The pedestal is carved with the wheel of law in profile, flanked by two deer and some early disciples of Buddha. The two cells to the sides are additional shrines. The right cell has large seated sculptured images of Pancika and Hariti, flanked by a chamara-bearer and a female caressing a bird on her hand. They are heavy but are remarkably beautiful. A child is sitting on Hariti's thigh. Hariti, the patron of children, was an ogress who devoured the children of Rajagraha until Buddha concealed one of her favorite children to make her feel the pain of such a loss. While attacking Buddha to find the lost child, she repented. Buddha assured her food in every monastery. To honor the promise, an image of Hariti is installed in the dining room of monasteries. The cell on left has two large yaksa images.

The painting on the left wall of the antechamber depicts the attempt of the beautiful daughters of Mara to distract Buddha from his meditation. On the right wall multiple images of Buddha with various hand gestures refer to the mir-

acle when Buddha multiplied into countless Buddhas. The ceiling of the antechamber has been painted in bright colors in a grid-like pattern containing floral and abstract motifs. White is abundantly used. On the left wall of the hall Maya, mother of Buddha, is shown standing in a palace garden in Lumbini where Buddha was born. On the extreme left of this wall is the Hamsa jataka. A golden swan king is captured and released by the King of Varanasi and Queen Khema after hearing the discourse on law by the swan king. In the painting a bird catcher and a companion are shown approaching a lotus lake filled with geese and further along he is shown leaving the pond, holding the swan in hand. The next scene shows a sage preaching in the king's court, then a lake full of lotus flowers, lilies and geese. Individual artists have painted the ceiling of the cave in a variety of styles.

The Jatakas painted in the hall includes the Vidhurapandita jataka. It depicts the Naga princess Irandati with full firm breast; narrow waist and large hips swinging while two attendants are watching her (Fig. 1.150).

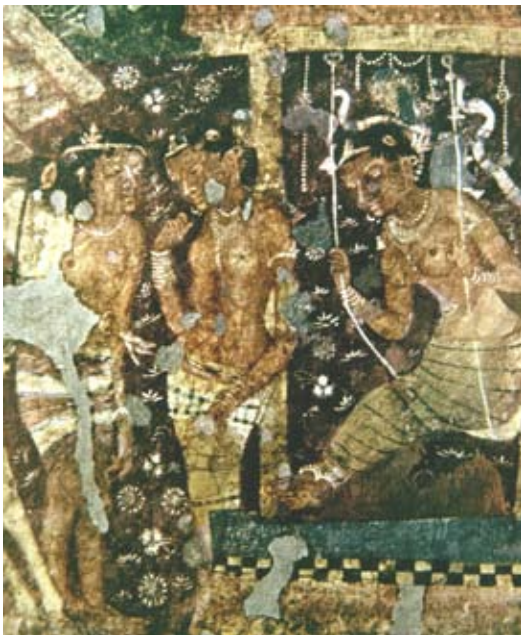


Fig. 1.150. Ajanta. Cave 2. Vidhurapandita Jataka. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

Perhaps the most attractive female body drawn at Ajanta is the one kneeling before the feet of Buddha on the ceiling (Fig. 1.151). Her body is as supple as a new shoot emerging from a seed.

One scene depicts a loving couple standing together (Fig. 1.152). Loving couples sitting in balconies, with erotic overtones still glow with tints of blue pigment.

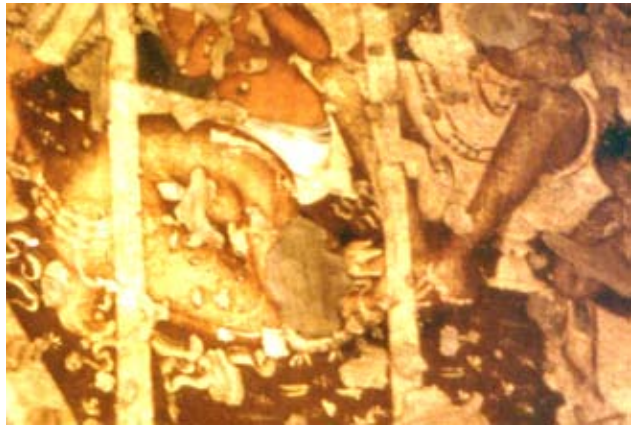


Fig. 1.151. Ajanta. Cave 2. Devotee kneeling before Buddha. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> century CE.



Fig. 1.152. Ajanta. Cave 2. Lovers. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

Cave 3, excavated during the fifth century, is a small, incomplete vihara. On the façade of the cave is one of the most beautiful pieces of sculpture carved at Ajanta. A delicately built damsel with all the attributes of feminine beauty is standing under a tree (Fig. 1.153). As she leans her bent elbow on a tree branch and rests her weight on one leg, her hips are thrust to one side, creating a sensual and sophisticated pose. There are no paintings remaining in the cave, but this one sculpture makes up for their loss.

Cave 4 is a large vihara with large square hall in the center and a few residential cells on the sidewalls. Cave 5 is a small vihara squeezed between Cave 4 and Cave 6, which is a vihara with two stories. The first floor has a square hall with sixteen pillars arranged in four squares. There are a few residential cells in the sidewalls. The second story is simi-

lar to the design of Cave 2 except that the cell at the right end of the rear wall has an additional shrine with antechamber. The main shrine in the center of the rear wall is carved with a seated Buddha with hands in a teaching gesture and flanked by two decorated Bodhisattva and various deities. Three Manusi Buddhas are carved on each sidewall of the sanctum. The cells on the right and left of the verandah are converted into additional shrines. Cave 7 has two adjoining square halls with four pillars. Each hall has a shrine at the end of the sidewall. The main shrine is located in the center of the rear wall.



Fig. 1.153. Ajanta. Cave 3. Apsara on Façade. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

On the sidewall a sculptured frieze depicts the miracle when Buddha multiplied himself a thousand times. A heretic sect in Rajagraha, the capital of Magadha, ruled by Bimbisara, refused to acknowledge the superiority of Buddha. They resolved to make a great display of their supernatural powers to convince the multitude of their mastership and superiority. As Bimbisara was a staunch supporter of Buddha, they decided to challenge Buddha in Sravasti, in the neighboring kingdom of Kosala. On the day fixed for the showdown, a large crowd gathered. The king of Kosala, Prasenjit, came to the gathering with great pomp and took his royal seat. On the invitation of the king, Buddha, in preliminary miracles, rose into the air and caused flames of fire and streams of water to gush forth alternately from his upper and lower body. Then with the assistance of Brahma and Sakra (Indra), he multiplied a thousand times, seated in a meditation posture

on a cartwheel-sized corolla of a golden lotus flower of a thousand petals, created by two serpent kings, Nanda and Upananda. Above this lotus he caused another lotus to appear which likewise showed Buddha seated in meditation. Thus he filled the sky with a multitude of Buddha figures. He seemed to walk, to stand, to sit or lie down. The Buddhas issued forth flames, flashes of lightning and streams of water. Some of them asked questions and others answered them. The heretical teachers were so confounded that they remained silent when the king invited to display their magical powers.

Cave 8 appears to be an incomplete vihara. Caves 9 and 10, excavated in the first century BCE to the first century CE, are chaitya caves with a row of pillars following the apsidal shape of the caves and a stupa at the rear, with a circumambulatory passage. By the time these caves were excavated, the idea of portraying the image of Buddha had reached Ajanta. The façade of Cave 9 is dominated by a window carved with an imitation of wooden rafters and a standing Buddha on the sides. It is believed to be one of the oldest chaitya.

Cave 10 is the largest chaitya at Ajanta. There are patches of the oldest known wall paintings in India, from the first century BCE, painted during the Satavahana reign in the cave. Fragments of one painting show a king with his retinue (including musicians and group of lovely ladies with expressive eyes) visiting a tree. On the right wall, the Sama and Chadanta jataka can be recognized.

In the painting of Sama jataka the king is shown aiming arrow at Sama holding a pitcher on his shoulder. The next scene depicts repenting king and the devastated parents beside the body of Sama. The painting ends with Sama sitting under a tree with a pair of deer grazing and the king near a hut. The painting of Chadanta jataka is much damaged but in broken patches depicts the favorite resort of the elephant, a lotus pond under pipal tree, and his presenting of lotus to other wife that enraged the jealous wife, hunter spying elephant from behind the rocks and sawing of the tusks. The chaitya pillars are painted with standing Buddha (Fig. 1.154).

The stupa is dome shaped with barrel shaped base and a square pedestal supported on a long square neck (Fig. 155).

Cave 11 excavated during the first phase inserted between cave 10 and 12 is uncomfortably close to cave 12. It has a small rectangular hall in the center with four pillars. The main shrine is on the rear wall. The cell to the right of shrine is converted into additional shrine with antechamber.

Caves 12 and 13 excavated during the first phase are closely packed viharas without pillars in the central hall.

Residential cells are cut on sidewalls. Excavation of cave 14 was attempted but was left incomplete. Cave 15 a vihara has square interior without pillars, shrine on the rear wall and few residential cells on the sidewalls.



Fig. 1.154. Ajanta. Cave 10. Paintings on pillars.

Ca. 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.155. Ajanta. Cave 10. Stupa. Ca. 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

Varaha Deva, the prime minister of Harishena financed the excavation of vihara Cave 16 in later half of fifth century. It has a large reservoir of water which is still in use. The interior of the cave has a large hall with pillars arranged in square, a large shrine on the rear wall and residential cells on the sidewalls. The interior of the cave is decorated with sculptures and paintings. The statue of seated Buddha with apsaras hovering above is detached from the rear wall in the shrine. Varaha Deva compares the cave to the palace of Indra.

A flying couple carved on the bracket of a pillar is remarkable for the impression of weightlessness. The female leaning on the man with bent legs and flowing hairs suggests flying motion but does not appear to exert any weight on man. The walls are painted with Nanda, Mahaummagga, and few other Jatakas. An enchanting figure of black princess on the wall is memorable for her elongated beautiful thin face, half closed almond eyes, lotus petal like lips, long neck, beautiful jewelry and headdress (Fig. 1.156).



Fig. 1.156. Ajanta. Cave 16. Black Princess. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

Beside cave 16 is carving of Naga king in a niche. The queen seated beside has broken off.

Upendragupta a feudatory ruling adjacent Rishika kingdom was the patron of cave 17. It is considered a standard Mahayana vihara. The pillared verandah is accessed by flight of steps. The entrance to the cave is carved similar to Cave 1, but above the door lintel loving couples sitting with erotic overtones wearing different costumes and jewelry are painted in separate panels (Fig. 1.157). Above the lovers a row of vines bearing white flowers separates a row of Buddha painted in panels. Buddha is seated in meditation with halo behind head indicating attainment of nirvana and with hands in gesture of reassurance and protection. The ceiling of the verandah is painted with attractive floral designs with a circle in the center drawn with busts of beautiful apsaras with their heads pointing towards the periphery.

On the sidewall is a much damaged painting of Vessantara jataka. A fragment of painting depicts Vessantara sitting with his consort on throne (Fig. 1.158).





Fig. 1.157. Ajanta. Cave 17. Entrance door lintel. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.



Fig. 1.158. Ajanta. Cave 17. Painting on veranda sidewall. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

The black prince with queen in his lap informs her that he is banished from his father's kingdom. She sags in the prince's lap, throwing her head to the side with almost expressionless eyes. Her fingers are shown nervously manipulating the chain of the dangling pendent around her neck, while anxious attendants are hovering around with carafes in hand on the star studded floor of the palace. Another patch of painting depicts a tall, delicately built, beautiful queen with happy face standing with a cup in her raised hand on the star studded floor (Fig. 1.159).

An elegantly dressed female standing beside the queen appears to be obstructing an approaching Brahmin carrying a basket in his hand. A man seated beside an attendant on

the other side of the queen, holding a parasol, appears to be oblivious to the surroundings. Behind the queen two ladies are peeking through a palace window.



Fig. 1.159. Ajanta. Cave 17. Painting on Veranda Sidewall. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

Vessantara is again shown standing in somber mood beneath a palm tree under a beautiful parasol held by an equally beautiful attendant in a palace garden. There is a pavilion at the far end of the painting. The large hall inside the cave has pillars similar to the hall of Cave 16. The rear wall has five cells. The shrine in the center of the rear wall has a statue of Buddha, with his hands in a teaching gesture, detached from the back wall. Ornamented Bodhisattvas with chamara and flying figures on the upper corners flank Buddha. The pedestal of the statue is carved with the wheel of law in profile, in the center flanked by foreign devotees and deer. Residential cells are on the sidewalls.

The cave contains the highest number of murals, most considered masterpieces. The Simha Avadana jataka covers a complete wall. Simha was a virtuous merchant. On one of his voyages he was shipwrecked, but with his companions reached an island inhabited by witches. The witches disguised as beautiful damsels entertained the visitors during the day, then, reverting to ogresses, devoured them during night. In a scene with erotic overtones, shipwrecked Simha is sitting in the tent with a beautiful damsel (Fig. 1.160). Simha, apprehending danger, accepts the offer of a flying horse; and escapes with a few companions from the island and reaches his native land. The witches follow Simha, disguised as beautiful women, and the witch who entertained Simha claims him as her husband. When refuted in court, she approaches the king who, enchanted by her beauty, takes her as his wife — and is devoured. Other ogresses devour the inmates of the palace. Simha notice vultures hovering over the palace,

with its closed doors. He climbs over the walls and chases out the ogresses. Later, with the army of the king, he invades the witch island to punish them and ultimately is crowned king of the island. The main incidents of the story have to be searched out in the painting.



Fig. 1.160. Ajanta. Cave 17. *Simhala entertained by a witch*. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

Near the Simha jataka is the renowned dressing room scene (Fig. 1.161).



Fig. 1.161. Ajanta. Cave 17. *Toilet scene*. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

The painting depicts a tall, sensual, seductive black damsel with arched eyebrows, half-closed eyes, pointed nose and flared lips standing with three-body bends accentuating the full, firm hips and thighs by crossing her legs. Holding a

mirror in one hand she is giving the final touches to her make-up after a shower. Most of her body, including the thighs, is decorated. By a touch of white paint, various parts of her body including her thighs, legs, nose, breasts and nipples are highlighted. Her buxom body appears to be radiating the warmth of flesh. In a nearby painting the beautiful damsels listening to Buddha's teaching are equally radiant. A painting in the antechamber shows Maitreya Buddha. Maitreya, the future Buddha, in the top register, is residing in Tusita, the heavenly paradise, awaiting his next birth. In the center register he is shown after descending from Tusita to preside over the earthly paradise of great tranquility, Ketumati, to the welcome of his devotees. The bottom register shows him preaching.

Another scene depicts a seated king giving alms. Men and women in varied costumes, some in rags, holding bowls in extended hands, are standing in front and beside the king. Another man standing in the street, holding a tray in his hand, is also distributing alms. A woman in the gathering wearing a tight-fitting garment to cover her upper body and holding a child on her hips, is remarkably beautiful. Besides her is another woman in a long striped robe.

The Vessantara jataka has been repeated on the left wall of the hall. The main incidents drawn in the paintings are the farewell to Vessantara by his parents, followed by Vessantara driven in a chariot drawn by four horses through the town streets. The next scene shows them living in a hut, followed by the gift of the children to a Brahmin in the absence of the mother. The redeeming of the children by the grandfather is followed by the return of prince and the queen to the palace.

Below the Vessantara jataka is another version of the Mahakapi jataka. Buddha, born as the monkey king, is shown leading a man away from a deep abyss where he had fallen from a tree, while looking for a stray cow. The ungrateful man tries to kill the seated monkey king by dropping a stone on him from behind. The king escapes by jumping aside. When approached, the king forgives the man.

In the Machchha jataka, Buddha born as fish induces the god Indra by his good deeds to send rain to save his kindred fishes who were being devoured by birds as the pond bed dried up. Most of the painting is damaged. Only one large fish is seen, surrounded by small fishes and other aquatic animals in the pond.

Another Mahakapi jataka is depicted on the front wall. The depiction of nature is realistic, compared to the carving of the jataka on the Great Stupa at Sanchi. The river is full of fishes and other aquatic animals and some people bathing in the river. A panel below presents the Hasti jataka. Travelers are shown feasting on the carcass of an elephant. Buddha,

born as an elephant, throws himself from the top of a precipice to die and serve as food to the hungry travelers.

In the Nigrodhamiga jataka, Buddha born as deer is trapped and kept with other deer in the Royal Park to be killed for meat when required by the king. The deer decide between themselves to select a member for slaughter by casting lots when the king requires meat. One day the lot falls to a pregnant doe. Buddha offers himself as a substitute for the doe. The astonished cook reports the incident to the king who, moved by Buddha's sense of compassion, lets all the deer go free. The painting depicts the deer in Royal Park, a deer in the kitchen for slaughter, and the astonished cook reporting to the king. The king is shown speaking to the deer near the kitchen hut. The next scene depicts the deer delivering a sermon. In the last scene a stupa with a congregation of birds and animals is shown expressing gratitude to Buddha.

Cave 18 is the smallest vihara. Cave 19 a splendid chaitya excavated in the second half of the fifth century by Upen-drugupta, a regional feudatory king of Asmaka. It is considered the perfect specimen of Buddhist rock cut temples. It has an elaborate façade with projecting pillared portico (Fig. 1.162).



Fig. 1.162. Ajanta. Cave 19. Façade. 5<sup>th</sup>.Century CE. Basalt.

Flanking the entrance to the portico are number of carvings of standing and seated Buddha; none of the carvings are alike. The panel to the right of entrance is carved with a standing Buddha offering his hand to his son Rahul. The next panel depicts Buddha standing under a stupa. A large number of panels on side walls of the cave, separated by pilasters, depict seated or standing Buddhas wearing diaphanous garments, holding hands in various gestures. A large circular window

with stone beams carved in imitation of wooden windows of the time is located on the portico. Bulky attendants with dressed hair and attractive poses flank the window. The images of Buddha are somewhat heavy and some are lifeless, although some are awe-inspiring. The interior of the chaitya hall has closely-set thick pillars crowding the space. Panels on the rim above the pillars are carved with Buddha images flanked with foliate and architectural motifs (Fig. 1.163).



Fig. 1.163. Ajanta. Cave 19. Buddhas carved above pillars. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

A few of these Buddha are supposedly from other worlds (Budhalokas) presumed to exist by Mahayanists. The ceiling is carved with an imitation of rafters. The stupa at the far end is almost a vertical structure. Above the dome of the stupa three discs like umbrellas are carved one above other. Under each disc a miniature stupa is carved (Fig. 1.164). The front of the stupa is carved with figure of standing Buddha under a pilaster arch.



Fig. 1.164. Ajanta. Cave 19. Stupa. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.



Fig. 1.164. Ajanta. Cave 19. Naga King & Queen. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

In addition to the lavish sculpture on the façade of the cave, a magnificently conceived sculpture of a royal couple in regal pose with a female chamara-bearer standing beside them is carved outside the cave on the left of the entrance (Fig. 1.165).

The couple are the king and queen of the serpents. Both are seated on a raised platform with one leg pulled close to the body and other leg resting on the floor in “royal ease.” The full-breasted nagini wearing jewelry and her hair tightly bound in braids is sitting slightly behind the king, holding a flower in her hand. The king’s head is under the multi-headed cobra hood.

Cave 20 and 22 are small viharas with shrines on the rear wall. Cave 21, 23 and 24 have large pillared halls. Cave 21 and 23 have three shrines on the rear wall with varying numbers of residential cells on the side walls, some serving as shrines. Cave 24 has no shrine on the rear wall. Caves 25 and 27 are excavated above Cave 26, as the right and left wings. Cave 25 was roughed out and not completed.

Buddhabhadra, a Buddhist monk, excavated chaitya Cave 26 with right and left wings. He obtained funds for construction of the chaitya from the court of the King of Asmaka, a regional feudatory. The verandah providing passage to the cave from courtyard has partially collapsed, disfiguring the façade (Fig. 1.165).



Fig. 1.165. Ajanta. Cave 26. Façade. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

The façade of the cave is dominated by a ribbed chaitya window flanked by guardians and a multitude of sitting and standing Buddhas. In addition a seated Buddha is carved in small panels above the window. The cave is similar but wider and more elaborate than chaitya Cave 19. The hall is 25m (75 ft.) deep and 13m (40 ft.) wide with twenty-six pillars. The interior is elaborately decorated with sculpture. The stupa is carved with the image of Buddha seated on an elevated platform with legs resting on a pedestal, possibly depicting Maitreya Buddha, the future Buddha (Fig. 1.166).



Fig. 1.166. Ajanta. Cave 26. Buddhas on façade of stupa. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

Maitreya Buddha was in existence when Buddha gave his first sermon. Five thousand years after the death of Buddha and more than five hundred rebirths, he will be born as

Buddha. The wall of the ambulatory passage along the perimeter on the left is carved with 7m (22 ft.) long statue of Parinirvana Buddha, representing the demise of Buddha, after which he has no more births (Fig. 1.167). The wailing of the mourners carved below on a plinth enhances the calm and detached expression on Buddha's face — similar to the sleeping Buddha in Bangkok. The cave is unique in depicting the demise of Buddha as well the to-be-Buddha.



Fig. 1.167. Ajanta. Cave 26. Parinirvana Buddha. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

Another beautiful sculpture depicting the victory of Buddha over Mara is carved in the passage (Fig. 168).



Fig. 1.170. Ajanta. Cave 26. Temptation of Buddha. 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

Buddha is carved seated under a Bodhi tree surround by the threatening army of Mara. Mara is seated on an elephant on the right. His voluptuous daughter, carved in front profile, is dancing, accompanied by a musician, to distract Buddha. Buddha, unmoved, has his hand in the gesture of calling the earth to witness.

All of the remaining caves are incomplete viharas. Cave 27, without pillars in the hall, has three shrines on the rear wall and three residential cells on one side and one cell on other. The middle parts of the verandah pillars are broken. The top of the pillar is hanging, attached to the roof, and the bottom stub is sitting on the verandah edge.



## 8. THE SIVA CAVE AT ELEPHANTA (540–555)

An outstanding early Hindu cave temple, displaying the best of Hindu temple sculpture created in the sixth century, is located on the island of Elephanta in the Sea of Oman, at a distance of 10 km from the Gateway of Mumbai. It can be reached by public motorboat in one hour. The Portuguese changed the name of this commercial, military and religious center in the sixteenth century from Gharapuri to Elephanta, after a large stone elephant statue that was on the shores of the island. The statue is now in a British museum. During the temporary occupation by the Portuguese, zealots of another religious persuasion used the interior of this most impressive cave for gunnery practice. UNESCO declared the Siva cave at Elephanta a World Heritage Monument in 1987.

After the demise of the Vakataka dynasty in the sixth century, one of their feudatories, now called the Early Kalacuri, rose to power in the Maharashtra region. They remained in power till the end of the sixth century when the western Chalukya of Karnataka eclipsed them.

It is possible that the craftsmen who excavated the caves at Ajanta and Aurangabad also excavated the Siva cave, under the patronage of the Kalacuri, and then returned to Ellora to excavate the caves there.

King Krishnaraja (550-575) of the Kalacuri dynasty, an ardent Pasupata Saivite, commissioned the construction of this rectangular mandapa temple to celebrate his conquest of the region. The history of the cave temple is not well known. A stone that some believe may have been inscribed with that history was found — and lost — by the Portuguese. The artistic style of the sculpture in the cave is said to suggest the period of excavation in 540-

555. It was earlier believed that the Chalukya of Badami excavated the monument between 600 and 645.

The Siva cave at Elephanta appears so open, light and airy that one rarely gets the feeling of confinement in a cave. Providing residence to the monks was not an important function of Hindu caves. The development of freestanding stone structural temples was in progress in South India at Aihole. The desire to break the temple out of the confinement of the dark cave and restricted hilly regions appeared first at Elephanta.

The cave was excavated with three large openings, one serving as entrance and two leading to flanking subsidiary shrines. The subsidiary shrines were constructed in sunken, open courts without any roof, allowing more light to enter the main cave as well as to provide sufficient height in the matrix for the tall façade of the subsidiary shrines. The courts with subsidiary shrines have no independent exit to the exterior.

The craftsmen who moved to Ellora after completing the Elephanta cave made radical changes in cave design. In Ellora they excavated a cave similar to the Siva cave in layout, with an exit to the exterior from the side subsidiary shrines. Cave 14 at Ellora is excavated with an open veranda similar to the open verandah of the side shrines of Siva cave. Cave 15 has an open veranda with a monolithic hall. Finally, unable to completely shake off the concept of a cave temple, the construction of Cave 16 was started as a grand monolithic structure. It has no roof and so is exposed to the sun; but it is still confined in a pit.

After Ellora, interest in cave construction waned and soon the temple confined in hilly regions was liberated and freestanding stone structural temples were constructed in the vast plain regions. Siva cave in addition broke the shrine free from attachment to the cave walls and added four entrances to the shrine.

Of all the monuments constructed by the Kalacuri, the Siva temple is the finest. The most distinguished feature of this cave are the monumental sculptured panels. There are no decorative designs carved on the walls of the cave or decorated borders around the panel to distract attention from the beauty of the monumental panels. The three-dimensional carving of large panels with large figures was introduced here. It started with the relatively flat Siva of Ardhanari and evolved to the almost detached Siva in the Andhaka panel. The same artists took three-dimensional carving to a climax in carving the episode of “Ravana shaking Kailas” at Ellora. Some of the panels in this cave are elevated to the status of secondary shrines.

The entrance to the cave is located on the east, facing the harbor in the Sea of Oman (Fig. 2.1).



Fig. 2.1. Sea of Oman seen from the cave. 2002.

The cave is essentially a mandapa with a narrow porch in front. From a slightly sunken court, possibly excavated to obtain sufficient height for the façade with a minimum of rock removal, a few steps lead to a pillared porch entrance with two pillars and two pilasters (Fig. 2.2).



2.2. Elephanta. Siva cave. Cave entrance. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The pillars are similar to the pillars in the mandapa and similar to the pillars in the Ellora caves. They are thick,

relatively plain, square up to mid-height and then end with fluted cushion capitals (Fig. 2.3).



Fig. 2.3. Elephanta. Siva cave. Pillars in cave. Mahadeva on back wall. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The pillars bear longitudinal ridges on the upper half. The central hall of the cave is 40m (124 ft.) long on the north-south and east-west axes. With the addition of extensions on three sides for entrances and for second shrine on the back, the total area of the cave is 5246 sq. m. (17,200 sq. ft.). The three huge heads on the bust of Siva carved on the back of the cave are visible from the main entrance. Some consider this panel as a secondary shrine within the cave. The 5m (16 ft.) high square shrine still attached to the roof of the cave is moved slightly to the side instead of being placed in the center of the hall or on the rear wall. This provides an unobstructed view of the three monumental Siva heads on the back wall of the cave from the main entrance (Fig. 2.4).



Fig. 2.4. Elephanta. Siva cave. Sanctum. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The square sanctum has undecorated entrances on all faces. Giant doorkeepers wearing highly decorated hair and crowns flank all the entrances. Like all the figures in the cave they have heavy lower lips and downcast eyes. A few steps lead into the sanctum enshrined with a lingam appearing



as though it were standing on a pedestal, carved without a spout.

From the main cave two large openings on north and south open to sunken courts with subsidiary shrines. A short flight of steps connects the main cave to sunken courts with subsidiary shrines. The sanctum in the main shrine of the cave is placed in line with the exits to the north and south sunken courts without mandapa pillars obstructing the line of view. Standing on the steps of the north opening outside the main cave one has a clear view of the lingam in the main sanctum (Fig. 2.5).



Fig. 2.5. Elephanta. Siva cave. Lingam in Sanctum seen from north court entrance. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The courts, without roof, are enclosed within high walls with drains for rainwater to the exterior on the east. There are no independent exits from the courts to the exterior.

It is a Siva temple. The walls of the hall are carved with nine large reliefs alluding to various attributes of Siva. Other gods, when present, are diminutive spectators to the glory of Siva. The subject matter of the panels has been dreadfully damaged by artillery practice and would be very difficult to understand without prior knowledge of the episode depicted. Centuries of dirt and dust deposits and encrustation with leaching minerals have also taken their toll. On the back wall of the cave three monumental sculpted panels are framed in pilasters carved with 4m (12 ft.) high guardians and dwarfs. The damaged central panel is carved with a bust of Mahadeva with three giant heads depicting different attributes of the god in a single form (Fig. 2.6).

On a 1m (3 ft) high base, the 5.5m (19.5 ft.) high heads carved 3.5m (11 ft) deep on the rear wall appear to emerge from the wall itself. The broad shoulders belong to the central head but can be attributed to other heads. The central, impassive head of Mahadeva, serene, supreme, beneficent and all knowing, is wrapped in self-absorbed inwardness indicating concentration and a store of energy. The right

hand of the statue is broken and the left hand is holding a citron. The left face, with its bulging eyes, twisted moustache, angry eyebrow, matted locks of hair on the head entwined with snakes and skull represents the destructive aspect of Siva, Aghora-Bhairava, the disruption of energy. He is holding a snake in one hand. The right head, female, decorated with pearls and with flowers in her hair, has a blissful, soft face, soft curls, full lips and a lotus bud in hand, represent the creative activity and continuity of space and time. The pilaster on the right of Mahadeva is carved with a 4m (12 ft.) high standing male with a female squatting beside him. The dwarf standing with a female on the pilaster on the left of the central panel is similar to the dwarf in Aurangabad Cave 7; perhaps it was carved during the same period.



Fig. 2.6. Elephanta. Siva cave. Mahadeva. West wall. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The panel to the right of Mahadeva is carved with Ardhanari: Siva, fused with his beautiful spouse Parvati, representing the fusion of male and female energies (Fig. 2.7).

The living beings created by Brahma failed to reproduce because he failed to create women. When he approached Siva for help, Siva transformed the right side of his body into a female and took the form of Ardhanari. The two parts separate and merge in sexual union to produce living creatures. According to most Hindu thought, the male component, purusa, is inactive. The female, personified in Prakriti, is the active urge for creation. Siva as Ardhanari manifests as the unifier of the inactive male with the active female. Together they represent all of creation

Ardhanari has four arms. The left half (male) has the strong and firm contours of a man's body, and matted locks of hair piled high on the head. One of his arms is resting on the back of Nandi, his vehicle. The right half, female (Parvati), is holding mirror in one hand and the other hand is la-

zily resting on her hip. The mirror is supposed to reflect the glory of the male (Siva) as the moon reflects the light of the sun. She has a soft jaw line, hair arranged in curls bulging to the side, a full, firm bosom, narrow waist and curvaceous, sensual hips — dramatically different from the hips of Siva. A four-headed Brahma sits on his throne of swans to the right; Vishnu on his mount, or vehicle, Garuda, and Varuna on his mount Makara, to the left, are sculpted at one quarter the size of Siva; they are applauding Siva for this manifestation. Flying figures occupy the upper corners. The flying couple on the left corner is exquisitely beautiful. Flying is generally indicated by pieces of garment or hair floating in the air. The female has nothing on her beautiful body to indicate forward motion; still, she appears to be floating in the air like a dream. Her right hand with a feather-light touch is resting on the shoulder of the male, without exerting the slightest pressure on him, and her left hand is resting on her hip. The female figure is more natural and attractive than the flying pairs on the sculptured cliff at Mamalapurum. The lower portion of the relief is badly damaged.



Fig. 27. Elephanta. Siva cave. Ardhanari. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The sculpted panel to the left of Mahadeva represents the legend of the river Ganges descending from her abode in heaven to earth to sustain life and for the disposal of human ancestors' ashes in water (Fig. 2.8). Ganges is carved as a three-headed female, above Siva, as union of three rivers forms the Ganges. Weightless flying couples are hovering above. The descent of Ganges on Siva's hair implies the union of male and female components. To spare the earth from the

shattering impact of her fall, and to unify earth and heaven, Siva permitted her to descend on his hair where, after meandering for ages, she lost her impact and descended gently to the earth.



Fig. 28. Elephanta. Siva cave. Descent of Ganga. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

Ganga was the second love of Siva. To express her displeasure, Parvati is standing at some distance from Siva, surrounded by dwarfs, with Vishnu, on Garuda, beside her. The thrust of her torso away from Siva, legs bent at the knees and her left hand away from Siva, implies her displeasure. The gods witnessing the event are carved in one quarter the size of Siva and Parvati. The scalloped margin of clouds above is characteristic of Chalukya sculpture.

The panel on the sidewall of the north entrance is carved with the legend of Ravana. In the panel the entire group of figures including the dwarf and Bhringin, the skeleton son of Siva, are completely detached from the concave back wall. This much-crowded panel in overall appearance would have been immensely impressive but for the heavy gunnery damage; the carvings may have suffered particular damage because most of the figures in the panel were detached from the background and were more exposed to the force of impact.

Ravana, the abductor of Sita, was the demon king of Lanka. In one version Ravana, while traveling in the mountains, could not cross the boundary of a place where Siva and Parvati were making love. Unable to bear the insult, Ravana tried to uproot Kailas, the abode of Siva, and throw it away. For this impudence Siva imprisoned him in a cave under Kailas, where he raged and raved like a wild animal. With light pressure from his leg Siva kept Ravana imprisoned for ages in the cave. After Ravana repented for a thousand years in captivity, Siva released him and allowed him to go

to Lanka. Ravana is the bearer of chaos in the universe but Siva effortlessly subdues him and restores calm. Unlike the Ravana sculpture in Kailas temple at Ellora, the six-armed Siva is sitting with crossed legs on his throne, with one leg drawn near the body and his left leg folded at the knee. The folded raised leg, by exerting pressure on the roof of the dungeon, kept Ravana imprisoned. Siva is calm, leaning towards Parvati (who is sitting beside him), to reassure her. The head and hands of the Parvati figure are broken but the remaining exquisitely carved torso with its outstanding bust is comparable to the marvelous torsos carved at Sanchi. The necklace dangling beside her naval indicates she is leaning towards Siva. Her sitting on a flat surface with one folded leg drawn near the body and the other leg with knee lifted to rest the foot flat on the ground is a common sitting posture of Indian women. Ravana is whirling beneath like a ferocious animal in the cage.

The panel on the right side wall of the north entrance, carved with legend of the gambling scene, is also sadly mutilated. In the panel Siva is seated cross-legged with a female attendant, Bhiringin, his skeleton son, on the back and flying couples hovering above. The beautiful Parvati is sitting with two female attendants and a guardian is standing beside. Siva's married life was not harmonious. The grievances caused by the yogi aloofness and the persistent adulteries of Siva habitually erupted into quarrels when Siva and Parvati played the game of dice, because Siva regularly cheated to win. During these quarrels Siva use to leave Parvati in anger and roam around, bolting out all the stars or extinguishing the sun or moon or committing other acts of cosmic hooliganism until Parvati transformed into a beautiful mountain maiden to win him over. The cycle of cataclysmic events and serenity in the universe reflect the innate nature of the gods.

The panels on the side walls of the south entrance depict the marriage of Siva, and Siva impaling the demon Andhaka. The legend of Siva's marriage with Parvati is romantic. Parvati, the beautiful daughter of the Himalaya Mountains, saw Siva, fell in love and decided to marry him. She fought with her parents, who did not approve her selection. Siva was a yogi, leading a chaste life; but determined to marry Siva, Parvati preformed penance for years to attract him. This persuaded Kama (the love god) to shoot an arrow at the heart of Siva and shake the yoga of Siva. Siva went to Parvati disguised as an old Brahmin and uttered disrespectful remarks about Siva. When Parvati defended Siva in a spirited way, Siva fell in love, and asked Parvati to marry him. She agreed, and asked him to obtain the consent of her parents, which they ultimately granted. In the much-damaged panel

Parvati is standing beside Siva surrounded by gods and flying couples (Fig. 2.9).



Fig. 2.9. Elephanta. Siva cave. Marriage of Siva and Parvati. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

With the thrust of her voluptuous hip towards Siva and the forward motion of her right shoulder toward him, she is turning away from her protective father, who stands behind them. Vishnu, on the right of Siva, gives away the bride. Four-headed Brahma acting as priest is sitting in front of the couple to offer oblations to the fire. All the gods are witness to the ceremony.

On the right side wall Siva is depicted slaying the demon Andhaka by impaling him on his trident (Fig. 2.10).

In a playful mood, once Parvati covered Siva's eyes. Darkness fell over the universe. A drop of sweat that came from his eyebrow fell in one eye, got heated, and turned into an angry child called Andhaka. Andhaka grew up in the underworld, adopted by a demon, Hariyanetta. Years later he saw Parvati, fell in love with her and wanted to carry her off (under the oedipal impulse?). Siva caught and impaled him on his trident and began to dance. The flesh and sins of Andhaka were burnt away by the fierce gaze of Siva. When Andhaka praised Siva he took him home and both Siva and Parvati accepted him as their son and gave him the name of Bhiringin. The blood of Bhiringin drained away when he was impaled and left him a skeleton. The panel is much damaged by the gunners. In the panel the huge, almost three-dimensional figure of Siva wearing a crown decorated with a skull plunges out and soars upwards. Flying apsaras are hovering in the corners. The damaged figure of Siva with fangs protruding

from his mouth, bulging eyes and a multitude of broken arms looks terrifying. He is carrying a sword in the only hand which remains intact. The figure of Andhaka impaled on the trident is also broken. In the palm of a broken left hand Siva, is holding a cup in which the blood of Andhaka was collected — bringing an end to Andhaka's cycle of death and resurrection.



Fig. 2.10. Elephanta. Siva cave. Adhaka impaled by Siva. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

On the side walls of the main entrance panels depict Siva as the Lord of yogi and Siva dancing his eternal dance. Both the panels are badly damaged. In the panels a weightless Siva is sitting crossed legged on a lotus with long lotus stalk coming out of turbulent, muddy waters (Fig. 2.11).



Fig. 2.11. Elephanta. Siva cave. Siva. Lord of Yogi. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

A similar panel in Cave I at Aurangabad, carved in the late fifth century, depicts Buddha sitting on a lotus in similar style. The image of Siva represents the ideal human yogi form. From the beginning, Siva is associated with meditative as well as sacrificial religion. He is a solitary god who withdraws into the mountains and meditates for countless years and accumulates energy to maintain the cosmic order. Other gods seek help or advice, and he obliges them. This panel may represent Lakulisa, the founder and teacher of the Pasupata cult (also considered the seventeenth incarnation of Siva, favored by early Kalacuri). According to the Pasupata belief the seemingly disparate aspects of creation are ultimately unified in Siva. This belief permeates through all the panels in the cave. The panel on the right side wall depicts Siva as Nataraja (Fig. 2.12).



Fig. 2.12. Elephanta. Siva cave. Nataraja. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

His erotic dance with erect phallus is associated with the creation of the world and Tandava, the violent aspect, is associated with destruction of the world. The dance represents the single aspects of Siva where he creates to destroy and destroys to create, thus unifying destruction and creation. According to a legend told in relatively late Sanskrit texts, a group of sages were living in a forest with their wives. To prove that the yogis had not subdued their anger and lust, he went to their wives as a handsome beggar, with his hair nicely styled, and started dancing amidst them with erect phallus, exciting their wives. The yogis on seeing him dancing thus amidst their wives cursed him, in a blind rage, to be castrated. The phallus of Siva fell to the ground and the universe was plunged into darkness. The yogis realized that the beggar was Siva and begged his forgiveness. He agreed

— on the condition that they would worship his phallus forever. Another version of the legend does not mention castration. The yogis in anger hurled everything they could lay their hands on at Siva but he trampled everything and kept on dancing, compelled by thwarted erotic impulses to destroy everything thrown at him. The image of Siva in the panel is sadly mutilated. His legs and most of the six arms are broken. By the thrust of his right shoulder carved out of the background Siva is turning towards the main entrance. With his only unbroken hand he is lifting a veil. With little space left above his head and the ceiling, he appears compressed from above. Amongst the spectators are his elephant-headed child Ganesha, and Kattrikeya. A three-headed Brahma on a throne of swans with a male and female devotee behind and apsaras beside are spectators.

In the sunken court on the south, a subsidiary shrine is located. A huge cistern on one side of the court collects water. A lingam with a square base is enshrined in the sanctum. The pedestal, like the pedestals in the other shrines, is lost. A huge doorkeeper guards the sanctum. The doorkeeper on other side is lost. A small hall in the shrine is carved with panels. Siva depicted as Lord of the yogi is badly damaged. The hall contains sculptured panels of Ganesha, Kattrikeya and seven mothers.

The image on the south wall is badly mutilated; Ganesha can barely be recognized. Flying apsaras, female attendants and possibly rats flank him. On Siva's refusal to beget a son, Parvati creates Ganesha from piece of her sari. Siva gazed at the beautiful child in anger and the head of the child fell off. On Parvati's pleas, Siva sent his mount Nandi to bring a new head. After a long battle with the royal elephant of the god Indra, Nandi brought an elephant head and Ganesha came to life when the head was placed on him. In another version of the legend, Parvati posts Ganesha at the entrance of her quarters to prevent visitors entering at will. Once, while Parvati was bathing, Siva arrived. Ganesha obstructed his entry. In anger Siva cut off his head.

Ganesha is worshiped before any undertaking to remove obstacles. According to one legend, the gods complained to Siva for granting boons to the demons that became his devotees, making it impossible for them to control the demons. To help the gods, he created Ganesha to overcome evil spirits. His mount, the rat, is well suited to gnaw through any obstacle.

The history of the eight mothers carved on the side wall is obscure. They may be the mothers of Kattrikeya or bloodthirsty killer servants of the murderous goddess Kali. The eight standing women are much damaged. One legend ascribes their origin to Siva's attempt to kill the demon And-

haka. The drops of blood falling to the ground from Andhaka while Siva was fighting him created new demons. To help Siva, other gods sent their Shakti in the form of mothers to suck the blood drops and prevent the sprouting of new demons.



Fig. 2.13. Elephanta. Siva cave. Kattrikeya. South side subsidiary shrine. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.

The image of Kattrikeya on the west wall has not sustained much damage. The large figure of Kattrikeya has a beautiful headdress. His hands and legs are partly broken. A dwarf accompanies him, while flying apsaras hover above (Fig. 2.13). Once, when Siva was making love to Parvati, Agni, the god of fire, interrupted his love play in the disguise of a chattering parrot. Furious at the interruption, Siva caused Agni to take his seeds in his mouth. Agni is mostly carved with a big belly. Unable to bear the seeds, Agni gave the seeds to Ganga, who could not bear them and cast them ashore on a clump of reeds where six matrikas were taking bath. The matrikas got pregnant all at the same time and give birth to Kattrikeya. To suckle milk from six mothers, he sprouted six heads. At the birth of Kattrikeya, a stream of milk started flowing from Parvati's breast, making her aware of birth of a son. The multiple parentage of Kattrikeya by Siva and Parvati, Agni, Ganges and six mothers possibly represent the mixing of several cult myths. As the son of Siva he became the head of the army of gods.

In the north, sunken, roofless court a subsidiary shrine facing east has been excavated in the rear wall of the open courtyard (Fig. 2.14).



Fig. 2.14. *Elephanta. Siva cave. North court. Subsidiary shrine. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.*

The entrance to the subsidiary shrine, which is larger than the entrance of the main cave, bears four pillars and two pilasters similar to the pillars of the cave.



Fig. 2.15. *Elephanta. Siva cave. North subsidiary shrine. Sanctum. Ca. 540-555. Basalt.*

The entrance is followed by the sanctum, which is guarded by seated lions flanking the entrance. Possibly the doorkeepers on the façade of sanctum have been lost. A lingam is enshrined in the sanctum. Part of the square base of the lingam is visible on a nontraditional pedestal. A mutilated panel of Yogi Siva, similar to the panel in the main cave, is seen in the subsidiary shrine.

## 9. THE BUDDHIST CAVES AT AURANGABAD (1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BCE–6<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

Aurangabad, an ancient city in Maharashtra, central India, is the commercial center of the region. The caves here present all the developmental stages of Buddhist cave layout, architecture and philosophy.

During Mughal rule the name was changed from Khidki to Fatah Nagar, and finally it was renamed after the last Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb (1659-1707), who is buried here. It was the capital of two southern dynasties, the Satavahana, in the second century CE, and the Yadva, in the twelfth century. For short periods it was the capital of Rashtrakuta, and Muhammad Taughlak, a sultan who temporarily shifted his capital here from Delhi.

The caves at Aurangabad were excavated in three phases. Chaityas, the earliest Buddhist caves, with stupas, provided monks a place to worship and meditate. Converting the chaitya into the vihara cave eliminated the stupa and provided space in the center of the cave where the monks could meditate and assemble to receive instructions to preach. A shrine in the rear wall met the need of worship. Small residential cells excavated on the periphery of the cave combined the need of worship with residence. With the increasing complexity of worship, more shrines were added by converting the residential cells of the vihara into shrines.

Cave layout took a step forward at Aurangabad. Hindu custom gave rise to a strong desire for circumambulation of the sanctum. The image of Buddha was detached from the rear wall at Ajanta, but to meet the desire to circumambulate the sanctum, the sanctum was moved to the center of the cave in the space of the vihara hall originally meant for the congregation of monks to meditate or

receive instruction. The community of monks played an important role in guiding the average people on the path of enlightenment by personal example. By eliminating the vihara hall, the monks may have been sidestepped as devotees were encouraged to develop a direct relationship with Buddha, with the help of Bodhisattvas and female deities like Tara, similar to the Hindus' development of an intense personal loyalty to a chosen god and his female counterpart. Tantrism, which had crept in Buddhism took firm root at Aurangabad.

About 9 km (5.8 miles) from Aurangabad are two groups of caves excavated in basaltic lava outcrops. The first group, comprising five caves, is located on a small hill (Fig. 2.20). The period of excavation of Caves 2, 4 and 5 is not certain. Caves 2 and 5 are viharas and Cave 4 is chaitya. It is possible that these caves were excavated during the Satavahana dynasty, coinciding with the excavation of early phase of Ajanta caves from first century BCE to the first century CE. Aurangabad was under the rule of the Satavahana during the early part of the first millennium.

Cave 1 and 3 were excavated during the Vakataka regime, coinciding with the second phase of cave excavation at Ajanta. The carvings of these caves show the influence of Satavahana and Vakataka art. The caves are numbered in standing sequence, as in Ajanta and Ellora, not on the basis of the date of excavation.



Fig. 2.20. Aurangabad. First group of caves. Ca. 1<sup>st</sup> BCE-5<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 2 has a verandah with a row of sitting Buddhas on left wall and two decorated pillars in front of the sanctum. Buddha is seated on a lotus, similar to the carving of Siva as Lord of yogi in the Elephanta cave. Two nagas with human bodies and their heads under a naga hood are holding the lotus stalk and supporting the flower with their heads (Fig. 2.21).



Fig. 2.21. Aurangabad. Cave 2. Buddha seated on lotus. Ca. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

Cave 4 is the only chaitya at Aurangabad. The similarities with the chaitya cave at Karli suggest the first century BCE as the time of excavation. The complete façade of the chaitya has collapsed, leaving only the outline of the chaitya window on one side and an open nave (Fig. 1.22).



Fig. 2.22. Aurangabad. Cave 4. Chaitya. Ca. 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

The chaitya has thick, plain, octagonal, perpendicular pillars along the aisles. Decorative sculpture is carved above the pillars and the vaulted nave is carved with beams. The stupa at the rear end of the nave has a drum-shaped base and bulbous dome with a square, long neck sitting on the drum base like a pot. The neck is carved with four floating square

horizontal plates above. The superstructure above the neck is missing.

Between Cave 4 and 5 is a shallow cave with a large statue of Buddha seated on a lion throne with legs resting on lotus flower. His hands are broken. He is flanked by two attendants. One attendant is lost and the extant attendant is possibly a female, suggesting Tara, the spouse of Avalokiteshvara (Fig. 2.23).



Fig. 2.23. Aurangabad. Shallow cave. Statue of Buddha. Ca. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE. Basalt.



Fig. 2.24. Aurangabad. Cave 5. Vihara. Ca. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

The façade of Cave 5, which is a vihara, has collapsed, exposing the skeleton of a residential cell on the left side of the verandah (Fig. 2.24). There are three openings on the façade bearing sculptured lintels. The sanctum, located in the center, bears three door jambs carved one behind another and flanked with beautiful females and decorative sculpture. The layout of the vihara was still evolving at this point; inside the sanctum a large image of a meditating Buddha with a halo behind the head is flanked by chamara bearers carved on the rear wall.

Cave 1 and 3, excavated during the regime of the Vakatakas in the late fifth century CE, shows advanced features of Buddhist vihara caves. They are contemporary to the late Mahayana cave excavation at Ajanta. The unfinished Cave 1 is 23m (71 ft.) deep with a verandah. An antechamber has two decorated round pillars on eight-sided bases, ending in round



tops bearing two side brackets (Fig. 2.25). A side bracket of the left pillar is broken.



Fig. 2.25. Aurangabad. Cave 1. Vihara. Pillars in front of sanctum. Ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

On the outer side of the other bracket a female, resembling the females of Ajanta, is carved near the base of the bracket. A large statue of Buddha in a shrine is seated with his legs on a lotus flower and hands in preaching gesture.

Cave 3 is 25m (78 ft) deep and 19m (60 ft.) wide, with twelve pillars in the hall. The intricately carved pillars are square at the base, round at the center and square at the top, bearing short side brackets. The carvings in the hall resemble the carvings in Cave 1 and 26 of Ajanta. The shrine with portico is moved to the center of the hall. The entrance to the shrine is flanked with huge figures of Avalokiteshvara holding a lotus in hand and Vijarapani holding a vijara in hand (Fig. 2.26).



Fig. 2.26. Aurangabad. Cave 3. Vihara. Sanctum. Ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Basalt.

In a large statue Buddha, seated on a lion throne in the sanctum, holds his hands in a preaching gesture, his legs resting on a lotus. The side walls of the ambulatory passage are carved with small statues of Buddha sitting in various postures. The cells on the sides and back of the passage are residential, whereas the cells on the rear corners of the passage are subsidiary shrines.

Across the same hill, the second group of four caves (Fig. 2.27) is located 1 ½ km (1 mile) from the first group.



Fig. 2.27. Aurangabad. Second group of caves. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

After the collapse of the Vakataka dynasty at the end of the fifth century, the Kalacuri rose to power and ruled central India till 600, when the Western Chalukya of Karnataka eclipsed them. During the later half of the sixth century the second group of four caves was excavated by the Kalacuri dynasty (Fig. 2.28). A road connects the two groups of caves. Excavation of Cave 8 was attempted. Possibly due to the hardness of the stone, the rough surface of Cave 9 was plastered. There is no noteworthy sculpture in Cave 9 but there is a shallow, incomplete carving of Tara holding a lotus in her hand. Cave 6 and 7 show Vakataka and Kalacuri traditions. Cave 7 shows some influence of Eastern Chalukya sculpture.

At this time the Pallava, a Hindu dynasty from Tamilnadu, were experimenting with the excavation of small caves and monuments in exposed granite outcrops and were developing decoration for temple exterior. The Chalukya of Karnataka were excavating caves in sandstone and developing freestanding stone temples in Aihole.

The style of sculpture in caves of the second group is similar to the sculpture in Elephanta. The craftsmen and artists and their descendents, after excavating the caves of the second phase at Ajanta and the excavation of Elephanta cave, moved to Aurangabad during the Kalacuri regime in the later half of the sixth century to excavate the caves of the second group. These caves are advanced in style and iconography over the caves of the first group, with large panels and monumental figures to convey the messages effectively. The females carved under Kalacuri influence are robust, with well-proportioned bodies, and are strikingly beautiful. A visitor who rushes on to Ajanta and Ellora will miss two masterpieces of Indian sculpture located in Cave 7, surpassed nowhere.

From the middle of the fifth century, coincident with the decline of the Gupta empire, interest increased in the cult of feminine divinities and religious rites connected with magic, known as Tantrism. It surfaced in organized form in the seventh century, in Buddhism, with two main forms, known as Right handed and Left-handed. The Right-hand sect, devoted to masculine divinities, became very influential in China and Japan. The Left-hand sect, led by Vijarapani (Vehicle of Thunderbolt), is devoted chiefly to the feminine counterparts or wives of Bodhisattvas and other divinities of later Buddhist mythology.

The chief feminine deity Tara is the spouse of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. The magical practices were believed to lead to salvation or to superhuman power.

The verandah of Cave 6 has two subsidiary shrines at the ends. There are fragments of painting on the roof of the verandah. In the right shrine Ganesha with the Saivite pantheon is carved on the walls. On the left shrine wall, six females and Siva are carved. The main shrine has a huge statue of Buddha flanked by attendants. An ambulatory passage surrounds the antechamber and shrine. Some of the cells on the side walls of the passage have stone beds. The shrine at the left corner of the ambulatory passage at the rear has a statue of Buddha with hands in meditation gesture and in the right corner shrine a statue of Buddha has his hand in a teaching gesture. Bodhisattva

Vijarapani, carrying a *vijara* in his hand, and Padmapani flank the doors of both the shrines. A *vijara* is an implement with an even number of hooks at both ends, which, according to some, represent the phallus.

Avalokiteshvara, holding a blue lotus in hand, is also known as Padmapani. Professor John Huntington states that the guarding of the shrines by Vijarapani and Padmapani and presence of Hindu Saivite pantheon in Buddhist cave strongly suggest the possibility that Buddhism (either identical to or very closely related to Shingon Buddhism) was being practiced in the second quarter of the sixth century at Aurangabad.

Cave 7, excavated around 560, is adorned by two superb pieces of sculpture depicting Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and a dancer; they are outstanding in the entire wealth of Indian sculpture. The pillared verandah of the cave has subsidiary shrines at the ends. The subsidiary shrine on the left has carvings of Hariti and her consort Pancika, flanked by attendants (Fig. 2.28).

They are bulkier than those carved at Ajanta. The attendant standing at left is caressing a bird held in hand. The shrine on the right has a group of consorts of Bodhisattvas carved in three-body bend poses with all the attributes of

feminine beauty. All the females carved by the Kalacuri have full-figured but well-proportioned bodies and radiate beauty.



Fig. 2.28. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Sub-shrine in hall. Hariti and Pancika. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.29. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Avalokiteshvara and Vijarapani flanking entrance. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt

The rear wall of the verandah has a central and two corner entrances leading to a small hall. The side entrances continue in the circumambulatory passage around the sanctum. Doorkeepers guard central entrance and small carvings of seated Buddha are carved on the façade (Fig. 2.29). The decorated central entrance on the right is carved with a larger-than-human Bodhisattva Vijarapani accompanied by his consort and flying couples.

On the left, the large panel is carved with a larger-than-human sized Avalokiteshvara, the protector of travelers. Nowhere in Buddhist sculpture is Avalokiteshvara presented more majestically (Fig. 2.30).

He has a benevolent smile radiating from his face. His graceful body shows broad shoulders and round hips. Curly hair is piled up high on the head and some tendrils falling to the shoulder spread like meandering streams in the valley. He is standing on a lotus with his right hand in a protection gesture. A lotus bud on a long stalk adorns his side.

Four small panels on each side depict two travelers in each panel praying to the Bodhisattva to save them from the perils confronting them. He is carved flying in front of each

small panel with his right hand raised in protection gesture. The carving on the right depicts travelers confronted with fire, a sword in the hand of their enemy, chains, and shipwreck. On the left side travelers are confronted with a lion, snakes, a mad elephant, and death — depicted as a demon snatching a child from its mother's lap.



Fig. 230. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Avalokiteshvara flanking Hall entrance. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

The hall behind has a large shrine in the center of the cave with an antechamber surrounded by a narrow circumambulatory passage connected with the passages from the corners of the verandah wall. The principal shrine, by occupying the center, has eliminated the vihara hall. The side walls of the main shrine entrance have a large panel carved with Tara, principal consort of Avalokiteshvara, and her reflections on her sides.



Fig. 231. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Tara flanking entrance to sanctum. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Prominent female images as attendants of Bodhisattvas or of Buddha represent sexual symbolism and are associated with the Tantrism that flourished at Aurangabad in the sixth century. These voluptuous figures with elaborate hairdos have proportionate soft bodies, round, full breasts, large, round hips thrown slightly to one side, and bulging thighs. The Goddess Tara is full-figured but radiantly beautiful (Fig. 2.31).



Fig. 232. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Main shrine. Buddha. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 233. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Bodhisattva and his consort. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

The dwarves on the left of Tara, with five knots of hair on their head, represent the active male principal. They

resemble the dwarf attending the Mahadeva statue at El-ephanta, personifying compassion. The female dwarf to the right personifies wisdom. The flying celestials with garlands in their hands, in the upper corners, are bearers of supreme wisdom. They are set on clouds with scalloped margins, a characteristic of Chalukya sculpture. Inside the main shrine a huge figure of Buddha is carved, seated on a lion throne, his legs resting on a lotus and hands in a teaching gesture (Fig. 2.32). Three Manusi Buddha on each side flanks the figure of Buddha.



Fig. 2.34. Aurangabad. Cave 7. Dancer. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

A large panel on the right of Buddha is carved with a slightly bulky, voluptuous female with an elaborate hairdo, firm, large breast, round hips and thighs, flanked with Bodhisattva and a dwarf (Fig. 2.33). On the left wall a group of six female musicians playing different instruments accompany an extraordinary beautiful dancer (Fig. 2.34). Her hair is piled up high on her head in an attractive arrangement. Her

oval face with chiseled nose, flared lips and downcast eyes bears a faint smile. She wears a diaphanous garment covering her lower body. She is depicted in a Bharatanatyam dance pose, which enhances her radiant beauty and sexuality.

Dance developed a huge vocabulary of visual language by the seventh century. Her slender delicate left arm with palm turned upward denotes some sort of duality, or a long slender object that could be understood in context of presentation. As the fingers are directed towards her genital area, not far away, she may be inviting cohabitation. Her prominent breasts and slightly large lower abdomen representing her creative ability may indicate her right to motherhood.

The sanctum is surrounded by a narrow circumambulatory passage. In the passage three residential cells on each side and subsidiary shrines at each back corner are excavated. Buddha, in each shrine, is carved seated on a throne with his legs on a lotus and hands in a teaching gesture.

10. EARLY WESTERN CHALUKYA MONUMENTS  
AT AIHOLE, BADAMI, MAHAKUTA, ALAMPUR AND  
PATADKAL  
(535–756)

The free-standing, structurally modern temple was pioneered in Andhra Pradesh, where Chalukya monuments are located at Aihole, Badami, Mahakuta, and Patadkal in North Karnataka and Alampur. These are the earliest group of extant temples in South India.

The temple building activity of the Western Chalukya ended at Patadkal. UNESCO declared the group of monuments at Patadkal to be World Heritage Monuments in 1987.

The small town of Badami lies 96 km (60 miles) from the twin cities of Hubli and Dharwar, the commercial and academic centers of South India. From there to Badami is a 3-hour trip by road or railway. Badami has developed boarding and lodging facilities. Small villages in the Malaprabha River Valley — Aihole 43 km (27 miles), Patadkal 16 km (10 miles), Mahakuta 5 km (3 miles) from Badami, can be visited by daily road trips from Badami. Alampur is located 256 km (159 miles) from Patadkal near Karnul in Andhra Pradesh and can be reached by train from Hubli.

Tribes living in the rugged Deccan plateau were in constant conflict over the fertile lands of Tamilnadu and Andhra. The Satavahana ruled the region from the second century BCE to 300 CE. The Pallava feudatories of Satavahana appeared in Tamil lands in 325 CE and dominated much of peninsular India by 600. They ruled parts of south and central India up to 800. The Chalukya, possibly one of the feudatories of Satavahana, gained prominence in the mid-sixth century and ruled Karnataka in south India for about two centuries.

The founder of the Chalukya line, Jayasimha, and his son Ranaraga, governed Aihole in the early sixth century. During the rule of Ranaraga, Aihole and Mahakuta started developing as religious centers. In the mid-sixth century, Pulakesin I (535-566) founded the Chalukya dynasty in the eastern Deccan with Badami, a settlement of the Kadamba, as capital. He gathered the talent to excavate the cave temples and the Buddhist chaitya at Aihole. His son Kirtivarman I (566-597) conquered parts of Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. Possibly he constructed the Mahakuta temple. Mangalesha, his brother, constructed the first Brahman cave at Badami during the regime of Kirtivarman I. On the death of Kirtivarman I, Mangalesha (597-610) became regent to Pulakesin II, the minor son of Kirtivarman I. During the rule of Mangalesha, Mahakuta emerged as great Siva center. It may have been him who constructed the Jain cave at Badami. Mangalesha tried to install his son as successor to the throne. A civil war broke out that temporarily disrupted the temple building activity. Pulakesin II (610-642), after his uncle was killed in the civil war, gained power and conquered the south Indian kingdoms of Kadamba, Ganga and Alupa. After conquering parts of the Godavari River Valley in Andhra, he installed his younger brother as ruler in the Godavari district, establishing the Eastern Chalukya dynasty, which survived the demise of the Western Chalukya regime and ruled till 1070.

Pulakesin II repulsed the attack of Emperor Harsha from north India. He attacked and defeated the Pallava king Mahendravarman I, but failed to take the capital; this started the feud with Pallava that lasted till the end of Chalukya rule. When he attacked the Pallava the second time, he was killed, and Badami was under Pallava occupation for nearly 13 years. During Pulakesin II's reign the Meguti temple and a Jain temple at Aihole and the Upper

Sivalaya temple at Badami was constructed, before the temporary fall of Badami in 642.

The Chalukya of Badami returned to power after 13 years under Vikramaditya I (655-681), son of Pulakesin II, after taking refuge in parts of Andhra Pradesh during the occupation of Badami by the Pallava. Vikramaditya I regained control of territories including Alampur in Andhra Pradesh in 658. The Chalukya were worshipper of Vishnu, but they also worshipped the seven mothers and Kattrikeya, son of Siva, and revered Siva. Vikramaditya became a Saivite. The Malegitti Sivalaya temple at Badami was constructed during his rule. His successor Vinayaditya (681-696) constructed Svarga Brahma temple at Alampur, and his queen Vinayavati may have constructed Jambulinga temple at Patadkal. His son Vijayaditya (696-733) continued the temple-building activity at Alampur and built Sangameshvara temple at Patadkal.

The longest, most peaceful and prosperous Chalukya reign was that of Vijayaditya. Vikramaditya II (733-744), the next king, defeated the Pallava king Nandipotavarman. He built a couple of temples at Aihole and Mahakuta and continued the temple building activity at Alampur. He married two princesses of the south Indian Kalacuri dynasty, who built Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Patadkal. The Durga temple at Aihole was also built in the middle of the eighth century. Kirtivarman II (744-766) built several small temples at Mahakuta and completed construction of the Papanatha temple started during the reign of Vikramaditya II. Dantidurga, a feudatory of the Chalukya, defeated Kirtivarman II (744-776) and seized Badami, ending the rule of the Chalukya and terminating their temple building activity.

Kirtivarman II tried to seize the power upon the death of Dantidurga, but was prevented by Krishna I. Descendants of the early Eastern Chalukya survived as subordinates of Rashtrakuta and appear to have retained significant prestige and resources. When the Rashtrakuta regime ended in the tenth century, the late Eastern Chalukya dynasty rose under Taila II in 974 in Andhra Pradesh, but merged with the Cola royal family in 1070. Rashtrakuta and the late Eastern Chalukya of Andhra also constructed temples in the region. The temples constructed by the late Eastern Chalukya resemble the early temples.

The Chalukya engaged in cave excavation in the second half of the sixth century at Aihole and Badami. But within a century they gave up cave excavation and directed their energies towards development of freestanding stone structural temples that could be built in the vast plain regions of India. Chalukya temple building activity, after the start at Aihole, oscillated between Badami, Mahakuta, Alampur and Patadkal.

Most of the Chalukya temples were built in a small triangular area with Badami and Aihole at the base and Patadkal at the apex, in the 20 km (12 miles) long Malaprabha River Valley, which is partly lined by sandstone hills; there are a few comparatively well developed temples at Alampur in Andhra Pradesh. The temples were constructed of large red sandstone blocks, laid without mortar disguising the joints. Large temples were constructed with flat roofs over multi-pillared halls and ceilings were carved with large separate panels. Most of the temples are of modest size and appear heavy. Some Jain temples were also constructed.

Aihole, standing on the banks of the Malaprabha River, was possibly the capital of the early Chalukya rulers when they were feudatories. It was a large city spread over five miles and has still retained a massive old city wall, almost circular, with many entrances. About 130 stone temples were built in a three-square-mile area of Aihole between 450 CE and 650. About fifty are in various state of preservation; the rest are in ruins. Buddhist chaitya and vihara caves enriched with local elements inspired the design of these temples. The transition taking place at the time from rock cut cave temples to free-standing structural temples necessitated experimentation to develop a plan for long lasting stone temples suitable for the plain regions. In imitation of the caves excavated in the hills, the Chalukya constructed temples with a massive appearance in the early stage. Gradually they developed all the basic units of the free-standing structurally modern temple. The development of all the basic units of the temple can be traced in the extant Chalukya temples at Aihole.

The rectangular sanctum of early temples was changed to square in temples constructed near the end of the temple-building period at Aihole. Evolution of the temple tower started with a four-sided indistinct mass on the center of the temple roof. The tower was later moved over the sanctum. The curvilinear tower of the northern temple, complete with crowning elements, was developed. A distinct decorative feature developed at the base of the tower façade is called the *gavaksa*. It consists of a circular enclosure carved with the image of a dancing Siva or other deity. In a further development, a projecting element with a wagon vaulted roof with a *gavaksa* on the façade was added at the tower base. It is called *Sukanasa*. A distinct pyramidal Kadamba-Nagara tower with multiple receding flat square tiers decorated with the *kalasa* (pitcher) on a flat top was also developed at Aihole. It led the Chalukya on the road to development of the four-sided south Indian temple tower refined at Badami.

The breakthrough in development of temple towers occurred when a hollow chamber was added on the tower of the Upper Sivalaya temple, enabling construction of tall tow-

ers by lessening the load on the tower. Further refinement of the tower took place at Mahakuta. The finalization of the south Indian temple tower and decoration on the temple exterior were completed at Patadkal. Many of the early experimental temples stand at Aihole, Badami, Alampur, Mahakuta and Patadkal. Unfortunately the date of construction of most early temples is not known.

The Chalukya oscillated between developing and constructing south- and north-Indian style temples, possibly due to their strong affiliation to Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh, which may have been their original home, was very receptive to central and western influences, possibly a legacy of the Satavahana. In addition, a line of the Chalukya dynasty was governing parts of Andhra Pradesh conquered during their expansion by Pulakesin II (610-642). After the finalization of the tower, the south Indian dynasties of the Cola, Hoysala, late Chalukya, Vijayanagara and Nayakas adopted the pyramidal south Indian tower with regional modifications. It is interesting to note that temple towers popular in south India are decorated with designs developed by the Pallava in Tamilnadu. The early designs of these towers were carved first on the pilaster ends flanking the sanctum entrances of most of the temples at Aihole. The surge of temple building activity at Aihole may have even helped write or finalize the codes for construction of future temples.

The badly weathered sculpture at Aihole is distinctly different from, and inferior to, the sculpture at Sanchi, Ajanta and Mamalapurum but glimpses of the influence of these centers is seen in some carvings. The females generally lack gentle curves and body bends. They are carved in awkward poses, occasionally with distorted bodies, particularly the breasts, hands and legs, although some carvings are good. Above the Guadar-gudi sanctum door lintel a highly-decorated chaitya window is carved with a seated Lakshmi bathed by elephants. It is similar to the carvings of Lakshmi on the Sanchi gateways. The sculpture in the Ravana Phadi cave shows Pallava influence. The females are tall and delicate, but slightly rotund. By the eighth century the carving style had matured, as seen on Durga temple. Some distinct features are the carving of large sculpture panels of gods on the ceiling slabs in the early Aihole temples. This was possibly done to make the devotee feel surrounded by the gods or to enshrine the gods on the walls as well as above the head. This practice appeared again in the temples constructed near the end of the building activity at Aihole. The most often repeated carving is Man-Garuda, a human upper body with wings, carved on the lintels of the temple doors. The coiled bodies of the snakes held by Garuda in both hands decorate the doorframe. In the Ravana Phadi cave, the drapery of the

females is indicated by deeply scored parallel lines. Some females are carved with a distinct loin cloth and few carvings show the females in an extremely agitated sexual mood. Amorous couples are seen on the first temple constructed at Aihole, but the near-human size copulating pair on Huchchappaya Matha is possibly the first large erotic display in an Indian temple.

Many of these temples were neglected and used as residences or cattle barns till recent time. One temple is still in the custody of private individuals. The early Chalukya temples at Aihole are called *gudi*, meaning "temple" in the local language. These temples are classified into an early group that includes simple temples like the Konti-gudi, Guadar-gudi and Lad Khan temples, and an intermediate group that includes the Galaganatha, Huchchimalli-gudi, Durga and other temples exhibiting a few advanced temple features.

Jayasimha and his son Ranaraga, who ruled Aihole in the first half of the fifth century, may have built Konti-gudi, the earliest-built group of free-standing stone temples, in the beginning of the fifth century and Guadar-gudi in the first quarter of the fifth century. The modern temple was evolved from a mandapa with an open facade. Konti-gudi, a group of three small, similar, early temples are essentially open mandapa (Fig. 2.30).



Fig. 2.30. Aihole. Konti-gudis. Pillared portico. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The first temple facing east in this group has a rectangular verandah. The sloping roof of the verandah is supported by six pillars on the front. Two parallel rows of four squat pillars located on a wide axis in the middle of the hall behind the verandah bear the weight of the ceiling. A wall constructed on the back and sides of the temple supports the sloping roof. The space between the two rear squat pillars is clumsily blocked with a wall with an entrance in the center. Two walls join the rear pillars and back wall to form the sanctum. The façade of the sanctum entrance is richly decorated. Man-Garuda is carved on the lintel of the sanctum door. The sanctum, guarded by doorkeepers, is empty. Vishnu and Nataraja are carved on the exterior walls of the sanctum. The ceiling slab is carved with a three-headed Brahma, seated on a lotus, and Siva seated on a dwarf. A panel is carved with a four-

armed Narayana sleeping cross-legged on a coiled naga. In the carving Narayana is sleeping with his head under a Naga hood and possibly Brahma wearing a crown is seated beside his legs (Fig. 2.31).



Fig. 2.31. Aihole. Kontigudi. Mandapa ceiling. Narayana sleeping on Ananta. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

In the second temple there are two sets of two pillars in the center. The two rear pillars are used to create the sanctum. One of the spaces left beside the sanctum is similarly blocked to form an additional sanctum, starting the trend to construct more than one sanctum in a temple. The pillars are carved with beaded festoons, a floral band, and circular medallions carved with amorous couples.

The third temple is similar to the first in its floor plan, with two additional features. On the roof of the third Gudi, a five-foot high square structure with miniature carvings is constructed in the center of the roof. This unimpressive structure was the beginning of the temple tower. The process of dividing the interior space, leading to the development of various interior temple components, was first introduced here.

A wall with perforated windows and entrance in the center separates the sanctum from the verandah, which in later developments became the mandapa. The space between the pillars of the verandah façade and the wall with perforated windows is still open but the sanctum is behind the wall. A pillared portico is constructed between the two shrines; it is not a passage between the shrines. Such pillared porticos were constructed as a front porch of advanced temples.

A second line of approach in developing the temple format appeared in the building of a mandapa open on all sides with a sanctum in the center; this type did not gain ground. The Guadar-gudi was constructed in the first quarter of the fifth century on an elevated molded platform in a pit with steps to climb to the temple (Fig. 2.32).



Fig. 2.32. Aihole. Guadar-gudi. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Four open undecorated squat pillars on each side on the periphery bear the sloping roof. A low parapet wall decorated with vases connects the pillars to the periphery. The two parallel rows of pillars running in the center of the mandapa on the long axis support the ceiling. The space between the two pillars of the first and second parallel of rows is blocked with an entrance in the center to form sanctum. The space left at the back of the sanctum introduced a circumambulatory passage around sanctum. Man-Garuda with spread wings is carved, holding a naga in each hand, on the lintel of the sanctum. Above the highly decorated lintel of the sanctum entrance, three chaitya windows are carved with pyramidal *sikara*-like structures ending in *amalaka* and *kalasa*. In the large central chaitya window, elephants are bathing Lakshmi, who is seated on a lotus. The two small pyramidal *sikara* flanking Lakshmi are carved with females standing with three body bends in the chaitya windows. The sanctum is empty. On the flat roof of the gudi a three-course masonry block with chaitya motifs is constructed above the sanctum that makes up the tower.

Lad Khan temple, constructed in the second quarter of the fifth century, is named after the last resident of the temple (Fig. 2.33). The cave-like massive appearance of the temple and the carving of a fish motif (similar to the carving in Badami Cave 2) suggest the temple was constructed during the regime of Pulakesin I (535-566). It is essentially a large square mandapa, where all the units of the temple except the porch and tower are enclosed in the large mandapa. Four tall massive pillars support the flat roof of the mandapa at the center; two peripheral rows of twelve and twenty pillars of lesser height support the two-tiered sloping roof of stone slabs. Stone slabs on the back, on the temple corners and the outer peripheral pillars support the temple roof on the sides. Windows carved in geometric designs close the space between the pillars and allow air and light inside. Stones cut in the shape of a split coconut tree trunk are added to cover



the spaces between stone slabs, introducing the local feature of coconut leaf-covered residential huts.

The enclosure of open space around the temple gave rise to the modern mandapa. A new unit, the open front porch (similar to the pillared portico of the early temple parapet wall with its sophisticated open front porch) is added, with a low parapet wall between the pillars.



Fig. 2.33. Aihole. Lad Khan temple. Ca. 535-566. Sandstone.

The entrance pillars of the front porch are carved on the façade with loving couples. The hand of the female on the left pillar is distorted. Beautiful Yamuna, standing on a tortoise, and Ganga on her mount *makara*, are carved on the corner pillars. A seated bull occupies the center of the mandapa between the four tall massive pillars. The rectangular sanctum is constructed between two back pillars attached to the back wall. The lingam is enshrined in a rectangular sanctum without a circumambulatory passage.

A later development was to extend the mandapa in the back of the sanctum, giving rise to the designs of the Alampur temples. The flat roof above has a small square cell carved with pilasters on the exterior walls and at the front entrance. The stone ladder kept in the second Konti-Gudi suggests that access to the cell above was given a similar stone ladder, now lost. Niches on each side of the cell are carved with reliefs of Vishnu, and incomplete carvings of Surya and Ardhanari. It was possibly an experimental tower or secondary shrine above.

The Tarabasapa, Narayana and Galaganatha temples have well-developed front porches and a well-defined doorway entrance from porch to mandapa. The well-conceived sanctum with its entrance door is a separate distinct unit attached to the rear of the mandapa. The mandapa of the Tarabasapa temple has two-tier roof. Lattice windows on the side walls of the mandapa allow light and air into the interior. The shrine door is flanked with pilasters decorated with chaitya windows at the top and the door lintel is carved with Man-Garuda. A sculpture on a stone slab depicts Durga killing the buffalo-demon. The tower is curvilinear with amalaka pieces between the moldings and a very short *sukanasa* at the base.

A similar tower is carved on the top of the shrine door lintel. The Narayana temple is similar to Tarabasapa. The sanctum of Narayana is enshrined with a statue of Surya, carved from black stone, flanked by Usha and Pratyusha, the female attendants, with bow and arrow to drive away darkness. The curvilinear tower bears the image of Surya inside a chaitya window on the façade.

Huchchappayya-gudi is similar to Tarabasapa. Siva is carved as Nataraja in the porch and as guardian of the sanctum enshrined with the lingam. The sanctum exterior walls bear a three-eyed Siva in the north side niche and Nrsimha, the lion incarnation of Vishnu, in the west side niche.

In Huchchappaya Matha the walls on the periphery and two rows of 6 pillars on vertical axis support the sloping roof. A seated Nandi is located between the last four pillars of the vertical row of pillars with a squat square tower on the roof. The front porch is missing (Fig. 2.24).



Fig. 2.34. Aihole. Huchchappaya Matha. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.35. Aihole. Huchchappaya Matha. Exterior pillar. Erotic couple. Ca. 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The sanctum is located at the rear of the mandapa. An exterior pilaster on the facade wall of the temple depicts a female with the loose end of her open loincloth hanging be-

hind her. She is so impatient that she is pulling the hair of the man who is standing with her, with a short, pendulant phallus, pulling her folded leg. Her breast appears distorted (Fig. 2.35). The ceiling of the mandapa is carved with Siva and Parvati seated under parasol with a host of attendants and many other gods.

The main temple of the Mallikarjuna group lacks an antechamber and circumambulatory passage. The most interesting feature of the temple is the Kadamba-nagara style tower.

Chikka-gudi is similar to Guadar-gudi but is better organized, with the layout of the Alampur temples. It has a rectangular pillared portico, interior columned mandapa and sanctum with aisles on the sides and back. The mandapa columns and beams are decorated with the lotus. A circumambulatory passage surrounding the sanctum has three latticed windows. The exterior walls are undecorated. The ceiling slabs are carved with flying figures, Vishnu sleeping on Ananta with Brahma springing out of Vishnu's navel, and Trivikrama. Siva is carved as Nataraja, and as Andhakasura killing the demon elephant. The base of the ruined sikara stands on the roof.

Huchchimalli-gudi, located near the Travelers Bungalow, has the layout of the Alampur temples (Fig. 2.36).



Fig. 2.36. Aihole. Huchchimalli-gudi. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The temple, standing on a high plinth, consists of entrance porch, mandapa, and an antechamber that is not completely separated from the mandapa. The front porch has low parapet walls carved with delicate vase-and-foilage motifs. The ceiling of the portico is carved with Kattrikeya seated on a peacock, holding a sword in one hand and flowers in other hand, surrounded by flying figures. The exterior of the mandapa is devoid of niches and has very small windows. There are four pillars arranged in a square in the mandapa. The space between the two rear pillars of the mandapa is blocked by a stone grill with a door in the center (Fig. 2.37).



Fig. 2.37. Aihole. Huchchimalli-gudi. Wall separating sanctum from mandapa. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century Sandstone.

In a later development, when the mandapa was completely separated from the sanctum, the antechamber was formed. The entrance door to the sanctum located behind the stone grill is decorated with floral designs, and Man-Garuda holding nagas in his hands. Ganga and Yamuna are carved at the base of the door lintels. The square sanctum enshrines the lingam. The ceiling of the mandapa is carved with Siva, Indra, Vishnu and Brahma with their mounts and the ceiling of the antechamber is carved with the lotus. The circumambulatory passage around the sanctum has perforated windows on the back and side walls. The curvilinear tower on the sanctum is carved with a sukanasa bearing a chaitya window carved with Nataraja. There is a tank a few yards in front of the temple.

There are thirty temples in the Galaganatha group situated on the bank of the Malaprabha River. Most of them are dilapidated. The main Galaganatha temple has a pillared portico, mandapa, antechamber, detached sanctum and curvilinear tower similar to the Tarabasapa temple. Similar temples with well-defined antechambers are located in adjoining Chikka-gudi and Ambiger-gudi. All the basic units of the temple are evolved and the basic internal design of the modern temple was complete and has remained the same, except the division of these basic units to serve various needs.

Near the top of Meguti hill, Pulakesin I (535-566) in the mid-sixth century excavated a two-storied Buddhist chaitya with open façade at Aihole. The only surviving sculpture in the chaitya is the carving of Buddha on the second storey ceiling — Buddha with a halo is sitting cross-legged in an undefined posture. There is a three-tier umbrella above his head. On the crest of the hill, Pulakesin II (610-642) constructed the Meguti temple in 634. The temple is dedicated to Mahavir (Fig. 2.38).



Fig. 2.38. Aihole. Meguti Temple. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

It is the first temple built with the body of the south Indian temple. The south Indian temple features are basement moldings decorated with friezes in between and kudu cornice. The friezes are now empty. The twelve pillars and four pilasters of the large porch bear the flat roof with curved eaves. The small parapet wall on the top is decorated with a faded Kaputa and other decorations. The large porch in front of the temple with opposite steps to climb the basement has sixteen pillars with faint impression of carvings. The low parapet wall of the porch is decorated with friezes and kudu above. The niches on the temple's exterior walls and friezes on the porch parapet wall are empty now. An entrance from the portico leads to a chamber divided by a wall in the middle, similar to the mandapa of advanced Hindu temples which are divided into a front and rear mandapa. The second chamber, situated at a slightly higher elevation, is reached by a flight of steps. A door from the second chamber leads to a large hall with four pillars in the center. The sanctum is set in the center of the pillars, enclosed in walls. At the back of the sanctum is a crude image of Tirthankara. The circumambulatory passage around the sanctum is made up of connected chambers. The wall of a chamber at the back is blocked, making the ambulatory passage non-functional. A huge slab, possibly dislodged from one of the chambers, with a carving of Jain Yakshi Sidhiaka, attendant of Mahavir, is located in Aihole local museum (Fig. 2.39).

She is seated on a throne with one crossed leg resting on the other and is crowded by attendants and a seated lion beside. The carving of Sidhiaka, with a soft and proportional body, is outstanding in beauty and naturalism. Possibly this is the only carving of Sidhiaka carved in the nude. From the portico a stone staircase leads to the roof with a dilapidated, rectangular cell placed above the ground floor sanctum. The cell is enshrined with a Tirthankara image and has lost the roof. This structure is similar to the cell on the Ladkhan temple roof. It is possibly an experimental tower or a second sanctum on the roof. It may not be the original struc-

ture. The Meguti temple added the new element of mandapa division. The external design and decorations of Dravidian south Indian temples, mostly borrowed from Pallava sculpture, started to take final shape. The fully developed temple towers at Aihole were limited to the curvilinear (nagara) and Kadamba-nagara style.



Fig. 2.39. Aihole. Meguti Temple. Sidhiaka. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Ravana-Phadi cave temple was excavated possibly around 550, simultaneously with the cave excavation at Badami, in a small granite outcrop. The Saivite sculpture of the cave suggests it was excavated during the reign of Vikramaditya (655-668). A huge monolithic fluted pillar with square base stands in front of the cave, followed by Nandi seated on a platform facing the cave. The cave stands on a high platform reached by a flight of steps. On the platform's front corners there are small-pillared halls with front entrances. Fat potbellied Pancika, guardian of wealth, stands by the cave entrance. A flight of steps from the platform leads to the entrance with two decorated pillars in the center (Fig. 2.40).



Fig. 2.40. Aihole. Ravana Phadi. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The ceiling of the rectangular mandapa inside is decorated with a huge intricately carved lotus flower. The entrance side wall is carved with Ardhanari standing with a trident, her hip to the side (Fig. 2.41). On the other side, Siva with three eyes is guarding the entrance. The wall facing the mandapa has large opening leading to antechamber with carvings on both sidewalls. On one side of the sanctum entrance Siva is carved, standing under the three heads of Ganga, alluding to the episode of the descent of Ganga to the earth from heaven (Fig. 2.42).



Fig. 2.41. Aihole. Ravana Phadi. Ardhanari.  
Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.42. Aihole. Ravana Phadi. Descent of Ganga. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Parvati and Bhagiratha accompany Siva. On the side Harihara is carved as Siva and Vishnu. Siva is standing with a trident and Vishnu is holding snake in one hand and a conch in the other.

Two side chambers flank the rectangular mandapa. A flight of few steps on the left leads to a very narrow side chamber with a powerful image of Nataraja with ten long slender arms appearing like vines emerging from the back of Siva (Fig. 2.43). He is holding a snake in two hands raised above his head and wearing a snake on his neck.

Ganesha is carved on the right and on the left Parvati is carved, with a firm breast, narrow waist, rounded hips and thighs. Her dress reaching the ankles; this is different from the short dress of the Matrikas. Siva and Parvati are also accompanied with seven Matrikas in two groups. Three Matrikas stand between Parvati and Nataraja. They are all tall, with shapely bodies in three body bends, wearing short dresses covering only their thighs, and tall headdresses. In the group of three Matrikas, one looks bored, one is wearing a headdress carved with a skull and another is wearing a headdress carved with peacock feathers (Fig. 2.44).



Fig. 2.43. Aihole. Ravana Phadi. Nataraja.  
Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.44. Aihole. Ravana Phadi. Matrikas.  
Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Four Matrikas are carved after Parvati. All the females are tall, with slightly robust cylindrical bodies with the bends and curves of the females of Pallava sculpture.

The right chamber is not carved, possibly because of a fissure on the roof. A flight of steps from the mandapa leads to small antechamber with carvings on the side walls. Durga, carrying a long sword, bow, trident and multitude of emblems in her hands, is slaying a buffalo demon. The carving does not differ much from her carving on Durga temple. Her trident has pierced the body of the demon kneeling on the ground.

Another panel on the opposite side depicts Vishnu in his Varaha incarnation. Goddess earth is sitting on the raised arm of Vishnu (folded at the elbow) with her legs resting on the palm of another hand. The ceiling of the antechamber has three big circles carved with Vishnu on Garuda, a lotus, and Indra on his mount, the elephant; the beams are carved with flying apsaras. The rectangular sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam.

After the Meguti temple the last temple constructed at Aihole was the Durga temple, which is a synthesis of Hin-

du temple and Buddhist chaitya forms. The Buddhists had built a freestanding apsidal chaitya amidst the Jain caves on Udayagiri hill near Bhubanesvara, now in ruins. Temple 18 at Sanchi, constructed originally in wood during the Mayura dynasty in the third to first century BCE, was apsidal shaped. But this is possibly the first and last Hindu temple built on the apsidal chaitya design built in the eighth century. Probably it was consecrated to Surya. The temple stands on a high, ornately molded base, more attractive than the basement of the Meguti temple (Fig. 2.45). The flight of steps leading to the porch on the east are hidden behind a short wall resembling the molded base of temple. The porch surrounding the temple on the sides and apsidal back has thirty-three pillars standing on a low parapet wall (Fig. 2.46).



Fig. 2.45. Aihole. Durga Temple. Apsidal end.  
Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.46. Aihole. Durga Temple. Façade.  
Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

All the pillars of the porch are decorated on the exterior face with well-built and good-looking females and couples with the lovely females in three body bends, resembling the Pallava females. There are graceful females in various postures including intoxicated females in their lovers' arms, single females, and amorous couples and dancing pairs. The

female member of a dancing couple is shown wearing a loin cloth (Fig. 2.47).



Fig. 2.47. Aihole. Durga Temple. Carving on verandah pillar. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.48. Aihole. Durga Temple. Durga on temple wall. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

Some mithuna couples in the act of love exhibit extreme passion. A number of Dravidian and northern-style niches on the exterior walls of the temple in the porch are decorated with robust images. The eight-armed Durga killing the buffalo demon is standing beside her mount, the lion, carrying a trident and a multitude of emblems in her hands (Fig. 2.48). Her body appears stretched sideways, with two large ball-like breasts placed wide apart on her chest. A small, unimpressive buffalo demon with upturned head is placed be-

tween her legs, appearing to have distorted her hips and legs. Her trident has broken away or has not pierced the neck of the demon.

Vishnu, standing as a boar with one leg on the coiled body of Sesha, is carrying the mother goddess on his bent right hand (Fig. 2.49). The spouse of Sesha is sitting beside them.



Fig. 2.49. Aihole. Durga Temple. Vishnu as a boar. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Another niche is carved with Harihara, accompanied by attendants, looking up, and beautiful females in body bends in the upper corners. Multi-armed Siva is leaning on Nandi in the company of a dwarf in a niche.

The flat roof of the temple has four tiers. The first forms the eaves around the temple; the second tier forms the sloping roof of the porch and the remaining two tiers make up the rest of the roof. The roof of the sloping porch is carved with flying couples.

A flight of steps from the porch leads to the portico with carved ceiling and pillars. The door leading to the mandapa is decorated with Man-Garuda with spread wings on the lintel and holding nagas in both hands. The coiled tails of the nagas decorate the length of the doorframe. Bands of floral motifs and females in amorous postures are carved beside the band of naga tails. There is an indistinct temple tower carved above the door lintel.

Inside the mandapa two parallel rows of pillars on the long axis support the ceiling and divide the mandapa into central nave and side aisles. The side aisles serve as a circumambulatory passage round the sanctum. A Lingam is installed in the sanctum. The general belief is that the temple was originally dedicated to Durga. A partially-damaged, relatively plain northern-style curvilinear tower with clumsily fitted tiers carved with chaitya-arch motifs stands over the apsidal end. The crowning elements are possibly lost.

Other Hindu temple groups at Aihole are Jyotirlinga (sixteen temples), Mallikarjuna (five temples), Veniyavar (ten temples), Maddin (four temples), Tirambakesvara (five temples) and Ramalingam (five temples). Most of the temples are in ruins. There are ten Jain temples in three groups. Charanthi Matha has three temples, Yoginarayana has four temples. On Meguti hill are three temples.

Pulakesin I (535-566), the founder of the Chalukya dynasty, captured Badami from Kadamba in the middle of the sixth century. He fortified and made Badami his capital because of its advantageous defensive location. By damming the river between outcrops of red sandstone the present large lake was created and the town grew up around it (Fig. 2.50). The scenic Badami Lake seen from the porch of Cave 2 has a group of temples on the shore on the right, the Sivalaya temples on the hill on the left, and the town of Badami in front of the bank.

Badami is the southern-most region of the western hilly range in south India where rock cut-caves were excavated. The early Chalukya excavated four caves in the red sandstone hills bordering Badami town in the sixth century and built five stone structural temples in the seventh century. The caves may have been excavated using techniques similar to that used in the Buddhist caves at Ajanta and Aurangabad. The caves are similar to the open-pillared mandapa resembling the early temples at Aihole, like Konti-gudi. The open front façade, lack of any large structures in the cave, and comparatively soft sandstone possibly made the excavation of the caves easier than the Buddhist caves in basaltic rocks. The sanctum is excavated in the rear wall of the caves.

The inclined causeway leads to four caves in the cliff towering Badami. The caves are numbered serially. Cave 1 is possibly the earliest. Cave 3 was excavated during the reign of Kirtivarman I (566-597) and was consecrated to Vishnu by Mangalesha in 578. Cave 2 and Jain Cave 4, the last cave in the series on the top of hill is of uncertain date.

In basic lay out the caves are transverse aisles separated by columns standing on raised floor strips separating aisles. The square pillars of the façade have fluted cushion capitals elaborately decorated with brackets and beams. Inside the mandapa the pillars are carved in two different styles. Though small and simple the caves have fine carvings and decorative motifs particularly on ceiling. The females carved are in general more attractive and beautiful than at Aihole. They are tall, lightly built with body curvatures similar to females at Mamalapuram and body bends like Sanchi females.

Cave 1, possibly excavated a few years earlier than Cave 3, is dedicated to Siva (Fig. 2.51).



Fig. 250. Badami. Badami Lake. Group of temples on lakeshore. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century.



Fig. 251. Badami. Cave 1. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

It is similar to Cave 3 but smaller. The cave stands on a high plinth and the molded columns are decorated with medallions and jeweled garlands. The outer aisle is treated like a porch. The right exterior extension of the porch is carved in deep relief with a large panel depicting a multi-armed Siva dancing, watched by Parvati, Nandi, Ganesha and a drummer (Fig. 2.52). On the left extension of the porch Siva is standing in a large panel with a trident in one hand and the other hand resting on his hip.



Fig. 252. Badami. Cave 1. Nataraja. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Another panel is carved with Siva as Ardhanari leaning on his mount Nandi, with a pronounced tilt of the hips. His richly decorated spouse Parvati is standing beside him and his son Bhairava is standing in the background. Flying figures hover in the upper corners. The overall effect of the panel is not overpowering. The females of all the flying couples in the caves are shown sitting on the legs of the flying males, unlike other examples where the female flies behind the male, with

one hand touching his shoulder. One panel is carved with a standing Vishnu holding a conch and chakra. He is accompanied by the beautiful Lakshmi, an attendant holding a flower, a dwarf, and another dwarf standing by who has a human body and a Nandi head.

Cave 2, dedicated to Vishnu, has the verandah cut into an overhanging cliff (Fig. 2.54).



Fig. 2.53. Badami. Cave 2. Ca. 535-561. Sandstone.

The molded basement is decorated with a row of dwarfs. The façade pillars are decorated similar to the pillars of Cave 1. The ceiling of the outer aisle is carved with a fish wheel and swastika motifs, similar to the motifs in the Lad Khan temple at Aihole, suggesting the cave was excavated during the reign of Pulakesin I (535-566). Vishnu is carved standing with a flower in his right hand. A beautiful, diminutive female is standing beside him, holding a flower with a long stalk in her left hand. Vishnu as multi-armed Trivikrama carrying a multitude of weapons is standing with one leg on earth and other resting on heaven (Fig. 2.54).



Fig. 2.54. Badami. Cave 2. Trivikrama.  
Ca. 535-561. Sandstone.

A group of worshippers is carved below. The dead body of King Bali is falling on their heads. Four-armed Vishnu in the Boar incarnation is standing with one leg on earth and other leg on the coils of Sesha (Fig. 2.55). The spouse of Sesha is sitting to the side. Vishnu is holding the mother goddess in the palm of his right hand, supporting her back with another hand. Vishnu, carved as a boar by the Chalukya, has a proportionally long snout and is comparatively slender to those carved in other south Indian temples. The hall is orientated towards the sanctum. The sanctum set in the back wall bears decorated carvings on the door.

Cave 3, the largest cave, was excavated during the reign of Kirtivarman (567-597). Mangalesha, younger brother of the king, dedicated it to Vishnu in 578 (Fig. 2.56).



Fig. 2.55. Badami. Cave 2.  
Vishnu as Boar.  
Ca. 535-561. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.56. Badami. Cave 3. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.

It has a large spacious verandah. Dwarfs are carved on the decorated niches of the molded plinth. There is a band of unrecognizable decorations above the dwarfs. The columns of the cave are carved in three different styles, like all the other caves. The square columns on the cave façade bear a medallion near the base decorated with loving couples and



decorative sculptures near the top. Inside the hall, some of the columns are round with parallel longitudinal grooves, a narrow neck bearing a square, decorated top and abacus supporting beams on short brackets. Some similar square columns are plain. The brackets of the façade row are decorated with superb loving and mithuna couples standing beneath trees in various postures (Fig. 2.57).



Fig. 2.57. Badami. Cave 3. Bracket. Mithuna couple. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.58. Badami. Cave 3. Bracket. Mithuna couple. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.

One female has entangled her leg with the leg of her lover while holding him by his shoulder. She has placed her other hand on his chest (Fig. 2.58).



Fig. 2.59. Badami. Cave 3. Bracket. Loving couple. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.

Another beauty is leaning on her lover's chest; her hip has tilted to the side and her body weight has shifted due to her crossed legs. The male holds her by the shoulder and she is balancing herself by holding a rope held by both (Fig. 2.59).

Another is exhibiting all the curves of her body by throwing her hip to one side and shift-

ing her body weight on one leg, leaning on the folded hand of her lover (Fig. 2.60).

Her lover appears to be pulling her by the hand while she tries to pull herself away — all the while looking at him lovingly. Another couple is carved with the female displaying all the curves of her delicate, slim body. A female with long legs is standing with downcast eyes, holding a stick in her hand, with a child standing beside her. When looked at from the other side, the child looks like a monkey standing on his hind legs. All the females carved on the brackets are tall and slim with long arms and legs.

Fig. 2.60. Badami. Cave 3. Bracket. Loving couple. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.

A superb image of Vishnu with four arms sitting on the coils of a serpent with his head under the naga hoods is carved at the end of the outer aisle (Fig. 2.61).



Fig. 2.61. Badami. Cave 3. Vishnu seated on coiled Seshha. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.

Trivikrama, the incarnation of Vishnu pacing the cosmos in three steps, is carved in almost three dimensions at the end of extended aisle. Vishnu is surrounded by devotees; and the dead body of King Bali is falling above their heads. On the protruding corner of the cave, Vishnu is standing in all his grandeur. The lion incarnation of Vishnu, Nrsimha, is carved at the end of the second aisle (Fig. 2.62). Worshipers stand near his feet and flying couples hover at the corners. Vishnu is standing majestically with a conch in one hand and a pointed artifact and snake twisted around the other hand.



Fig. 2.62. Badami. Cave 3. Nrsimha. Ca. 566-597. Sandstone.

As the Boar incarnation, Vishnu is standing with one leg on the coils of Sesa and holding a standing Mother Earth in the palm of his hand. The carvings of standing Vishnu are self assertive with inflated legs, oversized arms and erect posture. His jewelry is carved in great detail. The ceiling features intricately carved medallion friezes. In one carving Vishnu, in the center of the medallion, is riding his vehicle, Garuda. He is surrounded by eight guardians of the space (directions) carved inside medallions. Another carving, under the eave of the passage entrance, depicts a seated deity flanked by flying couples. The overhanging eave of the cave has the only remaining patches of original cave painting. The sanctum at the back is decorated with loving couples beside the entrance.

A further climb through a gateway leads to Cave 4. It is a small cave, dedicated to Mahavir. The façade columns in the transverse aisles are decorated similar to the façade columns of Cave 2. The columns inside are decorated with carvings of various Tirthankaras (Fig. 2.63).



Fig. 2.63. Badami. Cave 4. Pillars in mandapa. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

At the end of the aisle is a large panel of a standing Bahubali, with vines entwined on the limbs and thick strands of hairs on his head. Beautiful female worshippers, attendants, and snakes are carved near his leg (Fig. 2.64).

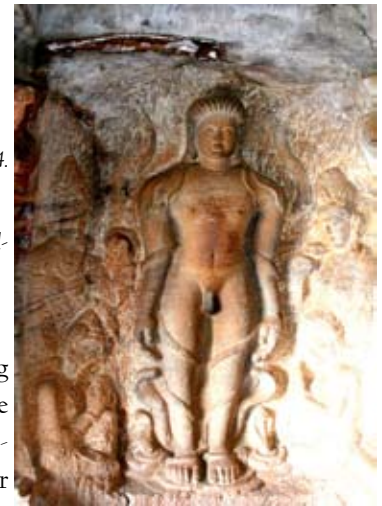


Fig. 2.64. Badami. Cave 4. Bahubali on sidewall.

Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

In another carving at the end of the aisle Tirthankara Parshvanath is standing under a naga hood accompanied by an attendant holding a parasol above his head and a devotee seated at his feet. A Tirthankara with a crown above his head is carved standing under an arch (Fig. 2.65).



Fig. 2.65. Badami. Cave 4. Mahavir on sidewall.

Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The arms of the arch are carved horizontally with Jain teachers. The sanctum is enshrined with a meditating Mahavir. He is sitting on a throne with a halo behind his head. A three-tiered umbrella above the head and beautiful attendants holding chamara beside him, and flying figures above, surround the Tirthankara.

The Chalukya constructed five structural stone temples at Badami in the seventh century. The dates of construction are not known with certainty, except for the Jambulinga temple. All the temples at Badami have a high plinth with elaborately carved figures of mostly mythical animals. The temple towers have a limited number of receding tiers and various crowning elements. One of the temples has a north Indian curvilinear temple tower with *amalaka* and *kalasa* as

crowning elements. Other extant towers on the temples are a four-sided Dravidian type with a square-to-dome or octagonal-to-dome superstructure, with or without *kalasa*. A brick tower superstructure foreshadowing the future Vijayanagara temples is also seen at Badami.

A group of three Sivalaya temples stands on the North Fort hill (Fig. 2.66).



Fig. 2.66. Badami. Sivalaya temples on North Fort Hill. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Dravidian temple style was further developed in Upper Sivalaya, at a temple constructed in the early part of the seventh century. The temple has a molded plinth. Scenes from the Ramayana and the legends of Krishna, including Rama shooting the golden deer and Ravana abducting Sita, appeared for the first time in Indian sculpture on the plinth relief. The exterior walls bear pilasters and a *kaputa* cornice on top. The parapet wall above bears a barrel-vaulted *sala* and square-domed *kuta*. The carvings on the temple exterior walls, set in pilasters, depict Krishna holding Mount Govardhana, Rama subduing Kaliya (the king of serpents) and Nrsimha tearing open the stomach of a demon. The columned mandapa has disappeared. The square sanctum has an ambulatory passage. The imposing massive four-sided tower on the sanctum has a hollow lower chamber and repetitive units above, ending in a square-to-dome superstructure carved with figurative sculpture. The *kalasa* is missing on the tower. Inclusion of a hollow chamber made it possible to construct imposing tall towers; the repeated hollow chambers lessened the weight of the tower on the sanctum.

The Malegitti Sivalaya temple (possibly constructed after Upper Sivalaya) sits on a gigantic weathered sandstone boulder. It has a richly carved front porch, square-columned mandapa with aisles, sloping slab roof and sanctuary without circumambulatory passage. The exterior of the temple is similar to the Upper Sivalaya temple but the parapet wall elements are better articulated. The exterior walls of the mandapa bear sculpted panels and the windows in recesses are surmounted by foliated aquatic monsters. Siva and Vish-

nu are carved between the windows. The super structure of the tower is octagon to dome.

The almost-ruined Lower Sivalaya has a massive four-sided Dravidian tower with two receding units and an elongated-square-to-dome superstructure topped with a *kalasa*. The superstructure is highly decorated with figure carvings. It bears some resemblance to the tower of the Upper Sivalaya temple.

The Bhutanatha temple, surrounded by structures of later origin, stands in a picturesque locale on the shores of the lake. It was probably constructed in the sixth century. The temple has an entrance porch, square-columned hall, sanctum and pyramidal tower with square, flat tiers with a square-to-dome superstructure topped with a *kalasa*. The porch with sloping eaves was a later addition. The sculpture on the columns has been mutilated.

Jambulinga temple, built in 699, is hidden behind the dwellings of the modern town. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva were installed in three sanctums with openings to a common large hall with elaborately-carved ceiling panels. The evolution of more than one sanctum in a temple, started in Aihole, matured in this temple with shrines for three gods. Brahma is carved accompanied with a flying couple in the central bay, Siva is carved with Parvati and Nandi on the ceiling in front of the Siva shrine with Lingam. Vishnu is carved with his consort. In addition to the fish wheel, a naga with human upper body and flying couples are carved on the ceiling. The brick tower is disfigured. Brick was used to lessen the load on the tower. Most of the temple towers in Vijayanagara are constructed of bricks.

In the late seventh century, possibly contemporaneous with the Alampur temples, the Chalukya constructed twenty small- and medium-sized temples in a developing Dravidian style at Mahakuta, 5 km (3 miles) from Badami. The residence of a Saint Agastya, who destroyed the legendary demon Vatapi, made the place famous and sacred.

All the temples situated at the base of the hill are enclosed in a compound with a gateway facing east. All the temples are Saivite. Lingams are installed and stored everywhere in the compound. The two medium-sized temples, Mahakuteshvara and Mallikarjuna, and a small, well-preserved Sangameshvara temple face east. Small temples located on the periphery of the compound wall face the tank in the center of the enclosure. All the temples except two have northern-style towers, in contrast to those at Badami. Most of the temples are of later origin and some utterly neglected temples have dark interiors. The exterior walls of some temples are carved with beautiful sculptured panels.

A large tank in the center of the complex, surrounded by a low parapet wall, has a continuous supply of water from a natural spring (Fig. 2.67).



Fig. 2.67. Mahakuta. Temple tank. Mahakuteshvara & Sangameshvara Temples in background. Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The continuous flow of spring water to the tank is channeled to another tank outside the temple complex so that the level of water in the tank remains the same all the time. A small, open square mandapa is constructed in the tank above the water level and installed with a Lingam. Outside the parapet wall of the tank a small circular shrine in the shape of the lingam is constructed. A small window near the top is the only opening in the temple providing light and air to the interior. The floor of the shrine is well below the water level in the tank. At the bottom of the shrine a tunnel dug deep below the standing water level in the tank floods the shrine up to the water level in the tank. Inside the shrine a Lingam is installed above water level, which remains constant, controlled by the water level in the tank. The Lingam can be reached for worship only by swimming through a tunnel connecting the shrine to the tank. Another small, open mandapa beside the tank has an enshrined lingam carved with beautiful female faces on the top.

Mahakuteshvara, a whitewashed temple constructed in the sixth century, is still in use. It has concrete porch of recent origin. The location of the temple in crowded structures around does not permit the front full view of the temple. An inscription dated 601 on column removed to Bijapur Museum, states authority of Mangalesha (579-610) to increase the grant to the temple suggesting that the temple existed before 610. A seated bull in detached pavilion faces the entrance porch. The layout of the temple is similar to the Badami temples. The moldings on a raised basement in addition to chaitya windows are carved with a frieze narrating episodes from the Ramayana (Fig. 2.68).



Fig. 2.68. Mahakuta. Mahakuta temple. Side wall. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A pierced stone window on the exterior walls allow light to enter the hall and sanctum. The parapet on the wall top bears a *sala* and *kuta*. The exterior walls of the sanctum on three sides are decorated with gods carved in southern-style panels framed in decorated pilasters and a decorative band. A decorated Ardhanari is carved in a niche standing with a trident and a snake wrapped around her waist (Fig. 2.69).



Fig. 2.69. Mahakuta. Mahakuta temple. Sidewall. Ardhanari. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The sanctum has an incomplete ambulatory passage. The four-sided whitewashed tower with pilaster and parapet elements between stories resembles the towers of the Sivalaya temples at Badami. It has a square-to-dome superstructure and a finial.

Mallikarjuna, a southern-style temple, was possibly constructed after Mahakuteshvara temple, which it resem-

bles (Fig. 2.70). The colonnade wall constructed at the side of the entrance does not permit a full frontal view of the temple. The side walls are carved with Vishnu standing majestically and Ardhanari, short and bulky, with three body bends and four hands. Siva is carved on the left of the façade, standing with a trident. The mandapa has two rows of thick, square, decorated pillars and the sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam. The southern-style four-tiered tower is decorated with kudas, kaputa cornice and pilasters similar to the tower of Mahakuteshvara temple. The tower ends in an eight-sided dome structure, bearing large chaitya windows on four side and a round kalasa above.



Fig. 2.70. Mahakuta. Mallikarjuna temple. Tower.

Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Sangameshvara, a small, well-preserved temple with minimal carvings, was possibly constructed in the mid-eighth century. It was constructed with a southern-style body and northern-style tower.



Fig. 2.71. Mahakuta. Sangameshvara temple.

Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The molded base is decorated with kudas and kaputa cornice on the parapet wall. The sidewalls bear pilasters with carvings in between (Fig. 2.71). The temple has a small porch with four decorated pillars with a low parapet

wall bearing vase and foliage decorations. The plinth of the ruined Nandi mandapa in front has a statue of a seated Nandi. The square sanctum follows the porch. The niches on the exterior walls of the shrine bear superb sculptures. The niche on the north is carved with Harihara. Ardhanari, in the west niche, with her pronounced tilt of the hips and body bends is beautifully decorated (Fig. 2.72). Her feminine features contrast well with the male.



Fig. 2.72. Mahakuta. Sangameshvara temple. Ardhanari. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The niche on the south has a carving of Lakulisa, with a graceful, well-proportioned body and erect phallus, standing on a dwarf (Fig. 2.73). Lakulisa is considered the incarnation of Siva.



Fig. 2.73. Mahakuta. Sangameshvara temple. Lakulisa. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Lakulisa was the founder of the Pasupata sect, with which this shrine may have been affiliated. The curvilinear northern-style tower is crowned with a ribbed *amalaka* and finial. The carving of Gavaska on the front façade of the tower appears to have

been erased. The tower is similar to the towers of the Jambulinga and Kadasiddhesvara temple towers at Patadkal.

The tower of the Bananti temple resembles the tower of the Upper Sivalaya temple at Badami and may be contemporary to it. The temple is almost unadorned. The four-sided tower with four tiers is carved with shallow, empty niches between tiers. The almost-round, ribbed tower with flat top lacks a finial.

## II. CHALUKYA II

The Chalukya, after establishing their rule at Badami, conquered the area surrounding Alampur, Andhra Pradesh during their expansion period and constructed numerous temples around Alampur. These temples, though not well known, are considered finest monuments of the time and have some of the best Chalukya sculpture.

Andhra Pradesh may have been the original home of the Chalukya. Starting with the reign of Vijayaditya (696-733) till the end of the dynasty during Kirtivarman's rule (744-755), the Chalukya constructed nine temples in a group near the southern banks of the Tungabhadra River at Alampur in addition to several other temples in the surrounding area. Three of these may have been built by Vikramaditya (733-744). Kirtivarman (744-755), the last king of the dynasty, possibly continued construction of the last temple, Taraka Brahma, started by Vikramaditya, but could not complete it. All nine temples facing east are dedicated to Siva. Eight of them are located in the dilapidated Fort area and the Taraka Brahma temple is built outside the Fort area.

The Taraka-Brahma is the only temple built in southern style. Perhaps the northern style was preferred due to the broader influence of the north at this time, to which this area was very receptive. All the temples at Alampur, with minor differences, are similar to Sangameshvara temple at Kudaveli, to which Pulakesin II (619-642) made a grant in 637.

The date of construction of all the temples at Alampur except Svarga-Brahma is not known for certain; it is possible that most of the temples were built after the reign of Pulakesin II (619-642), which would indicate that temples of similar design were in existence before most of the Alampur temples were constructed, and the Chalukya continued the legacy of their original homeland.

The original name of the temples is not known. All the temples are collectively called as the Nava (nine) Brahma. In basic layout all the temples in Alampur have a long rectangular mandapa enclosing a sanctum near the rear, with Nandi sitting between the pillars in front of the sanctum in most cases. The layout is reminiscent of the early mandapa temples at Aihole. Most have an front open entrance porch and a few have open or blind porches on the sides. The layout of the temples differs in size, number of pillars and the orientation of pillar rows in the mandapa, presence or absence of a front porch, and side porches with or without entrance.

The exterior walls of the temples have regularly-spaced niches built in the northern style with interlocking half or full *gavaksa* (circular enclosure) decorations. Most of the niches have lost their carvings. The majority of the temple entrance doors are carved with multiple divisions of lintel and jambs, with flying couples on the upper portion of wall. Some temples bear large lattice windows on the side walls, some with entrances.

All the temples except one have northern-style *Vimana* (towers) with four tiers. The towers on two of the temples are missing and the one southern-style tower is dilapidated or was not fully constructed. All the towers have a wagon-roof-shaped extension, the *sukanasa*, at the base of the tower with a circular or horseshoe-shaped blind arch on the façade enclosing a carving of Nataraja. Some towers have lost the carving of Nataraja. Full or half interlocking *gavaksa* (circles) and pieces of ribbed flat stone on the tower add to the beauty. The top of the northern-style towers are decorated with *amalaka*, a flat, almost round stone with ribs carved on the margins and a *kalasa* (a pot-shaped structure) above.

The date of construction is known only for Svarga Brahma, built by one of the sons of Vinayaditya (682-696). The basement of the temple is decorated with geese

on blocks and niches. The sculpture on the temple walls includes Siva, Saivite deities with dwarfs, Vedic gods, musicians, dancers, and monster masks. Guardians with clubs flank the entrance doorways. There is an abundance of flying figures on the walls below cornice. Some of the flying figures on Svarga Brahma temple are unique. In one carving a flying couple appear to be making love while in flight.

Visva-Brahma, a massive temple with the tallest tower in Alampur, bearing an empty *gavaksa* on a *sukanasa*, was possibly built in 696-733 during Vijayaditya's reign (Fig. 2.74). The basement is divided into blocks. The central division consists of square blocks with carvings on the front square face. Seated Nandis decorate the roof corners of the temple. There is no front entrance porch. The lintel of the entrance door of the temple is carved with flying man Garuda, and Ganga and Jamuna with body bends decorate the ends of the door jambs.



Fig. 2.74. Alampur. Visva Brahma Temple. Ca. 696-733. Sandstone.

One of the side porches bears a carving of Nataraja flanked with small lattice windows (Fig. 2.75).



Fig. 2.75. Alampur. Visva Brahma Temple. Nataraja in side porch. Ca. 696-733. Sandstone.

Most of the northern-style niches on the exterior walls are empty. The exterior sides and back walls bear blind porches.

Large lattice windows installed on sidewalls provide air and light to the interior. Most of the surviving carvings are of mithuna couples. The mandapa pillars bear some decorative sculpture. The façade of the sanctum is decorated beautifully with Nandi sitting in front. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam. The pilasters beside the entrance on top are carved with tall, slender beautiful females with three body bends. The ceiling in front of the sanctum is carved with lotus.

The Vira-Brahma is similar to the Visva-Brahma in layout and decorations, with fewer decorated niches on exterior walls. The majority of the niches are empty. There are no side porches on the exterior walls. Three large lattice window on the exterior wall on each side of the sanctum provide access, light and air to the sanctum area. The interior pillars and ceiling are decorated. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam. A sitting bull is positioned in front of the shrine. The tower is stout and comparatively short, with four tiers. The *amalaka* and *kalasa* are missing from the top of the towers.



Fig. 2.76. Alampur. Akra Brahma Temple. Rita.

Ca. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Some loose sculpture possibly collected from various temples is lying on ground; one of these is perhaps the most beautiful sculpture at Alampur. It depicts Rita, the spouse of Kama (Fig. 2.77). The sculpture embodies a sublime beauty with the ideal feminine body standing on a decorated pedestal. Her curvatures are accentuated by the garment she is wearing. She is sparsely decorated, but wears a high headdress and her abundant hair spreads like a fan beside her head. She is standing in front of a crocodile-like mythological creature near her feet, holding a sugarcane plant in one hand and possibly a sweets-filled pot in another hand.





Fig. 2.77. Alampur. Kumara Brahma Temple. Ca. 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Akra-Brahma, a copy of Visva-Brahma, was possibly constructed during the reign of Vikramaditya (680-696). The main entrance to the temple bears worn-out door guardians. The tower is lost. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam and a seated Nandi in front.

Kumara-Brahma is possibly the oldest temple constructed by the Chalukya at Alampur (Fig. 2.77). The four pillars of the front porch on the upper half are intricately carved. There are large lattice windows on the side wall. Most of the carvings on the exterior are lost. The ceiling is decorated and the sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam, with Nandi sitting in front. The tower, with gentle curves, appears light.



Fig. 2.78. Alampur. Bala Brahma Temple. Ca. 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

The Bala-Brahma temple was probably constructed during the reign of Vikramaditya (Fig. 2.78). The front white-washed mandapa, of recent origin, was constructed using old Chalukya pillars. It two sub-shrines dedicated to the seven

mothers and Mahesamurti flanking the front end. Outside the mandapa on the left a pillar carries an elephant standing on the top. The vestibule and sanctum follow the mandapa. Three niches around the sanctum exterior walls are carved with Parvati, Siva and Parvati and Ganesha. There are four projecting niches and a large lattice window on the exterior walls. The *vimana* bears an elongated *sukanasa* and almost round *amalaka*. On the back of the temple a low wall has two sub-shrines bearing sculptures of Nataraja and Durga. Multi-armed Durga, in three body bends holding weapons and various attributes in his hands, is standing pressing the head of the buffalo demons with one leg and pulling up the tail of the buffalo with his other hand for leverage.

The Garuda-Brahma temple was possibly built during Vijayaditya reign. A modern temple built in front of it hides the full front view and another structure built on the left has covered the face of the left wall. It is very similar to Vira-Brahma, with four decorated pillars in single row on the front porch. The pilasters of the porch are carved with doorkeepers. The highly decorated entrance with a multi-jamb entrance has an image of Vishnu on Garuda on the lintel and Ganga and Jamuna carved with three body bends at the jamb ends. The entrance door to the vestibule bears a flying figure on the lintel. The decorated niches on the temple façade are empty. The *sukanasa* on the northern-style tower bears an empty *gavaska*.

Of all the temples at Alampur, Svarga-Brahma is the most beautiful (Fig. 2.79).



Fig. 2.79. Alampur. Svarga Brahma temple. Ca. 682-696. Sandstone.

An inscription on the temple states that it was constructed in honor of the queen of Vinayaditya (682-696) by one of her sons, presumably in the early eighth century. The temple porch has four pillars in a row on the façade with an entrance between the middle pillars, and a pillar and pilaster on side. The pilasters are carved with doorkeepers standing with clubs.

In addition to Vishnu, Siva and Brahma, Vedic gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni and Vayu are carved on the temple walls. Below the cornice on the exterior walls flying couples are carved. On one side of the temple façade Siva, Vishnu and Brahma are carved in three decorated niches (Fig. 2.80).



Fig. 2.80. Alampur. Svarga Brahma temple. Left temple façade. Ca. 682-696. Sandstone.

Vishnu is carved standing in the central niche holding a conch and chakra. On the left niche Siva is emerging from the Lingam. Three-headed Brahma and Vishnu are carved flanking the Lingam at the top, in the middle, and near the bottom. At the bottom they are carved diving below the Lingam. In the right niche Siva is carved again as Nataraja. The image is badly damaged.

Various small carvings around the niches are lost or partially broken. On the other side of the temple façade Indra is carved standing with a baby elephant in a highly decorated central niche, flanked on one side with Siva living as a beggar in repentance for cutting off the fifth head of Brahma (Fig. 2.81).



Fig. 2.81. Alampur. Svarga Brahma temple. Temple façade. Right. Ca. 682-696 CE. Sandstone.

On one side of Indra, Siva is carved receiving Ganga on his head. The carving is much damaged and only the presence of the skeletal ascetic Bhagiratha in the lower corner suggests the carving as a depiction of Gangadharmurthi. The broken multiple arms on one side of Siva appear like a spreading wing. A seated Nandi is carved at one lower corner. Another carving depicts a furious six-handed Siva riding the chariot driven by the three-headed Brahma to slay the three demons. The doorway of the shrine has multiple divisions of jamb and lintel. The exterior walls are carved with gods in decorated northern-style niches, interposed with latticed windows, loving and mithuna couples, and flying figures below the cornice. There are three blind porches on the exterior walls surrounding the sanctum. In one of the porches a multi-armed Siva is carved as Nataraja, with a group of musicians playing the drum and flute, accompanying a dancer (Fig. 2.82). Beautiful Parvati with body bends is standing beside them.



Fig. 2.82. Alampur. Svarga Brahma temple. Nataraja carved in side porch. Ca. 682-696. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.83. Alampur. Svarga Brahma temple. Carvings on wall. Ca. 682-696. Sandstone.

The next carving depicts a female standing under a tree, holding the trunk of the tree to resist the man who is pulling her toward him. All the while, the expression of love on her face, slight bend of her head in modesty, and her other hand resting on the thigh of the man indicate her deep love for him.



Fig. 2.84. Alampur. Svarga Brahma temple. Carvings on wall. Ca. 682-696. Sandstone.

Another niche is carved with a deity holding a rosary in one hand and an unrecognizable object in other hand (Fig. 2.84). Beside the deity a loving pair is standing side by side. The male is offering food to the female, holding it in his hand near her chin, and pulling her toward him with the other hand. Due to the shift of weight to one leg, resisting the pull by her lover and turning her head towards him with a loving look, the curves of her body have become pronounced. Pulling the lower garment with her free hand to collect herself, as a modest Indian woman does, she further emphasizes the outline of her full round hip and thigh, and has created delicate ripples in the garment. Other carvings of loving couples depict delicate females with body bends in an expression of joy and love.

The interior columns are fluted with vase and foliage motifs on the base and capitals. The *Vimana* appears similar to the *Vimana* of the Galaganatha temple at Aihole. The fully preserved four-sided tower, curving gently inside, is decorated with interlocking *gavaksa* and miniature *amalaka* designs. An enlarged *gavaksa* arch on the *sukanasa* is carved with a dancing Siva. The tower is crowned with an *amalaka* and rod-shape grooved *kalasa*. Many of these features are seen on the dilapidated Galaganatha temple tower at Aihole built in the seventh century. It is possibly that the Alampur temples may have served as models for the Galaganatha and some other temples at Patadkal.

The Padma-Brahma temple is unfinished. It is crowded by other buildings. Possibly it was built in the last years of Vikramaditya's reign (733-744). The next regime, Kirtivarman's (744-755), was not stable and he could not complete the construction; then the dynasty came to an end. Most of the niches are left empty. The grill of the lattice window on the façade is lost. The entrance door is flanked by door guards and a garuda on the lintel of the door. The ceiling is carved with lotus. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam, with Nandi sitting in front. The northern-style tower without *sukanasa* and *gavaska*, is well preserved.

Taraka-Brahma, the only southern-style temple at Alampur, may have been built during Vikramaditya's reign (Fig. 2.85). It is located near a Muslim shrine. It has a small entrance porch with one of the pillars of the façade missing, a very small vestibule with Ganesha carved on the entrance lintel and an empty shrine. There are three empty niches on the outer walls. The square tower with two tiers is dilapidated. A large shoe-shaped *sukanasa* on the tower is carved with a sitting Siva in the company of males and females. On this southern-style temple for the first time a *sukanasa* appeared. It was copied on two other southern-style temples at Patadkal.



Fig. 2.85. Alampur. Taraka Brahma temple. Ca. 733-744. Sandstone.

About 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from Alampur is a temple locally called the Sangameshvara temple (Fig. 2.86).

This unique and beautiful temple stands on an elegantly carved platform, about 1.5 m (4.5 ft.) high, reached by a flight of steps. The Nandi mandapa in front of the temple appears to be reconstructed. The plinth of the temple was possibly discovered buried, and restored.



Fig. 2.86. Kadlur. Sangameshvara temple. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.87. Kadlur. Sangameshvara temple. Façade of temple. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A parapet wall of about 0.7 m (2 ft.) height constructed on the margins of the platform encloses the temple in an outer circumambulatory passage. On the right front corner of the parapet is an oblong shrine with a vault roof decorated with a cornice and *sala*. The platform side walls all around are carved with *kudus*, *sala* above, and divided in bands below. The bands are carved with deities and animals. The façade of the temple is carved intricately. *Kubera* flanks the temple entrance (Fig. 2.87). The sloping roof of the temple is in three tiers. The four-sided, four-tiered tower has gentle curves; it lacks a *sukanasa*. The *amalaka* is almost round with a *kalasa* similar to that of the Svarga-Brahma temple. The interior of the mandapa bears decorated pillars. The pilasters flanking the sanctum entrance are carved with doorkeepers. The sanctum with Nandi sitting in front and an enshrined Lingam is similar to the sanctums in the other Alampur temples.

The windows on the exterior walls are carved in geometric designs and enclosed in beautifully decorated niches between short pilasters. A niche with a window bearing a swastika design is carved above with elephant heads holding round pots in their trunks, giving a bath to Lakshmi sitting

below (Fig. 2.88). The bodies of the elephants are carved in a beautiful foliated pattern. A band of dancers is carved above.



Fig. 2.88. Kadlur. Sangameshvara temple. Temple wall. Window. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Another window with a fish circle is decorated with peacocks with beautiful foliated tails drinking water from a fountain. There are many such attractive niches carved around the temple. Most other niches are carved with deities. The carving of Siva as Aghora-Bhairava (Angry Siva) is dramatic. Ten-armed Siva with fangs protruding from his mouth and a skull on his headdress is standing, feet set apart, holding a trident with a human impaled on it (Fig. 2.89). Most of Siva's hands are broken, but in one hand he holds a snake.

Multi-armed Siva as naked Nataraja is carved in one niche. All his hands are broken. He appears calm and unaware of his surroundings, absorbed in the dancing (Fig. 2.90).

A band of dancers is carved above. Ardhanari has three heads and four arms, and short legs. The large tilted hip of Parvati, also on short legs, does not look natural. Her upper body is no different from Siva's except the breast and large earring. The side head of Ardhanari is not distinct. Siva is standing with his hand resting on Nandi.

Siva as Lakulisa with stout body and short legs is standing with erect phallus, holding his hand in a protection gesture. Durga and other deities are also carved in the niches.

A group of interesting shrines called the Papanasanama is located across the riverbed two kilometers (1.2 miles) from Sangameshvara temple (Fig. 2.91).



Fig. 2.89. Kadlur. Sangameshvara temple. Temple wall. Siva impaling demon. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.90. Kadlur. Sangameshvara temple. Temple wall. Nataraja. Ca. 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

One may be bewildered by the sight of some 20 small and medium shrines of various shapes and designs intermingled in a small area. Some shrines are one-celled, some have a mandapa and some have a mandapa and tower. Some cells have a partition inside. Some are double shrines and some are

triple shrines sharing a mandapa. There are northern, southern, *kadamba*, *visra*, *gopura* (or oblong-shaped) towers, their height varying from four to six flat steps or four tiers. The shape, size and thickness of the crowning elements vary immensely. Some shrines have Nandi sitting on the mandapa roof corners and some have Nandi in front of the sanctum. Some shrines have door guardians standing in front. All the shrines are installed with deities and are currently in use. The majority are dedicated to Siva as Lingam. Other shrines are dedicated to Ganesha, Seven Mothers, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Hanuman, Naga Raja and Durga.



Fig. 2.91. Kadlur. Papanasana Temples. Ca. 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Sandstone.

In one shrine Durga is carved killing the buffalo demon (Fig. 2.92). Her trident has pierced the back of a human hip and Durga is apparently holding the severed buffalo head by a horn. Her Vahana, the lion, is standing behind.

It is hard to understand the reason for constructing such a diverse group of shrines in a confined area. It cannot have been experimental, as most of the shapes and sizes of these shrines were already in existence. One probable factor could be that the spot is popular with families, devotees of various gods, who come to bathe in the small stream, picnic, worship their gods, and spend some leisurely time together enjoying the company and the cool shade of the shrines and trees while the children play. Still, that does not seem sufficient explanation.

A little distance from this group a shrine was reconstructed from stones collected from rubble. The sanctum is empty.

After the open mandapa of the early temples was enclosed in walls, as in Lad Khan temple, the development of the basic internal units of temple took place inside the shell of the mandapa at Aihole. Some efforts to arrange the basic units of the temple in linear fashion outside the mandapa were made at Aihole, Badami. This divergent development took distinct separate lead at Alampur and Patadkal.

At Alampur all the units of the temple except the entrance porch were enclosed in the shell of the mandapa. The need for circumambulation of the sanctum was accomplished by the addition of two rows of pillars forming a nave and aisles and extending the mandapa with additional pillars on the back of the sanctum, where the aisles served as a circumam-

bulatory passage. Additional subsidiary shrines were added in the mandapa of some temples.



Fig. 2.92. Kadlur. Durga in a Papanasana shrine. Ca. 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

This design had architectural and aesthetic limitations. Large temples could not be built without the addition of more pillars, which makes the interior resemble a maze.

At Patadkal the arrangement of basic units of the temple in linear fashion with the mandapa as a second unit took a firm lead and the complex design of modern Indian temples took shape. This design facilitates development of large, grand temples as the size of the individual unit can be varied to some extent and decorations can be added to each unit to one's heart's content. With different styles of decoration on the exterior wall and a different shape of towers, northern- and southern-style temples came into being. The design developed and perfected at Alampur had reached a dead end.

Fig. 2.93. Patadkal. Temples at Patadkal. Ca. 7-9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone

Patadkal stands on the banks of the Malaprabha River a few km. down stream from Aihole. Vijayaditya, Vikramaditya and Kirtivarman II built the temples at Patadkal in a short period of about 50 years, from 696 to 745. In the second half of the eighth and the ninth centuries, the Rashtrakuta built a few temples with plain exteriors. The Chandrasekhara temple in the archeology compound and the Jain temple near the village were built by the Rashtrakuta after the collapse of the Chalukya. Patadkal was the Chalukya royal commemorative and coronation site. The evolution of various styles of temple tower and Dravidian decorations on temple walls, started in the sixth century at Aihole, and continued in Badami, Alampur, and Mahakuta, reached a climax at Patadkal in the latter half of the eighth century. Aihole contributed the basic internal design of the temple, with the decoration of south Indian temple walls and the curvilinear northern-style tower. The pyramidal superstructure and the exterior design of the south Indian temple were finalized at Patadkal and the temple was made a complete entity.

The archeology compound near the village of Patadkal has a group of eight medium and large temples surrounded by clusters of small minor shrines on the banks of the Malaprabha River (Fig. 2.93). Of the four large temples at Patadkal, the Papanatha temple in northern style is the largest; it is located outside the archeology compound. The Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna and Sangameshvara, the other three temples, are Southern in the architectural details of base molding, pilasters, corbels and temple tower. The Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples were the largest and most decorated temples of the time.

Minor shrines in the northern style were constructed during the seventh and eighth centuries. Some distance away from Patadkal village is a Jain temple.

A brick temple foundation discovered during an archaeological dig in 1960 near the Sangameshvara temple in the compound possibly belongs to the Early Chalukya period. None of the extant temples at Patadkal predate the Western Chalukya dynasty. Western Chalukya architecture reached



its culmination at Patadkal, and the temple building activity continued even after the fall of Early Western Chalukya. All the temples face east and are dedicated to Siva. Fine-grained gray-yellow sandstone from the nearby hills was used for the temples. Some artists at Patadkal have signed their work.

The Sangameshvara temple is possibly one of the earliest temples constructed at Patadkal by Vijayaditya (696-733), and left incomplete after his death (Fig. 2.94). The rectangular temple in Dravidian style has a molded base decorated with elephants. There is a spacious high platform in front of the temple. Possibly, the original spacious mandapa on a platform collapsed and the present mandapa with two rows of four plain pillars were added during the Rashtrakuta reign. The stairway to the mandapa was completed on only one side. The exterior temple walls bear southern-style niches. Some of the niches bear windows with lattice or geometric designs.



Fig. 2.94. Patadkal. Sangameshvara Temple. Ca. 696-733. Sandstone.

The niches on the antechamber walls are empty, but the niches on the sanctum wall are carved with deities. The cornice above the walls and a small parapet wall above the cornice bears *sala, kuta* and *kudu kaputa* projections. The vestibule has two empty minor shrines, possibly meant for Ganesha and Durga. Two doorkeepers guard the sanctum with clubs. The sanctum is enshrined with a square Lingam and is surrounded on three sides by a passage with windows on each side. The four-sided 16 m (50 ft.) high tower has two stories. The short wall between the stories is decorated with pilasters and sculptured panels. The tower is topped with large *kuta* roof with pot-like *kalasa*. There is no *sukanasa*. A broken stone pillar near the temple bears an inscription giving information about Vijayaditya and Vikramaditya. The plinth of the dilapidated mandapa in front of the temple has a mutilated Nandi.

The Galaganatha temple is similar to temples in Alampur, suggesting it was constructed at the end of the seventh cen-

ture; that would make it the earliest monument constructed in Patadkal (Fig. 2.95).



Fig. 2.95. Patadkal. Galaganatha Temple.

Ca. 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A broad platform in front of the temple suggests inclusion of a large mandapa in the plan to envelop the sanctum with an ambulatory passage, like the temples in Alampur. As the exterior walls of the hall were not built, the temple now consists of the sanctum with an ambulatory passage on the back and sides with sloping slabs roof. There were three porches on the ambulatory passage's exterior walls. Only one porch on the south has survived. The basement of the platform on the north bears pilasters carved with Lingams and a few spouts in the shape of the *makara* mouth. The Lingams are lost. The entrance door to the sanctuary is decorated with flanking pilasters, Nataraja on the lintel and beautiful river goddesses standing under trees with body bends at the base of doorframe. A black stone Lingam is installed in the sanctum. On one side of the sanctum the broad passage has a porch. The two front columns of the south porch are carved with vase and foliage motifs. On the back wall of the porch, a carving of multi-armed Siva, standing with trident impaling a man, is flanked by windows carved with triangular perforations (Fig. 2.96).

The niches on the outer walls of the sanctum are empty. The well-preserved 15 m (41.5 ft.) high square tower has three projected bands on each side. The damaged portion of the tower façade, showing a hollow interior, was possibly the façade projection representing the *sukanasa*. The central projected bands on the tower have miniature *gavaksa* with human faces in the center, with additional half-*gavaksa* motifs added in the lower tiers. The outer bands are carved with tiers of eave-like moldings decorated with *gavaksa* alternating with

*amalaka* pieces. The tower is topped with a big round ribbed *amalaka* standing on a drum base and *kalasa* with a coconut on the mouth of the *kalasa*.



Fig. 296. Patadkal. Galaganatha Temple. Porch. Siva impaling demon. Ca. 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Kadasiddhesvara temple is possibly one of the early temples built in the first decades of the eighth century during the reign of Vijayaditya. It is the first temple located near the entrance of the archeology compound. The temple stands on a high basement (Fig. 2.97).



Fig. 297. Patadkal. Kadasiddhesvara Temple. Ca. 697-734. Sandstone.

The basement of the sanctuary is carved with pilasters flanking carvings of, for the most part, badly worn Lakuli-

sas, recognized by the locks of hair. The exterior walls of the sanctum are decorated niches with full and interlocking half *gavaksa* in a northern-style niche carved with Harihara holding an axe and conch, and a beautifully decorated Ardhanari standing with tilted, voluptuous hips (Fig. 2.98). She is holding a flower in her hand. Siva is resting his hand on Nandi standing beside her. This may be one of the best carvings of Ardhanari. The decorated façade of the sanctum entrance with obliterated carvings on the doorframe is guarded with two doorkeepers holding clubs. The *sikara* has ten tiers of diminishing size. *Amalaka* pieces at the corners alternate with two tiers carved with *gavaksa*. Each tier bears a projection in the center, with badly worn sculpture. The façade of the tower on the east is carved with a large *gavaksa* arch on the bottom two tiers, with a dancing Siva in the center. The top three tiers are flat squares. The *amalaka* and finial are missing.



Fig. 298. Patadkal. Kadasiddhesvara Temple. Ardhanari. Ca. 697-734. Sandstone.

Jambulinga temple, constructed in the first decade of the eighth century, is located behind the Galaganatha temple (Fig. 1.99). It appears similar to Kadasiddhesvara. The basement of a dilapidated pavilion in front of the temple has a statue of Nandi. The basement molding is carved with dwarfs, birds and few Lingams on the topmost mold.

The exterior walls of the sanctuary are carved on the south with Siva holding an axe in his left hand, Vishnu with a disc and conch on the north and a faded Surya on the west. The doorframe of the sanctuary is flanked with round pilasters; the sculpture on the doorframe has been obliterated. A black stone Lingam is enshrined in the sanctum, which lacks a circumambulatory passage. The tower, similar to the tower of Kadasiddhesvara temple, has a pronounced horseshoe-



shaped arched projection on the east façade carved with the image of Nataraja, accompanied by Parvati and Nandi.



Fig. 2.99. Patadkal. Jambulinga Temple. Ca. 8th Century. Sandstone.

Papanatha, the largest temple in northern style, incorporates some southern-style elements. It is situated adjacent to the Archeology compound (Fig. 2.100). It was possibly constructed in the early eighth century during the reign of Kirtivarman II (745-757).



Fig. 2.100. Patadkal. Papanatha Temple. Ca. 745-757. Sandstone.

The original temple probably consisted of small rectangular mandapa with four sixteen-sided columns, a sanctum with northern-style tower and Nandi mandapa in front. Later the mandapa was dismantled and a larger mandapa was constructed to include a circumambulatory passage around the sanctum, similar to Galaganatha temple, in the complex. Shortly thereafter another larger outer mandapa was constructed, enclosing the Nandi, and the two mandapas were joined making the combined mandapa disproportionately long compared to the height of the tower.

As the temple stands on the bank of the river, it was raised on a 2 m (6 ft.) high platform of stone blocks, facing the river, with opposing steps climbing to the temple. The entrance porch with opposite balcony seats is supported on two intricately decorated pillars bearing loving couples, a horse-headed female and two pilasters (Fig. 2.101).



Fig. 2.101. Patadkal. Papanatha Temple. Entrance porch. Ca. 745-757. Sandstone.

Only one doorkeeper leaning on his club has survived beside the lavishly carved mandapa entrance. The southern-style multi-faceted basement is decorated with foliage in the recesses and lions attacking elephants on the front entrance porch basement. The exterior walls have thirty-four niches projecting slightly from the walls and reaching the *kaputa* cornice. The niches have pilasters on either sides, carrying part *gavaksa* in complex designs above, flanked by flying figures. Some of the niches have beautifully carved windows and intricate floral designs and deities, interposed by beautiful females standing in three body bends. An exterior porch is carved with deities in the niches and on the column (Fig. 2.102).



Fig. 2.102. Patadkal. Papanatha Temple. Exterior. Porch. Ca. 745-757. Sandstone.

A large number of panels are carved with scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, narrating the episodes of

the conquest of Lanka by Rama and the boar hunt by Arjuna and Siva, and the handing over of the magic axe by Siva to Arjuna. Other wall sculptures depict Yama on the buffalo, Brahma, Varuna and Indra on an elephant, Krishna holding Mount Govardhana in hand, Ganesha and Durga, Trivikrama and Vishnu riding Garuda. The exterior walls of the ambulatory passage has three porches.

The outer large mandapa has four rows of four massive columns. A finely polished Nandi, facing the sanctum, is sitting in the passage at the entrance of the mandapa. The central two rows of pillars are sixteen-sided, with females carved on the base. The capitals of the columns bear foliage motifs and brackets with *yalis* and monster masks. Beams carrying the sloping slabs of the roof are carved with dwarfs, garlands, and images of Siva and Parvati. The beams of the passage near the sanctum are carved with figures emerging from the open mouth of the *makara* (Fig. 2.103) and intricate decorations. Amorous couples are carved on the pilasters on the interior walls. The mandapa ceiling is carved with a number of reliefs including Siva dancing in the company of Parvati, and musicians, and Siva dancing with a trident. Parvati, carved in ideal feminine beauty, is standing with three body bends (Fig. 2.104).



Fig. 2.103. Patadkal. Papanatha Temple. Decorated beams. Ca. 745-757. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.104. Patadkal. Papanatha Temple. Nataraja on ceiling. Ca. 745-757. Sandstone.

Decorated niches on the middle of the mandapa interior walls are carved with Ganesha and Durga killing the human-shaped buffalo demon. A Man-Garuda is carved on the door lintel of the second mandapa. Doorkeepers are carved on the pilasters flanking the entrance, holding clubs. The four decorated columns of the second mandapa are similar to the aisle columns of the first mandapa. The decorated façade of the sanctum is carved with a Garuda on the lintel, round pilasters on each side, and Ganga and Jamuna accompanied by females in body bends. A black stone Lingam on a pedestal is enshrined in the sanctum. The tower resembles the towers of Kadasiddhesvara and Jambulinga temples and may have been constructed around the same time.

Lokamahadevi, the queen of Vikramaditya II (696-745), constructed the Virupaksha temple to commemorate her husband's victory over the Pallava. The military campaign with Pallava ended in 745, so that this temple must have been constructed in the second half of the eighth century. The name of the master architect, Gunda, is carved on the mandapa and many artists have signed their creation. This is the best preserved, largest and (originally) the most ornate temple of its time in India. The floor plan of the temple is similar to the Kailas temple at Ellora. The similarity ends with there, as the two structures are fundamentally different. All the units of the temple are aligned on an east-west axis. The rectangular temple stands in a paved court enclosed in a wall with two entrances, one opening to the Malaprabha River on the east (Fig. 2.105) and other, smaller gate on the west.



Fig. 2.105. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. East entrance gate. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The entrance porch with high balcony seats is supported on two pillars and two pilasters. A large weathered Nandi is located in front of the east entrance porch. It appears to be a later addition. The side walls of the porch are decorated with shallow niches with eaves above, with carvings that are now faded. Above the eave the walls are carved with temple models flanked by seated worshippers and a band of dwarfs. Below the deep eave, on top of the wall, friezes are filled with

garlands and the parapet wall above is decorated with *kuta* and *sala*. The compound wall around the temple has small, dilapidated built-in sub-shrines facing the temple. The enclosure wall interlocks with the enclosure wall of the Mallikarjuna temple; part of the wall is missing, leaving a gap on the north. The entrance porch leads to an open yard with a large, open, square Nandi Pavilion (Fig. 2.106).



Fig. 2.106 Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Nandi mandapa. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.107. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Apsara on Nandi mandapa pillar. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The pavilion stands on a 2.5 m (8 feet) high basement with a flat roof supported on four circular pillars. It is lavishly decorated both inside and out, with beautiful females on the walls and pillars, including a graceful female in three body bends feeding a bird from her hand (Fig. 2.107). A 2 m (6 ft.) tall polished black stone Nandi is seated in the pavilion facing the temple.

The temple stands on a high platform surrounded by small shrines (Fig. 2. 108). The entrance porch on the east has decorated the eaves and balcony seats. Doorkeepers guard the entrance to the temple. The exterior walls have pierced windows decorated with attractive floral designs set in niches that admit light and air to the interior. Niches

with huge panels are flanked by slender pilasters. There are some niches above, with short cornices decorated with *kudus* enclosing Nataraja, human heads or group of men. Some niches are carved above with Lakshmi seated on a lotus and elephants pouring water on her, with graceful trailing vines, or flying couples. Some niches are carved below with friezes of animals. Thirty-five niches on the exterior walls bear elaborately dressed images.



Fig. 2.108. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.109. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Right façade. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

On the right side of the porch, Vishnu as Trivikrama is carved in a niche decorated with *makaras* bearing foliated tails on one side of the mandapa entrance and Vishnu standing with a conch and wheel interposed is standing between the windows carved with fancy designs (Fig. 2.109). On the other side, Nataraja is dancing on a dwarf and Siva is standing with Parvati, with one leg on Nandi (Fig. 2.110).

On the east wall of the mandapa, Siva is carved emerging from the Lingam. The Lingam, fringed with flames, is flanked by Vishnu at the bottom and a three-headed Brahma near the top (Fig. 2.111). The niches are decorated with peacocks bearing foliated tails, Lakshmi bathed by elephants, and flying males.



Fig. 2.110. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Temple left façade. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The next niche, decorated above with flying figures, is carved with Siva standing on a dwarf. The niches are flanked with windows with delightful designs installed between. The corresponding mandapa wall on the other side has a carving of Nataraja on a dwarf and Siva and Parvati standing with pierced stone windows interposed (Fig. 2.112).



Fig. 2.111. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Porch side view. Entrance Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.112. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The side walls of the mandapa are carved with Siva standing with Nandi. Ardhanari, with her tilted hip, carved in a beautifully decorated niche, has physical features not much different from those of Siva except for her breast. In other carvings Siva is standing in a regal pose, as an ascetic standing with matted hair, with one leg on a dwarf, while above beautiful females are riding *makara*. In other niches Vishnu, in regal pose, is standing with his emblems and as a boar he is standing with one leg on the head of Sessa, carrying Mother Earth on one arm. One carving depicts Siva standing with a trident impaling a human. To the side a panel is carved with episodes from the Ramayana, depicting Ravana kidnapping Sita. He is brandishing a sword at Jatayu while Sita stands in the racing chariot. This is followed by an embracing mithuna couple, the female entangling her leg with the male's. Attractive full-bodied highly decorated damsels with body bends are carved in panels around the temple. A full bodied *apsara* stands, looking into a hand-held mirror (Fig. 2.113). A tall, slim female with broad hips and body bends is holding a staff with elephant carved at the top (Fig. 2.115).

Fig. 2.113. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Apsara looking in mirror. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.114. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Apsara holding staff. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The three side porches on the exterior wall bear decorations on the side walls and on the ceilings, with Nataraja in the center flanked by old sages and females. The side porch-

es, with columns and balcony seats, admit light and air to the interior.

The large square mandapa has four rows of four columns and two more columns at the sanctum entrance. All the columns in the center of mandapa are lavishly decorated with friezes, one below the other, narrating episodes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Columns near the walls are carved with loving and mithuna couples. The interior of the east porch is decorated with celestials. One west porch column is carved with Surya driving a chariot. The south porch column is carved with Ravana with one of his multiple faces on the back, a twisted body and feet sinking into the ground while lifting the Kailas in one of his multiple hands (Fig. 2.115).



Fig. 2.115. Patadkal. Virupaksha Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Ravana lifting Kailas. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The twisted body of Ravana and a hotchpotch of figures on the mountain lack expression and drama. An antechamber leads to the square sanctum guarded by Siva. The sanctum door is flanked by profusely decorated pilasters with river goddess at the bottom. Ceiling is decorated with Siva dancing on dwarf. The sanctum is enshrined with a polished black stone Lingam. Two small minor shrines with decorated entrances flank the sanctum entrance. A circumambulatory passage around the sanctum begins at the right of one shrine and ends at the left of the other. The south shrine is dedicated to Ganesha, but the slab carved with Ganesha has been removed. The north shrine contains a majestic sculpture of Durga killing the buffalo demon. Her trident has pierced the neck and the sword has pierced the chest of the demon. In early carvings, the demon killed by Durga were carved as a buffalo, later changed to a human with buffalo head. In this sculpture the demon is carved as human with buffalo horns.

The highly decorated four-sided small tower has three receding tiers. The walls of the lower two stories are carved with projecting pilasters bearing the *kuta-sala-kuta* sequence. The third story has walls with pilasters and eaves decorated

with *kuta* only. The *sukanasa* with a vaulted wagon roof on the façade of the tower is carved with a temple model. A large square *kuta* decorated with *kudus* on all sides adorns the top. Above the square *kuta* a pot-like finial stands at the height of 17.5 m (54 ft) above the ground, making this the tallest Chalukya tower.

The beautiful stone windows on the walls, relief carvings on the columns, and decorated beams are highlights of Chalukya architecture. The sculpture is soft and lyrical compared to that at Ellora. The temple is contemporary to the Kailas temple at Ellora. Patadkal, for a short period, was under the rule of the Rashtrakuta king, Krishna, who built the Kailas temple at Ellora.

The second queen of Vijayaditya (696-733) was a sister of the first queen, who built the Virupaksha temple. This compact temple is similar to Virupaksha but is advanced in style and was left unfinished. The interlocking of the compound wall with the gap between the compound walls of the two temples indicates that this one was possibly built after the Virupaksha temple. The east gateway may never have been constructed. Part of the west gateway has survived. A damaged Nandi mandapa, standing on a raised, molded basement decorated with animal friezes, features two green, unfinished Nandi; it is located in front of the temple (Fig. 2.116).

An extended porch on the front façade rests on two short and robust decorated pillars. The walls are carved with females in various postures. The sculpture at one corner depicts two beautiful *apsaras* in interesting poses (Fig. 2.117). Both decorated females with body bends are standing under a tree. The posture of the female standing in side profile, with her upper body turned to face the front, is unique. Shifting her body weight onto one leg, she has pushed out her torso out of the niche frame.



Fig. 2.116. Patadkal. Mallikarjuna Temple. Nandi mandapa. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 2.117. Patadkal. Mallikarjuna Temple. Carvings on Nandi mandapa wall. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The style of her hands resting on her thigh is aristocratic, telling everyone, “I am beautiful and I know it.” The pose of the tall, delicate, highly decorated soft-bodied female standing with one leg resting on a tree trunk behind her is very attractive and is unique in the placement of a draped garment between her legs. She is holding a bird in her hand.



Fig. 2.118. Patadkal. Mallikarjuna Temple. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The temple stands on a basement decorated with a molding (Fig. 2.118). Most of the sculpture and its placement on the exterior walls are similar to the sculpture in the Virupaksha temple, as is the entrance porch, which is likewise badly damaged. Many beautifully-designed stone windows are broken.

There are 27 niches on the exterior walls with decorative carvings above and below. Seven of the panels are empty and seven bear incomplete images. There is no sculpture on the east side of the temple. On the exterior walls a standing Siva, with right hand in a protection gesture, and Ardhanari, are carved in the windows. Ardhanari’s half body again shows little differentiation from Siva’s, as it lacks curves aside from the slightly bulging hips and large, pimple-like breast. An-

other niche is carved with a standing Siva, and robust Parvati with body bends.

A flying couple carved on the exterior wall is more interesting (Fig. 2.119). The flying pair is carved as a ship sailing on water. The legs of the male are carved in the shape of a boat. He is holding a dish in one hand, heaped with sweets. The female is heavily ornamented and is holding a flower bud in her hand. Usually, the females are carved with a small piece of garment or floating hair to indicate the forward movement of the couple. In this case the female is resting on the bent leg of the male, which resembles a spar on a sail boat. The carvings behind the female appear like a sail decorated with flower petals. Her folded hand resting on the shoulder of the flying male in front has dragged one of her breasts to rest on the shoulder of the male. She looks like she is steering the ship.



Fig. 2.119. Patadkal. Mallikarjuna Temple. Flying couple on exterior wall. Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The porches of the temple are similar but smaller than the porches of Virupaksha. The columns of the east porch are carved with an eight-armed Nrsimha killing two victims at a time and Siva holding a trident and snake. The south porch is badly damaged. The better-preserved north porch columns are carved with images of Vishnu on Garuda, lovers, and mithuna couples. Siva with his trident and clubs is carved on the pilasters flanking the entrance.

The interior of the mandapa is similar to but smaller than the mandapa of Virupaksha. Most of the carvings on the pillars are similar to the carvings on the Virupaksha temple. The story of the seduction of Ahalya by Indra, from the Panchtantra, can be seen on the columns. Ahalya was turned into stone after Indra seduced her and made love to her. Vishnu brought her back to life, eons later. The carving of Durga advancing on a lion to kill the demon is a copy of the carving at Mamalapuram.

Nataraja with Parvati and Nandi, a naga with a coiled tail and elephants giving a bath to Lakshmi are carved on the ceiling. Mithuna couples are carved on columns near the walls. Minor shrines flanking the sanctum door, now empty, were possibly dedicated to Ganesha and Durga killing the demon. The ceiling of the antechamber is carved with Siva and Parvati, with other celestials. Doorkeepers flank the sanctum. The entrance is carved with decorations and man-Garuda in the center of the lintel. A black stone Lingam is enshrined in the sanctum. The ceiling of the sanctum is carved with lotus. The highly decorated pyramidal tower is similar to the Virupaksha temple tower.

The design and layout of the South Indian temple was now complete. By the addition of repetitive units, height was achieved (within certain limits in various regions). The addition of local decoration gives a regional flavor to various examples. Most of the decorative designs of these temples were evolved at Mamalapurum.

Near the end of their reign the Chalukya concentrated again on the construction of northern-style temples.



Fig. 2.120. Patadkal. Kashivishvanatha Temple.

Ca. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Kashivishvanatha temple was probably constructed near the end of the eighth century. It is situated very close to the Mallikarjuna temple. The enclosure wall stops short of the Mallikarjuna temple façade. A dilapidated Nandi mandapa with plinth and worn down, squatting Nandi stands in front of the temple. The high molded plinth of the temple is decorated at the top with vine decorations. The exterior surface of the temple has a varying number of projection running from the plinth to the top on the sanctum, vestibule and mandapa. The projections from the sanctum wall continue

on each side of the tower. The highly decorated curvilinear tower ends in a frieze carved with miniature pilasters under the flat top. The *amalaka* is missing. The square tower has five bands of decorations on each side; the central broad band is flanked two narrow bands on each side. All the bands are carved with interlocking *gavaksa*, giving a mesh appearance to the tower.

The bands at the corners of the tower are decorated with small *amalaka* pieces, cornices, and *gavaksa* arches. On the façade of the tower the broad central band composed of four bands of *gavaska* arches and large chaitya window above is carved with Nataraja accompanied by Parvati. The chaitya window is beautifully decorated with beaded garlands and flying figures on the side and above. The flanking chaitya windows with images of gods are not complete.

The entrance façade of the shrine is decorated with three bands of foliations on the jamb and a beautiful Ganga and Jamuna accompanied by mithuna couples at the jamb base. The lintel of the door is carved with man-Garuda. Flanking the entrance are decorated niches carved between sets of pilasters, with eaves above. The carvings in both niches are broken. There is a band of sculpture above the eave. The small rectangular ornate mandapa has four pillars with sixteen sides. The pillars are carved with stories from the life of Krishna and various incarnations of Siva. Siva and Parvati with Kattrikeya in her arms are carved in the center of the ceiling. The entrance to the sanctum, flanked by doorkeepers, is decorated like the temple entrance. Beautiful Ganga and Jamuna, with delicate bodies in three body bends, at the jamb base, are accompanied by two equally beautiful females. One of the females is holding a parasol above the goddess. A black Lingam on a pedestal is enshrined in the sanctum. Miniature Dravidian-style temples are carved on the east wall of the sanctum and a lotus is carved on the ceiling.

Chandrasekhara, a small temple, was constructed during the Rashtrakuta period in the late eighth or the ninth century (Fig. 2.121). It is located between the Galaganatha and Sangameshvara temples. This is the only temple inside the archeology compound constructed by Rashtrakuta. The characteristic feature of the Rashtrakuta temples are the few carving of figures on the walls, the decoration of the temple façade with slender pilasters carrying modeled capitals and brackets, and a porch with squat circular columns and brackets. The plain entrance to the shrine is flanked by pilasters. An antechamber with niches on the side walls is carved with a relief of *sala*.

On the sanctum walls, a pair of *makara* is carved on the brackets of the central pilasters. The sanctum is enshrined with a Lingam. There is no superstructure on the shrine.



Fig. 2.121. Patadkal. Chandrasekhara Temple.

Ca. 8-9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Jain temple, constructed in typical Rashtrakuta style in the ninth century, is located some distance away from Patadkal village. The temple stands on a modeled basement with no decoration at all on the exterior walls except between the closely-set pilasters (Fig. 2.123).



Fig. 2.122. Patadkal. Jain Temple. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone (Photo taken from Album of the Archeological Survey of India on site).



Fig. 2.123. Patadkal. Jain Temple. Dismantled porch. Sanctum in the rear. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone

The front porch has been dismantled for reconstruction. The spacious porch had twelve circular squat columns, and a life-size front half of an elephant with riders flanking the door to the vestibule. The plain entrance to vestibule of the dismantled temple is carved with *makaras* with exaggerated foliated tails (2.123). There was no figurative carving any-

where in the temple, except a Jain figure in the *kuta* of the *kaputa* cornice on the north side. The one-chambered tower with *kuta* roof decorated with *kudus* on four sides and plain pilasters on the exterior walls has been dismantled for renovation. The outer circumambulation passage around the detached sanctum is not enclosed. Roof slabs from the sanctum project over the passage. The elephants and columns have been removed for renovation of porch and are kept in front of the temple for latter installation (Fig. 2.124).



Fig. 2.124. Patadkal. Jain Temple. Dismantled Elephant. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The temple building activity of the early Chalukya ended at Patadkal, where the finest of the Chalukya temples were constructed.



## 12. THE CAVES AT ELLORA (550–950)

The Ellora caves were excavated from 550 to 950. They are located 28 km (17 miles) from Aurangabad in central India. There are no lodging and boarding facilities at Ellora but Aurangabad is a convenient base, offering boarding and lodging and convenient public transportation to the site. UNESCO declared the monuments at Ellora World Heritage Monuments in 1983. At Ellora there are Hindu, Buddhist and Jain caves; they reached the climax of development as well as the demise of the cave-carving trend altogether.

The Buddhists had adopted many Hindu temple features at Aurangabad and refined them at Ellora. Many of the changes Buddhism was undergoing under the Mahayana influence are seen at Ellora. Tantrism and the carving of sensual females became prominent, and female deities like Tara and others similar to the Siva Shakti were more often seen. New groups of Buddha and additional shrines were added to existing caves. The stupa lost its original form. The façade of the stupa was occupied by an arch with Buddha seated below. The superstructure appeared like a round pot above the arch. The shrine, under Hindu influence, was detached from the rear wall with a well-defined circumambulatory passage at Aurangabad, but multi-armed goddesses appeared for the first time at Ellora.

The Buddhist excavated grandiose three-storied caves. Though Buddhism did not die out at this time, it appears to have been suppressed by the Hindu Rashtrakuta dynasty in the south. The political and social control of Indian society by Buddhism came to an end in the seventh-eighth century.

Cave 12 is the last and most elaborate vertical cave excavated at Ellora, and with it the era of cave excavation in India by Buddhists came to an end. Each storey of the cave is larger than any single cave at Ajanta. The Moslems' burning of libraries and monasteries, and the prosecution of monks — the nucleus of the Buddhist organization and guardians of Buddhist beliefs — drove them to other lands where Buddhism was flourishing.

The Hindus modified the cave designs evolved by the Buddhists to meet their needs. By this time the freestanding stone structural temple had evolved. The Hindus radically changed the cave, but at first were unable to shake off the cave design altogether. The cave was started as a monolithic structure; the roof was torn open and the fully developed temple was liberated from the dark constraints and exposed to sunlight. The process of liberation of the temple from confinement was started with the three entrances of the Siva cave at Elephanta, the open courtyard of the Buddhist Cave 12, the open courtyard with a monolithic hall in Cave 15 and finally the roofless Cave 16. Cave 16 appears more like an open pit with a monolithic temple sitting in it. In place of residential cells on the side walls, colonnades with galleries were excavated. The Hindus did not excavate important caves after that, although some small minor caves were still carved during the next couple of centuries.

The Chalukya had developed freestanding stone structural temples that could withstand centuries of nature's destructive forces outside the caves, so that it was no longer necessary to confine the temples to caves in hilly regions. In addition, providing residence for monks was not a major function of the Hindu cave.

Hindu royalty began to act as patrons sponsoring the construction of religious monuments, and temples flourished. The caves lost importance and the era of cave excavation

vation by Hindus, Buddhist and Jains was over by the end of the eleventh-twelfth century.

But before then, craftsmen well experienced in cave excavation at Ajanta, and their descendants, created 34 caves at Ellora in the basaltic volcanic outcrops of the Sahyadri hills. The excavation of caves at Ajanta had practically ceased by this time. The technique for excavating the Ellora caves was similar to the technique used at Ajanta. The first 16 caves are in a row and the remaining caves are spread in small groups over an area of about 2.2 km (1 mile) to the north. The caves are given numbers in standing sequence rather than according to the date of excavation. The first twelve caves, located at the south end, are Buddhist Mahayana viharas except Cave 10, which is a chaitya cave. The remaining caves, numbers 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the south row, are Hindu caves. At the north end, in small groups, there are 13 Hindu caves. The last caves, a group of 5, are Jain caves.

It was earlier believed that Buddhists excavated Caves 1 to 5 in the first phase in the fifth century during the Vakataka regime. Some of the early caves excavated at the south end have unfinished sculpture, possibly indicating that the patronage abruptly came to a halt, as in Ajanta, due to the abrupt end of the Vakataka regime.

During the sixth century the Chalukya seized control of the southwestern Deccan, with Badami as their capital, and during their regime in the seventh and possibly the first part of the eighth century the rest of the eight Buddhist Mahayana caves were excavated, in line with the previous caves. Hindus excavated caves starting in the latter part of the seventh and the eighth century. M.K. Dhavalikar states that recent research suggests Buddhists excavated Caves 6, 5, 2, 3 and 1 in the right wing of the south end starting in 600, and after a century of work, in around 700, excavation stopped with numbers 4, 7, 8, 10, 9, 11 and 12 at the south end. The Chalukya ruled this region during the sixth and seventh century CE.

Hindus started the excavation of Caves 28, 27, and 19, followed by 29, 20, 26 and 21, in 550, earlier than the second set of Buddhist caves in the left wing of the south end. The style and volume of the figures in Caves 29 and 21 show the influence of Kalacuri art. Cave 21 has possibly the best sculpture in Ellora and Cave 29 resembles the Siva cave at Elephanta in both the style of sculpture and the layout. All these Hindu caves are scattered north of the Buddhist caves in small groups in an area of about 2.2 km (1 mile).

The Rashtrakuta, feudatories of the Chalukya, seized power from them in 752; they moved the capital to Ellora and then to Paithan, near Ellora, and remained in power till 973. Staunchly Hindu, the Rashtrakuta dynasty excavated the re-

maining Hindu caves (13, 14, 15, and 16) in line with the Buddhist caves at the south end. The order of excavation of the Hindu caves was possibly 28, 27, 19, 29, 21, 20, 26, 17, 19, 18, 14 and 16 (Kailas). Kailas, the last cave, was excavated during 750-800.

Both the Hindus and the Buddhists were busy excavating caves in the seventh century. The Buddhists stopped this work by the start of the eighth century; the Hindus worked vigorously in the eighth century and stopped after the excavation of Cave 16 in 783. A couple of minor groups of cave temples were excavated in the eleventh and twelfth century. In the ninth century, during the reign of Rashtrakuta ruler Amoghavarsha (819-881), a great patron of Jains, the Jain excavated five caves at some distance from the Hindu caves, in a group at the north end. The Jains ceased excavating in the early tenth century. It is interesting to note that Jain caves are located in association with Hindu caves in all the religious centers, indicating the cardinal relationship between Jains and Hindus. Possibly in the twelfth century the Ganesha Lena caves, located 100m above Cave 29, were excavated, with images of Ganesha, Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. Yageshvari, the last group of small cave shrines, is located further up. Siva as Trimurti is carved in one shrine. None of these shrines have sculpture of much artistic value.

Lay Buddhist worshippers sponsored the Buddhist caves. The Kalacuri, Rashtrakuta and possibly Chalukya were the patrons of the Hindu caves. The Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha was a probable patron of the Jain caves. Jains by their religious beliefs are restricted to professions in trade and they are a rich community; they may also have contributed to the finances. All the Buddhist caves, and some of the Hindu and Jain caves, were decorated with paintings but these have faded. A few faded murals on the ceiling of Cave ceiling and patches of paintings in Hindu Cave 16 have survived.



Fig. 2.125. Ellora. Caves 1-5.

Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.126. Ellora. Cave 2. Façade.

Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

The early Buddhist caves, 6, 5, 2, 3, 1, were excavated during 600. Caves 1-5 are located at the start of the south group (Fig. 2.125). Cave 1, a monastery with a dilapidated verandah and eight residential cells on the side walls, was possibly an experimental cave.



Fig. 2.127. Ellora. Cave 2. Tara. Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 2, a large cave with verandah, is reached by a flight of steps (Fig. 2.126). In a small shrine at one end of Cave 2, in the verandah, pot-bellied Jambhala, the guardian of treasure, is seated, possibly holding a lotus in one hand, attended by a *chamara* bearer. A bag of money is lying near his other hand. He is wearing a decorated headdress. The façade of the cave is decorated with small figures of Buddha and others. Two huge guardians, possibly Avalokiteshvara and Vijarapani, wearing jewelry and with halos behind their elaborate headdress, flank the entrance door. On the other side of the verandah there may have been another shrine, which has collapsed. The square hall inside has twelve massive pillars and galleries on the opposite side. There is a carving of a sensual Tara holding a lotus in one hand and the other hand in a protection gesture, with two female attendants flanking her and flying figures in the corners (Fig. 2.127). A highly decorated Vijarapani stands in similar niche. Each cell in the side wall is decorated with a seated Buddha flanked by *chamara* bearers. Some of the carvings are unfinished.

On both ends of the back wall is a double cell aligned with the side aisles, with several figures of Buddha. The shrine guarded by Avalokiteshvara and Vijarapani has a colossal image of a seated Buddha on a lion throne with hands in preaching gesture, flanked by Tara and possibly Avalokiteshvara holding a *chamara*, and flying Vidyadharas. There are no residential cells in the cave and possibly it served as shrine for meditation.



Fig. 2.128. Ellora. Cave 3. Verandah chapel. Buddha. Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 3 is a Vahara with residential cells in the side walls. The cave has a verandah with a chapel on the left side with an image of Buddha seated cross-legged in the witness-calling position, on a lotus flanked by *chamara* bearers (Fig. 2.128). Nagas holding the stalk in their hands support the flower above by their hoods. The chapel on the right side of the verandah has collapsed. Near the cave entrance Avalokiteshvara is carved. He is the protector of travelers. He is surrounded by eight small carvings depicting travelers facing the perils of the journey (Fig. 2.129). He is holding a lotus bud with a long stalk. The carving is similar to carvings in Cave 8 at Aurangabad, but not as sophisticated. The square hall of the cave has twelve square pillars with square shafts. There are five residential cells on the left side wall and four on the right; a fifth cell was destroyed when the chapel on the right collapsed on the verandah. There are two cells in the back wall flanking a shrine with an unfinished image of seated Buddha.



Fig. 2.129. Ellora. Cave 3. Avalokiteshvara. Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 4, a vihara, is smaller than Cave 3 but has two stories. The façade pillars carved with pot-and-foilage motifs and the façade are badly damaged. The square hall has unfinished cells. On the left Avalokiteshvara is seated, a halo behind his head, on a throne, with a small image of Buddha in his crown. He is holding a rosary and lotus in his hands and is flanked with by female attendants. One of the attendants, holding a lotus in hand, is possibly his spouse Tara. Above, to the left, Buddha is standing with his hands held in a protection granting gesture. Two pillars are in front of the vestibule. The shrine on the rear wall flanked by guards has a seated Buddha with his hands in a teaching gesture. Tall attendants and a female *chamara* bearer flank Buddha. To the west of the cell door Avalokiteshvara is standing. On both ends of the back wall is a cell. A small shrine in the cave houses Avalokiteshvara. Four small carvings on one side depict devotees praying to him for protection from assault, a man holding a sword, imprisonment, and shipwreck. The upper storey has no direct passage, but it connected with Cave 5 on the south. It is depilated. Only a few cells have survived. The shrine on the back wall has an image of a seated Buddha with attendants, and a circumambulatory passage. Sensual Tara, with her ideal feminine body posed in body bends, is standing with a lotus in her hand, flanked by female attendants and Vidyadharas (Fig. 2.130).



Fig. 2.130. Ellora. Cave 4. Tara. Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.131. Ellora. Cave 5. Hall. Ca. Early 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 5 is a large vihara with a rectangular hall 35m (109 ft.) deep (Fig. 2.131). The façade of the cave was destroyed, possibly by landslide. Two rows of eight massive square pillars near the side walls and two rows of four pillars near the front and back end surround a deep rectangular hall in the center. The pillars have square shafts and cushion capitals. Two long rows of low stone benches are carved in the center of the hall. Monks possibly used the benches to sit and chant Tantric ritual recitations. On the rear wall Buddha is seated on a throne, his hands in a teaching gesture and legs resting on a lotus in the main shrine. A highly ornamented Avalokiteshvara and Vijarapani with crowns and halo behind their heads guard the entrance. Small residential cells are cut into the side walls along with two spacious and better-planned additional shrines in the center of the side walls. The side walls are carved with highly decorated niches, some of them featuring images of Vijarapani and Avalokiteshvara holding a lotus attended by females with body bends.

All the remaining Buddhist Caves were excavated during 630-700 (Fig. 2.132).



Fig. 2.132. Ellora. Caves 6, 7 and 8. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Cave 6 is reached by descending a few steps. The façade is totally destroyed. Only a square hall with three cells on the back wall has survived. The vestibule is decorated with the Buddhist goddess of learning, Mahamayuri (Fig. 2.133). She is very dignified and beautiful, but not as beautiful as in Cave 6. She is carved with an idealized feminine body without body bends. She is attended by a female on one side. On the other side a pupil sitting below the spread tail of a peacock with a writing tablet in front. There are flying Vidyadharas in the upper corner. The Vidyadharas are mostly carved single, not as pairs. There is another image, possibly of Bodhisattva Manjusri, carved on the wall. He wears a deerskin on his left shoulder. In the main shrine a seated Buddha is flanked by attendants and devotees. Small images of Buddha flanked by attendants and devotees are carved on the side walls.



Fig. 2.133. Ellora. Caves 6. Mahamayuri.

Ca. 630-70. Basalt.

Cave 7, a dilapidated vihara, has a hall with four pillars decorated with bracket figures.



Fig. 2.134. Ellora. Cave 7. Maitreya Buddha.

Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Two of the five cells in the cave are incomplete. The future Buddha, Maitreya, is standing in royal pose with folded hands and slightly flexed body, guarding the shrine (Fig. 2.134). There is a halo behind his beautiful headdress.

Cave 8, with two stories, was possibly excavated around 700 (Fig. 2.135). The façade of the ground storey bears incomplete carvings on one side. The ground storey is incomplete and the cave resemble Hindu Cave 14. The entry to the first storey is through a tunnel from Cave 7. The two pillars and pilasters are decorated with carvings. The façade of the first storey is carved with a row of seated Buddha and above with chaitya windows occupied by seated Buddhas in three rows and other standing figures. There are three cells on the left wall of the hall. Carvings of Buddha figures adorn the walls of the hall. Side wall has an image of a seated Tara. The vestibule is pillared. The main shrine, surrounded by circumambulatory passage, has the image of Buddha detached from the rear wall and is guarded by Avalokiteshvara holding a lotus, and Vijarapani.



Fig. 2.135. Ellora. Cave 8. Façade. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

The southern end of the ambulatory passage is carved with an image of Mahamayuri (Fig. 2.136). Her carving is not as attractive as the one in Cave 6. She is attended on one side by a beautiful *chamara* bearer and on the other side by a peacock carved in profile and a pupil seated on the ground with a writing tablet.



Fig. 2.136. Ellora. Cave 8. Mahamayuri.

Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Cave 9, tentatively dated to 700, is dilapidated. A band on the façade is carved with small figures of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, above which are chaitya windows carved with Buddha figures. The façade has an unusual carving of the Goddess Tara rescuing devotees from the perils of a journey. This is the only depiction of the Tara litany in India. A chapel on the back wall is carved with Buddha, seated, with hands in a teaching gesture, on a throne, with Vidyadharas in the corners (Fig. 2.137).

Vijarapani and Avalokiteshvara, in the company of male and female attendants, flank Buddha, standing in niches with pillars with cushion capitals.



Fig. 2.137. Ellora. Caves 9. Side chapel. Ca. 630-70. Basalt.



Fig. 2.138. Ellora. Cave 10. Façade. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Cave 10, excavated in the early eighth century, is the only chaitya at Ellora (Fig. 2.138). It is the last chaitya excavated in central India.

The entrance to the cave was through a gateway in the front rock screen wall, now broken. The gateway with a few steps leads to a spacious, open courtyard and pillared verandah on either side. The back walls of the verandah on both sides have unfinished chambers, possibly intended as subsidiary shrines. At the far ends of the verandah, on the back walls, a single cell and another cell on the right of the first cell were possibly intended as shrines. The pillars of the corridors have massive square shafts with vases and foliage carved on the capitals. A flight of steps from the verandah leads to the upper storey, which is similar to the chorus gallery of a modern church. The parapet wall of the gallery at the base is carved with herds of various animals. Above the animals a band is carved with seated figures.

It has the smallest chaitya window known. The window is flanked by flying *apsaras*, small figures and sculptural decorations. At one corner of the gallery Avalokiteshvara is carved, standing in a decorated niche with attendants. At the other end a similar niche has a carving of Vijarapani. The en-

trance on the ground floor leads to a high, spacious, apsidal chaitya hall divided into central nave and side aisles, supported by pillars carved with hunting scenes and Buddha, with his hands in a preaching gesture, flanked by attendants and dwarfs. The roof is carved with rafters imitating the wooden beams of south Indian huts. The stupa at the far end has a huge carving of Maitreya Buddha, seated on a throne, his hands in a teaching gesture, under an arch covering the front face of the stupa (Fig. 2.139).



Fig. 2.139. Ellora. Cave 10. Stupa. Ca. 630-70. Basalt.

He is flanked by two attendants, possibly Avalokiteshvara and Vijarapani. A Bodhi tree and *Vidyadhara*s are carved on the arch. The umbrella on the top of the stupa has been replaced with a structure resembling a round pot.



Fig. 2.140. Ellora. Cave 11. Shrine in verandah. Broken statue of Buddha. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Caves 11 and 12 are the largest Buddhist vihara caves, excavated with three stories, in the seventh century. The entrance to both caves is through a gateway cut through a rock

screen in the front leading to a spacious rock-cut court. The floor level of Cave 11, buried in debris accumulated over the centuries, was exposed during 1876-1877 cleanups. Several sculptures, in caves used by all the three religions while Aurangzeb was Mughal viceroy of Deccan at Aurangabad, were mutilated and broken by Muslims. A statue of Buddha, with a broken head and damaged arm, is located in a verandah shrine (Fig. 2.140).

Cave 16 (Kailas) was the most damaged. To the left of the court in a shrine near the entrance is a shrine with Avalokiteshvara seated cross-legged. Tara and four-armed Bhrikuti are seated on either side (Fig. 2.141).



Fig. 2.141. Ellora. Cave 11. Shrine in verandah. Goddess with four arms. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Another four-armed goddess, Chunda, is carved on the left wall. Another shrine had a statue of Buddha flanked by the Bodhisattvas. The Rashtrakuta carved the Hindu gods Ganesha and Durga on this wall. The ground floor has a long, pillared verandah and a shrine in the back wall with a Buddha figure flanked by Padmapani and Vijarapani. To the left of the shrine is another cell. In the left hand corner, a cell with a staircase leads to the first floor.

The first floor has a long, pillared hall with five cells on the side wall. The first cell is incomplete. The last cell has a rock-cut bed. The remaining three cells house Buddha, attended by the Bodhisattvas. There are three shrines on back wall. The first cell is unfinished. The next cell has a small shrine with a huge image of a seated Buddha with hands in a gesture of calling the earth to witness, flanked by Padmapani and Vijarapani. A devotee is prostrated before Buddha. A female figure facing Buddha and holding a pot in her hand may represent Sujata. Buddha practiced extreme austerity and

self-mortification, eating only roots and fruits for six years. Sujata offered him his first solid food when he decided to give up self-mortification. On the left wall of the shrine, seated Bodhisattvas are carved. Maitreya Buddha with a miniature stupa in his crown, the Bodhisattvas Sthirachakra, holding a flag, and Jnanaketu, with a pennant, can be recognized among the group. Above the carving are Buddha figures. To the left of the entrance are Jambhala and a man holding a pot full of gold coins. To the right is goddess the Tara, holding a lotus. The central shrine has a colossal image of Buddha with hands in a witness-calling gesture flanked by Bodhisattvas.

The next shrine is similar to the main shrine. A small cell next to the shrine, at the end of the verandah, has a rock-cut bench and a small shrine with a seated Buddha flanked by three females on one side and three male Bodhisattvas on the other side. At the left end of the verandah a staircase leads to the top floor with a pillared verandah and a shrine in the center of the back wall, similar to the shrine on the first floor. A shrine in the northeastern corner has an image of Buddha with attendants. Another shrine in the southern half is left unfinished. On the walls are many figures of Buddha, and Avalokiteshvara attended by a female with four hands.



Fig. 2.142. Ellora. Cave 12. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

Cave 12, the last Buddhist vihara with three stories, excavated under a single unified plan, is dated to 700 (Fig. 2.142). It is largest cave at Ellora, with each floor larger than any cave at Ajanta. It accommodated forty monks. A gateway cut through a rock screen (now broken) leads to a spacious open court at a slightly higher level. The austere, 15.2m (46 ft.) high façade belies the wealth of sculpture and decoration inside (Fig. 2.143).

The few ground floor façade pillars are carved with decorative sculpture featuring a pot motif. Some façade pillars of the upper storey are carved with beautiful females with three-body bends (Fig. 2.144).



Fig. 143. Ellora. Cave 12. Façade.  
Ca. 630-700. Basalt.



Fig. 2.144. Ellora. Cave 12. Sculpture on 3<sup>d</sup> floor façade pillar. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.



Fig. 2.145. Ellora. Cave 11. Ground floor. Shrine wall. Buddha surrounded by Bodhisattvas. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

The ground floor is 35m (107 ft.) wide and 13m (40 ft.) deep, with three rows of eight pillars each on the horizontal axis of the hall. The central two rows of pillars continue in the antechamber, which is almost as long as the hall. There are nine panels representing the magic diagram of the cosmos. Eight seated Bodhisattvas are carved in separate squares, arranged around Buddha in the center, accompanied by a *chamara* bearer (Fig. 2.145). Bodhisattvas that can be recognized include Avalokiteshvara, Vijarapani, and Sthirachakra holding a flag, Jnanaketu with a flower stalk in the left hand, and possibly Manjusri. The attributes held in the hands are not clear. A corresponding space on the other side is carved with a seated Buddha, now mutilated. Buddha seated on a lion throne is carved on the left and right sides of vestibule, each accompanied by a female on his left, holding a lotus. Pilasters on the side walls are carved with Buddha, the four-armed goddess Chunda holding her hands in a protection-giving gesture, a bowl, rosary and lotus stalk. Another similar carving shows Chunda holding a ladle in place of the lotus stalk, along with another goddess. The shrine doors are carved with Maitreya holding a flower and Manjusri holding a flower on a book. In the shrine, a colossal image of a seated Buddha is enshrined. The shrine walls are carved with several seated meditating Buddhas and Bodhisattvas covering most of the walls. There are twelve cells in the hall. The first cell in the south wall has a staircase leading to another chamber near the first floor. The chamber is carved with several sculptures including a seated Buddha with attendants, Avalokiteshvara with a male and female attendant, and some small carvings along with a four armed-goddess, possibly Bhrikuti.



Fig. 2.146. Ellora. Cave 12. First floor. Padmapani with Tara and Jambhala. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

A further climb leads to the first floor with a long verandah with entrances to the hall near each end and a large entrance in the center with two massive pillars. The central hall is 35m (107 ft) wide and 21.3m (65 ft.) deep, with two rows



of eight pillars on the horizontal axis dividing the hall into three aisles. Small cells are cut on the back and side walls of the hall. The aisle in the center of the hall leads to the antechamber and shrine. The wall facing the shrine has two cells. The shrine in the rear wall has a small antechamber housing an image of Buddha flanked by three Bodhisattvas on each side. The walls of the vestibule are carved with Avalokiteshvara with female attendants, a stupa, four-armed Bhrikuti, and Avalokiteshvara with Tara and Jambhala (Fig. 2.146).

Avalokiteshvara holding a lotus, and Vijarapani, holding a thunderbolt and wearing elaborate jewelry, flank the shrine door. Inside a seated Buddha is flanked by Avalokiteshvara, Vijarapani, and Sujata holding a pot. An attendant is standing over a prostrate figure. Above, on the wall, seven seated Buddhas are carved.



Fig. 2.147. Ellora. Cave 12. Top floor. Manusi Buddha. Ca. 630-700. Basalt.

The long verandah outside at both ends provides access to the ground floor. In the north end of the verandah a staircase leads to the top floor, which is fully finished. It consists of a spacious hall, a vestibule and a shrine in the back wall. The spacious hall is divided into five bays, by five rows of eight massive square pillars. Two pillars and two pilasters separate the vestibule from the hall. The sidewalls of the hall have large sculptured panels of a seated Buddha with attendants. On the south end of the back aisle a large panel is carved with Buddha in a preaching gesture. The corresponding position on the opposite aisle is carved with Buddha going to heaven to preach the Law to the gods and entering Nirvana. The back wall of the hall on the left side has six manusi Buddha (Buddhas re-incarnated in a cosmic period) and Buddha seated under the particular sacred tree under which they achieved enlightenment (Fig. 2.147). On the right side sit seven Bodhisattvas, their hands in a teaching gesture and a parasol over their heads (Fig. 2.148). They are Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, Vijarasattva and Vajraraja. In the vestibule side walls are

twelve goddesses seated on lotus wearing halo behind their heads, including various representations of Tara on one side and Bhrikuti, Pandara and Tara on the other. On the right side of the back wall is a goddess wearing snakes around her waist, and a headdress. Next to her Mahamayuri, with peacock feather in hand, is followed by a goddess holding a water vessel. The image of Buddha in the shrine was adopted for worship as a Hindu god after obliterating the facial features. This was restored in plaster in the eighteenth century. Buddha is flanked by Padmapani holding a lotus and on the other side a male holding a sword, one holding a *Chamara*, and a devotee. Above on each side are seated Buddhas. On the inner side of the front wall is the donor couple holding a sack of money. A human-sized image of Buddha and a Bodhisattva in the antechamber and the shrine surrounding a devotee possibly make him feel more humble than if he were standing surrounded by the paintings.



Fig. 2.148. Ellora. Cave 12. Top floor. Seated Bodhisattvas with parasol over head. Ca. 630-700. Basalt

The next four caves in line with the Buddhist caves are Hindu caves. These are the last Hindu caves excavated, although the date of excavation of Cave 13 is not certain. It is a small, plain hall, almost totally dilapidated.



Fig. 2.149. Ellora. Cave 14. Durga standing with leg on lion. Ca. 550-750. Basalt.

Cave 14, excavated in the seventh century, is the first cave that introduces Hindu gods. The Hindu gods, active and energetic forces of creation, destruction and preservation, contrast starkly with the calm and peaceful atmosphere of the Buddhist caves.

Cave 14 has a square hall with sixteen pillars with four pillars in row. The pillars and pilasters are lavishly decorated with demon heads, human figures, chaitya arches, floral bands, and peacocks surmounted with humans. At the back is an oblong shrine with circumambulatory passage. The walls of the hall are carved with large, powerful and dramatic carvings, as though in a gallery, in similarly decorated niches. Most of the carvings are damaged or worn, but they still radiate power and energy of the gods. Starting on the left Durga, with a delicate, well-proportioned body, stands with one leg resting on a lion, holding a trident in one hand; all other hands are broken (Fig. 2.149). She has a decorated headdress and a halo.

Beautiful Gajalakshmi, in another niche, is seated on a lotus in a lotus pond flanked by attendants. Two elephants standing in the corners are bathing her, pouring water from pots held in their trunks (Fig. 2.150). One of her attendants has four arms and is holding a conch in one hand.

A damaged panel depicts Vishnu in his boar incarnation. He is standing with one leg on the coil of Sesha. An attendant and possibly the spouse of Sesha, with a cobra hood, are standing alongside. The goddess Earth, with her delicate body, rescued from the cosmic ocean, is standing crossed legged with three-bends on the palm of Vishnu.



Fig. 2.150. Ellora. Cave 14. Lakshmi. Ca. 550-750. Basalt

The next two panels are carved with Vishnu seated with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi, with six human figures carved below. In another panel he is sitting with beautiful

Lakshmi, flanked by attendants and seven dwarfs in a panel below. The shrine is located on the back wall guarded by doorkeepers and decorated with Ganga standing on crocodile and Yamuna standing on a tortoise. There is an altar and a broken image of Durga inside. In the north side of the circumambulatory passage are seven mothers, each holding an infant in her lap, followed by Ganesha eating sweets, Kali, and Kala. Beyond are seven mother goddesses with halos behind their heads. Parvati is carved on a pedestal with Nandi (Fig. 2.151), and Lakshmi is shown being carried by Garuda (Fig. 2.152).



Fig. 2.151. Ellora. Cave 14. Parvati.

Ca. 550-750. Basalt.



Fig. 2.152. Ellora. Cave 14. Lakshmi.

Ca. 550-750. Basalt.



Fig. 2.153. Ellora. Cave 14. Nataraja.

Ca. 550-750. Basalt.

Saivite sculpture includes Siva killing the demon Andhaka. When Siva wanted to kill Andhaka, his friend Gajasura attacked Siva in the form of elephant. Siva had to kill Gajasura first. In the carving Siva has spread the skin of Gajasura over his head, stretched by four hands, while with the other hands he is attacking And-

haka. Parvati, Ganesha and a dwarf accompany him. The next panel depicts an enraged Ravana with his multitude of hands shaking Mount Kailas. There is no panic. Everybody is calm, giving a sense that Siva is in control of the situation. The carving is not as dramatic as the one that was to come in Cave 16.

Fig. 2.154. Ellora. Cave 14. Siva and Parvati playing chess. Ca. 550-750. Basalt.



With one hand Siva is holding Parvati's hand; his second hand is resting on his seat, a third is holding the dice and a fourth hand is partially broken. Spectators include Ganesha with his elephant head, two females holding *chamara*, and two males. Below, dwarfs are playing with the Bull, the mount of Siva. Another panel depicts a four-armed Durga killing a demon. She holds a sword, a trident, and the head of the demon Mahishasura in her hands. The fourth hand is broken. The gods created Durga to slay the demon Mahishasura, son of Rambha, who had obtained a boon from Brahma that no man would kill him; that sounded good, but left him vulnerable to being killed by a woman. He was killed by Durga when he became a potent force and started harassing the gods.



Fig. 2.155. Ellora. Cave 15. Monolithic hall in verandah. Ca. 550-750. Basalt.

Cave 15 with two stories is located at a higher elevation. A long flight of steps leads to the spacious open courtyard cut in the rock with the first monolithic pavilion carved at Ellora standing in the center of the courtyard (Fig. 2.155). It

may have served as a Nandi pavilion. It has windows cut in a geometric design. A small porch in front of the pavilion was supported on two pillars. The entrance is guarded by a beautiful Ganga on a crocodile and Yamuna on a tortoise. The exterior walls are carved with sculpture and statues. Seated and reclining lions and dwarfs on the roof are broken. The two-storey cave behind the pavilion was started as a Buddhist monastery in the early eighth century. The Rashtrakuta king Dantidurga made a donation while the excavation of the cave was in progress but later the cave excavation continued as a Hindu temple. The modification of the Buddhist cave design by Hindus is evident in the layout. The spacious ground floor of the double-storied cave behind the monolithic hall has fourteen square pillars in two rows of six and two pillars in the vestibule. The interior of the cave has a few sculptures in low relief. The walls surrounding the hall have a few cells indicating the origin of the cave as Buddhist monastery.



Fig. 2.156. Ellora. Cave 15. Carving on pillar. Ca. 550-750. Basalt.

A flight of steps in the southeast corner of the front aisle leads to the upper floor with a spacious hall with forty-four pillars in seven rows of six pillars each and two pillars in vestibule. In the center of the hall are a few pits, which were possibly used to light fires. The front pillars are carved with attractive designs with floral patterns, snakes and dwarfs (Fig. 2.156).

The spaces between the pilasters on the side walls are carved with huge sculptures in bold relief. Large panels on the surrounding walls depict various incarnations of Vishnu and Siva. Siva as Andhakasura is slaying the demon. He has stretched the skin of the elephant over his head with four hands and is thrusting the trident in the neck of the demon. He wears a garland of skulls and sharp teeth are protruding from his mouth. The skeletal Kali is holding a bowl in her hand to collect the blood of the demon. Parvati is standing on one side of Siva. The next panel depicts Nataraja accompanied by musicians, Parvati, and his infant son. In another panel Siva and Parvati are playing chess, watched by Ganesha and other gods. Other panels display the marriage of Siva and Parvati, where Parvati is standing on the left of Siva,

three-headed Brahma is conducting the marriage and other gods are witnessing the marriage; Ravana is shaking Kailas. Sculpture on back wall depicts Siva pushing Yama, the god of death, with his leg (Fig. 2.157). A storey in the Puranas states that Markandeya, son of a sage, was great devotee of Siva. At the age of 14 the god of death came to take his soul. But Markandeya clutched the Lingam and did not let it go. Siva emerged from the Lingam and saved his devotee. In the carving the devotee is carved praying to the Lingam, and one leg of the emerging Siva is still inside the Lingam.



Fig. 2.157. Ellora. Cave 15. Siva emerging from Lingam to save his disciple from Yama. Ca. 550-750. Basalt.

The next panel depicts Siva as the bearer of Ganga. In the carving Siva is standing with Parvati on the left and Nandi on the right. Above, an elephant is supporting a lotus with a sage sitting on it. Five human heads are near the feet of Siva. A storey in the Purana narrates that King Sagara had a wicked son, Asamanjasa. He was a bad influence on the other children. The gods complained to Indra. When Sagara was to perform a horse-sacrifice, Indra kidnapped the horse and hid it in the hermitage of Kapila in the netherworld. When the Sagara's sons rushed to kill Kapila, the sage reduced them to ashes. They could be brought back to life only by the waters of Ganga. Bhagiratha, born in the Sagara family, by severe austerities brought Ganga down on the matted hair of Siva's head, and to the earth. When Ganga's water was sprinkled on the ashes of Sagara's sons, they came back to life. Sculpture on the back wall of antechamber depicts the myth that Siva is greater than Vishnu and Brahma. While Siva is emerging out of the Lingam, Vishnu and a three-headed Brahma are searching the bottom and top of the Lingam but both fail to locate the ends. Brahma is carved flying near the upper end of the Lingam and Vishnu is diving below. In another panel Siva is killing the demon Tripurasura. He holds a bow, an arrow, a sword and shield in his hands and is driven in a chariot by Brahma.

The Vaishnava sculpture on the right wall includes Krishna lifting Mount Govardhana to protect the people and cattle in a village of Mathura region from the deluge of rain

sent by Indra. In another carving Vishnu is reclining on the serpent Sesha while a lotus has emerged from Vishnu's navel, bearing a seated Brahma on a lotus flower. Vishnu is also carved riding his mount Garuda in human form. Vishnu as the Boar is shown rescuing the goddess Earth from the cosmic ocean in one panel. The goddess Earth is sitting on one of his arms. Vishnu as Trivikrama follows. King Bali, according to a storey in the Puranas, was a great devotee of Vishnu. Vishnu as a dwarf went to him and asked Bali to give him as much land as he could measure in three steps. Bali granted him his request. Vishnu turned into a giant and covered the earth, heaven and nether world in three steps. In the carving Vishnu is holding his emblem and various weapons in his hands. One of his legs is resting in the heavens. In a man-lion incarnation Vishnu is holding a battle-ax and conch and has caught the demon Hiranyakashipu with his three hands, to destroy him. The carving is vibrant with the forceful action of Vishnu. In the vestibule Ganesha and Parvati, seated on a lotus and holding a rosary, are carved along with musicians. On the opposite wall stands Kattrikeya, son of Siva, holding a bowl, a trident and a lotus beside a peacock. Amorous couples are carved on the pillars. Four-armed guards holding a club, snake and thunderbolt guard the shrine. A Lingam is enshrined in the sanctum. On the side wall Gajalakshmi, seated on lotus, holding fruit and a lotus in her hand, is carved. Elephants are bathing her. Two male attendants hold water pitchers. The one holding a conch, discus and lotus is Vishnu.

Dantidurga, the first Rashtrakuta king (who ended Chalukya rule) made Ellora his capital. He may have started the excavation of Cave 16 (popularly called Kailas) in the middle of the eighth century. It is the largest and most splendid monolithic rock cut Dravidian temple in India.

It stands in a roofless cave. King Krishna I, uncle of Dantidurga, completed the construction in six years from 757-783. A number of subsidiary shrines were added later. Kailas temple appears to be an attempt by the Hindus to surpass the largest Buddhist rock-cut cave in Ellora. They succeeded splendidly. Virupaksha, a structural temple at Patadkal, constructed in 740, superficially resembles Kailas in layout and Jain Cave 32 is a miniature replica of the Kailas temple. The rock cut city of Petra in Jordan is a large enterprise of similar nature.

After excavation of this extraordinary monument, the Hindus apparently lost interest in caves, possibly because there was nothing more to achieve and caves had lost their utility. Freestanding stone structural temples had been evolved that did not require the protection of caves in any part of India. The need to provide a residence for Hindu

monks was not as important as it was for Buddhists. After reaching this climax, the Hindus basically stopped excavating caves, although some small cave shrines were excavated later.



Fig. 2.158. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Gateway connected on back to Bull pavilion by bridge, seen from mountainside. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The caves cut deep into the rock do not provide much exterior surface for carvings. Verandahs added in front would provide limited additional space for decoration. By an imaginative, bold attempt the architects at Ellora isolated an enormous piece of rock near the center of hill, which had gentle slope on one side. Two longitudinal deep trenches cut towards the center of the hill and two horizontal trenches cut to join the ends of the longitudinal trenches isolated what is almost a small hillock in the part sloping towards the front margin. All the trenches were cut to the depth of the surrounding terrain. The floor of the temple courtyard at the rear is 30m (93 ft.) deep and 51m (154 ft.) wide. A comparatively small mass of rock was left outside the front horizontal trench to carve a gateway. The temple and other associated structures were carved out of the large mass of rock commencing from the top and developing into a three-storey high temple, Bull pavilion, two freestanding columns 20m (61 ft.) high, a flanking bull pavilion and two life-size elephants all attached to the mother rock. The rock was cut into small units and both exterior and interior surfaces of these units were decorated with sculpture. The temple is rock sculpture rock on a grand scale, innovative in design.

The mass of rock left outside the front trench was carved into a monolithic gatehouse (Fig. 2.158). The 15m (45 ft.) high façade of the gatehouse is two-storied. The graceful monolithic entrance of the cave is carved with Saivite deities on the left façade and Vaisnavite deities on the right façade of the lower storey. In niches between the pilasters along with a few Vedic gods, episodes from the Mahabharata are carved (Fig. 2.159). Most of the carvings are mutilated.



Fig. 2.159. Ellora. Kailas. Cave 16. Façade. Gateway. Ca 750-800. Basalt.

The façade of the upper storey bears a wide balcony window in the center flanked by blank niches. The entrance to the cave in the center of the lower storey is flanked by Ganga and Yamuna and embellished with decorative sculpture. The square chamber in the first storey has raised platforms along the side walls with a passage in between. The margins of the platform bear square pillars with capitals carved with vases and foliage. The back walls are carved with Ganesha and Durga. At the end of the entrance on either side are guardians holding pots of money. The upper storey of the gatehouse is not connected to the lower storey from the chamber. The passage opens to the temple complex surrounded by high walls and colonnades on left right and back of the temple.

Not all the units of the temple are at the same level. The front part of the courtyard is cut deeper, necessitating a few steps to get down into the courtyard from the gateway, possibly because the sloping rock mass remaining was not high enough in front. Inside, the elephants stand at the lowest level, the bull pavilion on a slightly higher level and the main temple stands on the second higher level with a couple of steps leading to the two levels.

In front of the gatehouse is a Bull pavilion (Fig. 2.160). It is 15m (46 ft.) high single-storey flat roof structure resting on a 7.5m (23 ft.) high solid rock plinth. Steps cut through the plinth on the side walls access the pavilion from the courtyard. The solid rock plinth of the pavilion has elevated the pavilions to the height of the upper floor of the gatehouse and is connected by a bridge to the gatehouse upper floor. This bridge provides the only access to the upper storey of the gatehouse. Nandi, the vehicle of Siva, rests on the floor of the pavilion facing the temple. Twenty meters (61 ft.) high, two freestanding columns and monolithic life-size elephants are carved to flank the pavilion. The freestanding columns and elephants are possibly artistic, more than symbolic, motifs. The elephant on the south is mutilated. The pavilion and the huge pillars are profusely carved with images of deities and structural decorations.



Fig. 2.160. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Bull pavilion connected to Gateway and Temple by bridges. Monolithic pillar seen from mountainside. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.



Fig. 2.161. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Mandapa connected to Bull pavilion in front. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

Behind the bull pavilion stands the temple, consisting of entrance porch, flat roofed *mandapa*, sanctum and three-storey-high tower (Fig. 2.161). The rock mass left behind the bull pavilion was not wide enough to carve a tower to reach the top of the cave with a proportionally wide sanctum. To push the tower higher and achieve proportional units, the temple was built on 7.5m (23 ft.) high solid rock plinth. The floor of the temple and the bull pavilion in front are at the same level and are connected by stone bridge. The bull pavilion is connected to second storey of the gatehouse in the back and to the entrance porch of the temple in front by stone bridges providing passage from the temple porch to upper storey of the gatehouse. Steps cut through the solid plinth of the entrance porch on both sides provide direct access to the temple from courtyard. Thus from sloping rock mass surrounded by trenches proportional height of the units was maintained between entrance gate and bull pavilion by lowering the floor of the temple behind entrance gate, constructing the bull pavilion on a high plinth and constructing the temple on a high plinth to push the temple tower out of the pit.

Facing the gatehouse entrance on the bull pavilion plinth under the bridge joining the gatehouse is a huge panel carved with Lakshmi seated on lotus flower in a lotus pond covered with leaves (Fig. 2.162).



Fig. 2.162. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Lakshmi facing entrance. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

Two elephants standing in the corners are pouring water on Lakshmi from round pots held in their trunks. Two small elephants are carved beside Lakshmi, holding round pots in their trunks to fill with water from the pond. The panel is flanked by two smiling guardians.



Fig. 2.163. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Siva killing Elephant demon. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The east face of the bull pavilion plinth is carved with a large panel depicting ten-armed Rudra, an early form of Siva (Fig. 2.163). As Andhakasura, the vector of the elephant demon, he is dancing holding a slain elephant's skin in his hands over his head. He is wearing a garland of skulls like a

sacred thread. On one side is the head of the slain elephant and on the other side Parvati is seated. A small carving at the lower left of the panel depicts seven mothers sent by gods to suck up blood drop of Andhaka to stop multiplication of the demon. Bhringi is carved near the legs of Siva and Vidyadharas are flying in the upper corners.



Fig. 2.164. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Durga fighting buffalo demon. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The rear of the front entrance gate wall as seen from courtyard is carved with an eight-armed Durga riding a lion and shooting arrows at the demon (Fig. 2.164). Her graceful and delicate body is more beautiful than the body of Durga carved in Mammalapuram. Riding her fierce lion amidst fallen demons she looks majestic, fearless, dashing and all-powerful. The brute demon with human body and buffalo horns is standing close to her, in front. She is aiming an arrow at the heart of the demon. The lion also appears to be attacking the demon. The gods above are watching the combat. The next series of panels depicts Krishna lifting mount Govardhana, Vishnu and Lakshmi followed by Lakshmi. Kama (Cupid) holding a sugarcane like a flag stands with his consort Rati, followed by Vishnu flying on Garuda (Fig. 2.165). The rear of the screen wall on the other side is carved with Siva impaling a demon, and various avatars.



Fig. 2.165. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Gods. Rear wall of Gateway. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The last carving of these panels depicts Siva riding a chariot to kill the demon Tripurasura (Fig. 2.166). Brahma is driving the chariot, which is drawn by four horses. Five more carvings on this side are damaged and are not clear.



Fig. 2.166. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Gods. Rear wall of Gateway. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The temple consists of an entrance porch, *mandapa* with two side porches, vestibule, a flat-roofed sanctum (Fig. 2.167) and a three-storey high tower (Fig. 2.168).



Fig. 2.167. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Decorations on flat roof of all the temple units. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.



Fig. 2.168. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Mandapa and Tower on sanctum seen from mountainside. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The flat roof the entrance porch supported by two thick square pillars and two pilasters is decorated with lotuses in receding tiers (Fig. 2.161). The plinth of the entrance porch is carved in bands with episodes from Ramayana and Mahabharata and the life of Krishna. On the front of the plinth

Brahma with three faces sits in meditation. The façade of the plinth under the bridge has a gigantic panel depicting Siva as a Yogi, eyes closed, deep in meditation, seated on a lotus throne supported by lions. Many Vedic gods surround him.

The massive plinth of the temple is carved with elephants and lions, some in combat. It appears as though the temple is being carried by the elephants. A sculpture on the front exterior wall of the mandapa depicts Ganga falling from heaven (Fig. 2.169).



Fig. 2.169. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Mandapa wall. Siva receiving Ganga on his matted hair. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The composition narrates the complete myth with all the characters involved. Ganga is carved as a beautiful female on the top of the panel above Siva, flanked by flying figures and deities. One figure in the upper left corner appears to be standing on one leg, carrying a Lingam on his head. The lower body of Ganga, shaped like the body of a serpent, is falling on the matted locks of Siva and flowing away from the head without wetting him. From the lock of hair she widens and falls in torrents beside the head of a sage, and flows down over the five heads of Sagara's sons to bring them back to life. Bhagiratha, whose penance succeeded in bringing down Ganga from heaven, is carved kneeling before Siva. Beautiful Parvati is standing cross-legged beside Siva.

The exterior walls of the temple are carved with many huge panels. One of the masterpieces of sculpture at Kailas, with exceptional dramatic quality, is the legend of Ravana carved on the temple plinth under the south porch of the temple (Fig. 2.170).

The Demon king Ravana with 10 heads and 12 hands is trying to uproot Mount Kailas, the abode of Siva, to throw

it like a missile in his battle against Rama (the hero of epic Ramayana). The body of Ravana is detached from the mother rock behind. Only the hands of Ravana, his flat foot and the knee of a folded leg are anchored to the floor to provide the power to uproot and throw Kailas. His twelve hands attached to the walls like the spokes of a wheel exert enormous pressure to shake Kailas off its foundations, making the whole mountain quake. The small platform with seated Siva, Parvati and attendants above Ravana's cage does not appear strong enough to withstand this vigorous shaking by Ravana. Parvati has clutched Siva's arm in alarm and her attendants are fleeing in panic. Siva is seated, calm. With the effortless pressure of his big toe on the top of the cage, he has kept the cage closed and Ravana imprisoned. The carving is exceptionally dramatic. On the northern side Siva is protecting his devotee, who is clutching the Lingam, from the god of death. When Yama wanted to take the soul of this devotee, Siva emerged from the Lingam and here he is shown as he is about to thrust his trident into the body of Yama.

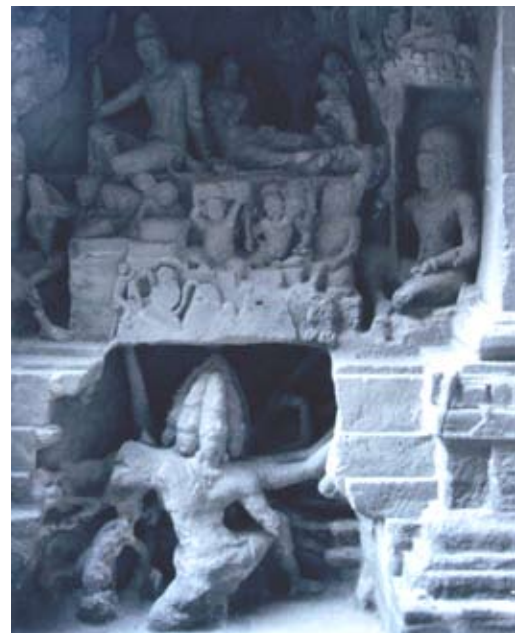


Fig. 2.170. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Ravana shaking Kailas. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The northern exterior of the temple is extensively carved with deities and structural decorations. One panel depicts Durga killing Buffalo demon (Fig. 2.172).

The carving depicts Durga with an exceptionally energetic, twisted body. She is thrusting a trident into the chest of a demonic soldier squatting beside the head of the Buffalo. Another panel depicts Nrsimha killing demon Hiranyakashipu. The rarely depicted episode of Sita's abduction shows Ravana carrying her away in a chariot and the bird Jatayu



attacking him. Ravana is about to injure the bird. A series of carvings depict the fight between monkey chiefs Sugriva and Vali, Rama killing Vali and Rama and Lakshmana consoling Tara, wife of Vali. Other carvings depict a Buddha-like figure, possibly a Vishnu incarnation, seated under a naga hood, and loving couples. The temple was once embellished with painting, now seen only in traces.



Fig. 2.172. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Durga killing buffalo demon. Ca. 750-800. Basalt.

The interior of the *mandapa* is free of figurative sculpture. The ceiling was once painted but the only picture remaining is one near a beam in the south balcony; it depicts a dancing Siva. Groups of four pillars arranged in a square stand near each corner of the *mandapa* hall. The hall has side porches and is connected to the colonnade cut on the left side of the hill by the stone bridge. The vestibule is carved with Somaskanda, Siva and Parvati playing chess, Vishnu, Brahma and the goddess Annapurna on the ceiling. Ganga and Yamuna with three-body bends guard the small sanctum. Their heads are broken. The sanctum with the Lingam is surrounded by extremely thick walls. The Lingam in the shrine is badly mutilated. The shrine is surrounded by a semi-circular open ambulatory passage, lined on the outer margin with five small shrines designed as replicas of the main shrine. The entrance and exit door to the passage flank the entrance of the main shrine.

The flat roof the *mandapa* is carved at the margins with larger elevated *sala* and small square *sikaras*. The flat roof is carved with lotus and four lions facing the cardinal directions. The pyramidal southern-style tower, capped with a

square *sikara*, is 29m (87.3 ft.) above the floor of the courtyard, reaching almost to the top of the rear wall of the pit. The square tiers on the tower, diminishing in size, are decorated with barrel-shaped structures, chaitya windows and various deities.

Six small caves were added to the complex at various times. The Rashtrakuta king Govind III (794-814) commissioned the shrine of the River Goddess at the northwest corner of the court. A huge doorkeeper guards the shrine. Three exceptionally beautiful statues of river goddesses Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati stand in a row in the shrine. Ganga, standing between arched pilasters, is particularly beautiful (Fig. 2.173). To her left is Yamuna. The goddess Sarasvati (Fig. 2.174), rarely carved in temples, is seen twice at Ellora. She is also carved as a door guardian in Cave 21.



Fig. 2.173. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. River Goddess Ganga. Ca. 794-814. Basalt.



Fig. 2.174. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Goddess Sarasvati. Ca. 794-814. Basalt.

The Hall of Sacrifice is located in the colonnade excavated in the side escarpment opposite to the carving of Ravana shaking Kailas. It is reached by a flight of steps. The front two pillars of the hall are carved with elegant female figures. In the hall starting on the right wall, the first carving is of Durga seated on a lion (Fig. 2.175). The next, Goddess Chamundi, has lost one left hand. In one of her right hands she holds a trident and in a left hand holds a bowl of sweets, and

a snake. In the corner is a horrific scene that sends chills up the spine. Skeletal Kali is sitting with the head of a naked male corpse in her lap and another naked corpse lays her legs. On the back wall Ganesha is sitting, eating sweets from the bowl in his hand.



Fig. 2.175. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Hall of sacrifice. Ca. 750-800 CE. Basalt.

The seven mother goddesses follows him. Most of the statues are broken but by their mounts carved below the statue the broken figures can be identified.

At the eastern end are three elegant statues of seated females (Fig 2.176). The female in the center with broken hands and legs appears to be queen of Rashtrakuta king Govind III (794-814). She is flanked by two females bearing *chamara*.



Fig. 2.176. Ellora. Kailas Cave 16. Hall of sacrifice. Rashtrakuta Queen. Ca. 794-814. Basalt.

The Yajana-Shala Cave on the southern escarpment features sculpture in the round with firm, slender bodies. It may have been excavated in about 800. The Paralanka Cave, in the middle of the southern escarpment, is an unfinished four-storey structure. It was joined to the temple by a bridge which is broken now. The Lankeshvara Cave in the northern escarpment on a level with the main temple is reached by a flight of steps located near the Gajalakshmi panel on the Bull Pavilion. It was probably carved in the early ninth

century. It consists of a Nandi *mandapa* with a male deity attended by two females near the *mandapa* and a sanctuary with ambulatory passage. The hall bears short and stumpy pillars, richly carved. The walls of the hall are carved with Nrsimha pulling out the entrails of the demon and the Hindu trinity along with Surya, Ganesha and other gods and goddess, including Siva and Parvati playing chess. The sanctum door is enshrined with the Lingam with Ganga and Yamuna. On the back wall is the Hindu is carved. On the right wall we see Ravana shaking Kailas. On the left wall, a dancing six-armed Siva is carved in bold relief, holding a small drum and a snake in hands that are almost free from the background. With matted hair and a third eye on his forehead, he is wearing a little jewelry and trampling a dwarf. Pillars on the south side are carved with Gangadhara, Siva and Parvati, Ardhanari and Durga — all mutilated. On the faces of the trenches surrounding the rear and the sides of the temple deep incisions were cut to construct multi-level colonnades in the ninth and tenth century. Huge panels are carved in the colonnades with reliefs, mostly depicting Siva, alone or with Parvati or with his vehicle Nandi and other gods. The carvings are not very artistic. This additional space for carving, in addition to all the external and internal surface of the various structures, was a bonus of the innovative design of the complex.

After witnessing the grandeur and beauty of Kailas a visit to other caves comes as an anticlimax — except for Caves 21 and 29. The Hindus lost any interest in caves after excavating Kailas, the grandest of all temples. Caves 17 to 29 were excavated before that. Starting from the middle of the sixth century, Caves 28, 27, and 19 were excavated. These are modest caves without many artistic attributes. Cave 29 and 21 followed along with the other caves. But Cave 29 is a copy of the Elephanta Siva cave; and Cave 21 has the most exquisite sculpture at Ellora. The recent understanding is that the Kalacuri of Aurangabad excavated these caves. This theory is supported by the characteristic bulky females of Kalacuri sculpture in a few caves. The previous view that the Chalukya of Badami excavated the caves at Ellora needs to be re-evaluated.

The porch of Cave 17, situated some distance from Cave 16 (Kailas), was possibly excavated in the seventh century. The porch of the cave is ruined, leaving twelve massive pillars of the hall with carvings of human heads and with female figures on brackets. The porch retains a carving of Vishnu and Brahma. There are carvings of Ganesha, and Durga slaying demon in the hall. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam. Cave 18, excavated in the seventh century, retains its porch, and a hall with two square pillars and two pilasters. The pillared vestibule is followed by the sanctum, enshrined

with the Lingam. Cave 19 is damaged and incomplete, with pillared hall, square shrine with Lingam and ambulatory passage.

Some distance away in the next group are three caves (Fig. 2.177).



Fig. 2.177. Ellora. Caves 20 and 21. Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

The incomplete Cave 20A has a court. On one side of the cave façade, a carving resembling the Jain yaksa Matanga can be seen. There is a halo behind his head and two flying figures in the corner. It may have been added later, or else the cave is a Jain cave. The verandah has four pillars with an unrecognizable shallow carving on the capitals and empty cells at either end. The main door, flanked by two additional doors, leads into the hall. Some believe that the hall was added later when the Jains were actively excavating caves at the north end.

The almost-destroyed Cave 20B is situated on a higher elevation with steps to reach it. It has a ruined pedestal in front, behind which is a small verandah with two huge, thick pillars, square at the base and with bulbous capitals. Possibly these are pillars from a hall which is completely destroyed. The carvings of Ganesha and Durga on the side walls are in poor condition. The cell entrance is flanked by two huge guardians who are reminiscent of the Buddhist Viharapani and Avalokiteshvara. Both hands of the statue on the right are broken. The statue on the left holds an unrecognizable object in his right hand. Two curvaceous females holding unrecognizable objects in their right hands accompany them. The highly decorated cell entrance door bears another small pair of figures at the bottom. The pedestal in the cell with ambulatory passage around it is empty.

Cave 21, one of the early caves, possibly excavated in the late sixth century, bears the finest sculpture, reflecting the beauty of the golden age of Indian sculpture with the volume typical of Kalacuri sculpture figures. A pedestal in the courtyard bears a monolithic Bull on the plinth. In the northern corner of the court is a small Ganesha shrine.

The right end corner of the cave is carved with a graceful Goddess Ganga with her hips slightly thrown to the side, standing with a dwarf attendant and a female *chamara* bearer (Fig. 2.178). Flying figures are carved on the upper cor-

ners. Yamuna is standing on a tortoise on the other side.



Fig. 2.178. Ellora. Cave 21. Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

A low parapet wall on the façade of the cave is carved with structural decorations, elephants and *mithuna* couples. The parapet wall is carved above with four massive, richly decorated pillars and a pilaster at each end. The capitals of the pillars are carved with foliage decorations. Charming damsels with slight bends and body curves decorate the pillars as bracket figures. Above the capitals of the pillars, mythological creatures and a frieze of a floral scroll and a dwarf are carved. Behind the parapet is a hall. The hall has a chapel on each end separated from the hall by two pillars with square shafts and cushion capitals. In the left chapel on the west wall, Kattrikeya is standing with his mount, the peacock, on one side and flanked by goat-headed gods and flying figures in the upper corner. On the back wall of the chapel is a large panel depicting the marriage of Siva and Parvati. On the left is Brahma, negotiating with the father of Parvati, who is standing beside her. Next Siva is holding Parvati's hand with Ganesha in between and Bhringi behind Parvati, followed by Brahma officiating at the marriage near a sacred fire, and Parvati's father standing between Siva and Parvati. Vishnu with conch is one of the spectators. Other carvings show Parvati standing as an ascetic holding a rosary to perform penance to gain Siva as her husband. Siva is shown approaching her to test her loyalty. To the right is a tall female, in front of whom a youth is coming out of a crocodile's mouth. He is Siva, saved by Parvati. In one end of the chapel Durga is carved slaying the buffalo demon. She is holding a sword, a trident, a shield and a buffalo head in her hands. On one side of the shrine large panels are carved. One panel shows Ravana shaking Kailas. Ravana has five heads, one of which appears like that of boar. The chapel on the other side has horrific carvings of Kala and Kali. Kala holds, in two of his remaining hands, a curved knife, and a man in another hand. He is dancing with joy. Kali has a human head in her hand and a Vidyadhara is holding a cup to collect the blood.

A child and a man are standing by. On the back wall is Ganesha. In his hands he holds a battle-axe, sweets, a rosary and a broken tooth. Next to him are the seven mother goddesses. They can be recognized with the mounts carved under them. The last one is Virabhadra. A panel on the next wall shows eight-armed Nataraja accompanied by Parvati, musicians and Bhringi near Siva's leg. Above are the guardians of the directions, on their mounts. Three hands of Siva are broken, yet the figure displays vigor and energy. With his attractive and dramatic pose he captivates the audience.

Fig. 2.179. Ellora. Cave 21. Chamara bearer.

Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



The shrine in the center of the rear wall is separated from the hall by two pillars with cushion capitals and square abaci. Two lovely *chamara* bearers are carved in front of the pillars (Fig. 2.179). The doorway of the shrine is profusely decorated with *mithuna* couples, auspicious symbols, mythological creatures and chaitya windows. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam, with a circum-ambulatory passage. On the other side of the shrine, the carving depicts Siva and Parvati playing chess in the company of female and male attendants. Parvati looks irritated because Siva is cheating in the game.

Cave 22 has a ruined Nandi pavilion in the court. A shrine in the southern wall of the court has the seven mothers, Ganesha, and Kala. The pillared hall has chambers on the walls, a vestibule and then a shrine. Among other sculptures in the shrine is an image of Ganga. Caves 23 and 24 are small shrines without any special features.

Cave 25, a short distance away from Cave 24, has a large court in front with a shrine in the right wall. The front portion of the hall has been destroyed. The hall has massive pillars decorated with *mithuna* couples, peacocks, and lotus, and capitals decorated with vases and foliage. The ceiling of the antechamber is carved with an image of Surya. The shrine is square. Cave 26 is similar to Cave 25. The sanctum with ambulatory passage is enshrined with the Lingam. Cave 27, similar to Cave 26, is in poor condition, as is Cave 28. It has a hall and a shrine. The shrine door is decorated with guardians and Vidyadharas. The outer wall has an image of Am-

bika, attendant of the Jain Tirthankara. It is possibly a later addition. Beside the cave is a waterfall and picnic ground.

Cave 29, a short distance away from Cave 28, was built in 580-642. It resembles the Siva Cave at Elephanta with its cross-shaped layout. The same craftsmen moved to Ellora to excavate this and certain other caves after their work at Elephanta was done. The façade of the cave has two pillars and two pilasters (Fig. 2.180).



Fig. 2.180. Ellora. Cave 29. Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

A short flight of steps flanked by roaring lions pouncing on elephants leads to the cave. One elephant is missing. The central hall has four vertical rows of pillars and the arms of the cross have two horizontal rows of pillars. At the widest part, the cave is 45.7m (140 ft.) wide. The sanctum is placed at the far end of the two central rows of the pillars, near the back wall, with four entrances like the sanctum at Elephanta cave. Huge, tall doorkeepers in the company of females guard the shrine entrances. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam. The walls of the hall are covered with large panels carved with gigantic figures similar to those at Elephanta but most are artistically inferior. One side of the entrance is carved with an eight-armed Ravana shaking Mount Kailas while Siva is cuddling Parvati, seated next to him. All the attendants with Siva and Parvati appear unaware of the shaking (Fig. 2.181).



Fig. 2.181. Ellora. Cave 29. Ravana shaking Kailas. Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

On the other side Siva is shown killing Andhaka. He has stretched the elephant skin over his head with four hands, and has sword, bowl and snake and in other hands. He looks furious, with bulging eyes. Parvati is standing to his left. On the left Siva, looking ferocious with bulging eyes, is slaying the elephant demon. On the south the verandah has a circular sacrificial pit. There is a colossal image of a goddess, possibly Ganga. In the south verandah is a carving of Lakulisa sitting on a lotus supported by two serpents. He is holding a club in hand. On the other side Siva is dancing his destructive dance while the gods are watching (Fig. 2.182). Parvati with her attendants is sitting alongside. Other carvings in huge panels in the hall include the marriage of Siva and Parvati, where Siva is standing holding the hand of a beautiful and attractive Parvati; and Siva and Parvati playing chess, watched by many spectators. Below a majestic bull is carved. The exits at the end of the arm of the cross on one side lead to a waterfall and on the other side to a few minor shrines, and ultimately to the outside of the cave.



Fig. 2.182. Ellora. Cave 29. Nataraja. Ca. 6-7<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Ganesha Lena, a group of five small shrines, is located 100m (300 yards) above Cave 29. They are carved with images of Ganesha, Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. Still higher up is the Yageshvari group of small shrines, possibly carved in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; they bear no artistic carvings.

At the north end of the Hindu caves are five Jain caves in a group. Excavated in the ninth and early tenth centuries, the caves contain beautiful, detailed and finely polished sculpture. Most of the sculpture is repeated again and again with slight variations. Possibly all the caves were excavated during the regime of Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha (819-881), a great patron of Jainism. Although the Jains believe in twenty-four Tirthankaras, they have carved images of only a few of them, chiefly Adhinatha, the first Tirthankara, Santinatha, the sixteenth Tirthankara, Parshvanath (who preceded Mahavir) and Gommateshvara (Bahubali), who represents Mahavir in all the carvings. A Jain Yaksa Matanga carved in

some caves with his vehicle Tirthankaras elephant was earlier misidentified as Indra, and his consort Yakshi Sidhiaka as Indrani. Yakshi Chakreshvari, attendant of Tirthankara Adhinatha is rarely carved.

Caves 30, 31, 32 and 33 are a complex of interconnected caves with only two entrances (Fig. 2.183). The complex is entered through Cave 30 and exited through Cave 33. The whole complex, created during the regime of Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha (819-881), was possibly intended as a huge complex with many side excavations and shrines, as in Kailas. It is so interconnected and complex that arbitrarily it is classified into four caves.

Cave 30 is the first cave of the series, also called Chotta (small) Kailas. The entrance gateway to the cave is a simple, solid extension bearing a curved eave. The interior wall surface of the gateway is carved with Tirthankara and a twelve-armed Chakreshvari, attendant of Adhinatha. She is holding a lotus, discus, mace, conch, and sword, and wearing elaborate jewelry. Her mount, the eagle, is carved below. There are small figures of Yaksa and Mahavir. The temple in the center of courtyard is a monolithic miniature copy of Kailas temple (Fig. 2.184).



Fig. 2.183. Ellora. Complex of Jain Caves 30, 31, 32 and 33. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.184. Jain Caves 30. Temple. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

The façade of the hill surrounding the shrine is excavated with galleries at two levels. Near the entrance gate, due insufficient height, there is only one storey. The first gallery

façade is decorated with elephants in front profile. The second gallery façade on the rear is decorated with Jain figures.

The square temple bears square extension porches on all sides with two circular pillars with bulbous cushion tops. Only the front and rear porches have stairs to reach the temple. The façade is without decoration. A huge stone slab carved with a seated Tirthankara is visible from outside. The Dravidian-style pyramidal tower with square tiers is carved with chaitya windows and *sala* on the front façade. It is capped with an octagonal *sikara* (Fig. 2.185). As in Kailas there is a life-size elephant on one side of temple and on the other side a 9.14m (32 ft.) decorated column with four devotees sitting back to back, facing the four directions on the top.



Fig. 2.185. Jain Caves 30. Temple. Rear view of the tower. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

On one side of the temple a small, unfinished excavation in the lower storey of the mountain sidewall is Cave 31. It has a hall with four pillars. Mahavir is enshrined in the shrine in the back wall.



Fig. 2.186. Ellora. Cave 31. Mahavir in shrine guarded by Parshvanath and Bahubali. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Walls flanking the entrance door are carved on one side with Tirthankara Parshvanath standing under seven hoods of a cobra and an attendant holding a parasol above. He is surrounded by a rider on a buffalo, a rider on a tiger and some flying figures. The other side is pictures Bahubali, with vines

growing on his limbs, attended by females, a pair of worshippers and flying figures in the corners (Fig. 2.186).

The flying figures in most of the carvings appear to be hanging awkwardly in the air. On the side wall is a carving of Yakshi Sidhiaka, attendant of Mahavir (Fig. 2.187). There are many carvings of Sidhiaka in these caves, but possibly this is one of the most beautiful. She is sitting under a mango tree on her carrier, the lion, surrounded by attendants and peacocks on both sides. Yaksa Matanga, attendant of Mahavir and the consort of Sidhiaka, is riding an elephant, flanked by attendants.



Fig. 2.187. Ellora. Cave 31. Yakshi Sidhiaka. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

There are two more small excavations with pillars at the entrance. One excavation has a carving of Bahubali and the other has a carving of Parshvanath (Fig. 2.187). Attempts have been made to carve an erect phallus on him. His attendant Yakshi, with a child on her lap, is seated on a lion (Fig. 2.188).



Fig. 2.188. Ellora. Cave 30. Tirthankara Parshvanath. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.189. Ellora. Cave 30. Sidhiaka. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.190. Ellora. Cave 32. Tirthankara Parshvanath. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 32 lies on the back of Cave 31. As the height of the hill at this point had increased considerably, Cave 32 is excavated with two stories. A climb of a few steps leads to the entrance of the ground storey of Cave 32. It is a large square hall with eight square pillars near the periphery. There are a few unfinished cells in the side walls and the pilasters of the front verandahs are carved with two huge images of the sixteenth Tirthankara, Santinatha. On the back wall Mahavir is seated on a lion throne in the shrine. From the entrance

of the ground storey, a stair on the left leads to a verandah with two pillars. Each end of the verandah has a shrine with Tirthankara. The back wall of one shrine is carved with Parshvanath surrounded by worshippers and riders on lions and Buffalo (Fig. 2.190). A tall, lean and beautiful attendant is holding parasol above the head of the Tirthankara (Fig. 2.191). The other shrine is carved with Bahubali with female attendants, worshippers and flying figures.



Fig. 2.191. Ellora. Cave 32. Attendant of Tirthankara Parshvanath. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

A further climb of a few steps leads to a large square court with twelve pillars with an aisle around the court. It is fully furnished with beautifully decorated pillars with a molded base, sixteen-sided shaft, cushion capitals and bands of flowers. In the aisles on one side a huge figure of Yakshi Sidhiaka is seated on her carrier lion, a under mango tree with attendants standing beside. The lump on her thigh appears to be the body of a broken child statue. Facing Sidhiaka is huge figure of Yaksa Matanga sitting on a small squatted elephant. In the center of each wall is a shrine. In one side Mahavir is seated on lion throne and is guarded by Matanga and Sidhiaka shrine. In another shrine Mahavir is seated with a Jina on lion throne with triple umbrella over head. The sidewalls are also carved with Bahubali with female attendants and others. The ceiling bears fragment of paintings. In the corner of the hall is a small excavation with four pillars and a shrine in the back wall with Mahavir. At the right ends of the verandah Chakreshvari is carved holding a manuscript and wheel. Opposite to her Sidhiaka is carved riding a lion. At the left a passage is cut leading to the upper floor of Cave 33.

Cave 33 is also two-storied cave. At the southwest corner of the cave steps descend to the ground floor. Mahavir is enshrined in the main shrine with Parshvanath and Bahubali flanking the shrine. There are carvings of Matanga and Sidhiaka in the verandah. The upper floor is huge pillared hall similar to the upper floor of cave 32 with numerous carvings of Mahavir and Parshvanath. Shrines are excavated in the center of each wall. One is carved with Mahavir with triple umbrella above and halo behind head and a Tirthankara with halo behind head (Fig. 2.192).



Fig. 2.192. Ellora. Cave 32. Mahavir with Jina. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Another beautifully decorated shrine guarded by Bahubali and Parshvanath is enshrined with Mahavir (Fig. 2.193).



Fig. 2.193. Ellora. Cave 32. Mahavir with Jina. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.



Fig. 2.194. Ellora. Cave 33. Sidhiaka seated on lion. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

There are many carvings of Bahubali and Parshvanath. Sidhiaka seated on lion is holding a child with a broken head on her lap (Fig. 2.194). There are fragments of many faded original paintings on the ceiling. One such painting shows two sensual *apsaras* entertaining a royal (Fig. 2.195).

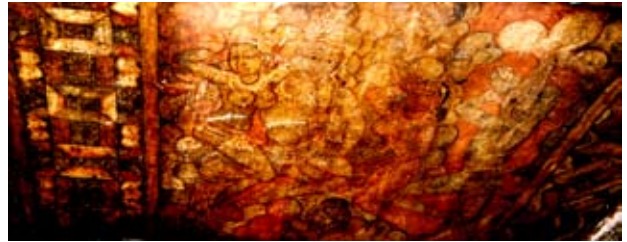


Fig. 2.195. Ellora. Cave 33. Painting on ceiling. Ca. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

Cave 34 is located a short distance from Cave 33. It is small, with incomplete carvings on the front pillars. The verandah and the entrance door are carved with small figures. Mahavir is enshrined in the cell, with Matanga and Sidhiaka flanking the cell. On the side wall Parshvanath and Gomateshvara are carved.

With the excavation of Jain caves in the ninth and tenth century at Ellora, the excavation of caves by Hindus came to an end in India, although some minor shrines were excavated in eleventh and twelfth century. They seem to have lost interest in caves. The challenge of building monumental, tall, freestanding stone structural temples by Hindu monarchs was by then in full swing.

The Buddhists lost control of the society and were confined to west India. They were driven away by destruction of their libraries and monasteries and by the slaughter of Buddhist monks by Muslim invaders into their home-lands, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

After carving the world's largest freestanding monolithic statue in Karnataka, in the tenth century, and constructing temples at Mount Abu, Rajasthan in the eleventh century, the Jains virtually ceased temple-building activity till twentieth century, when they constructed the Digambara marble temple in Delhi.



### 13. THE MONUMENTS AT MALAPURUM (600-800)

Mamalapurum, an ancient seaport known from the beginning of the Christian era, is situated 60 km. (36 miles) south of Chennai in Tamilnadu, southern India. It is a sleepy town where stone carvings and tourism are the main industry. In ancient times this was a bustling seaport, as is evidenced by Roman coins and artifacts discovered in the region. An armada sailed from this port during the reign of Nrsimhavarman I (630-668) to help reinstate the king of Sri Lanka. Merchant ships sailed to South East Asia regularly.

Travelers to South East Asia had to lay over for extended times waiting for the southwest trade winds to take them home; their sojourns influenced the art and culture of southwest Asia. The most recognizable influences of Indian art can be seen in the Bantey Samrei temple at Angkor in Cambodia.

In 1985, UNESCO declared the groups of monuments in Mamalapurum as World Heritage Monuments.

In the fourth century the Tamil-speaking Pallava of southern India, vassals of the Satavahana dynasty ruling the northwest Deccan, replaced the Satavahana and governed parts of present day Tamilnadu and Andhra states, with Kanchipurum as their capital. Over time the empire came to extend over all of Peninsular India except the lower tip. The Pallava were the first southern dynasty to create their civilization and art without the influence of the north.

This may have been the first Hindu dynasty that pioneered the excavation of small caves in granite outcrops during the reign of king Mahendravarman I (580-630). But within a century they diverted their energies to the con-

struction of freestanding stone structural temples. They constructed the first large stone structural temple in southern India, with a soaring tower, based on the basic design developed by the Eastern Chalukya. Their sculpture is equal in elegance, grace and sophistication to the sculpture at Sanchi and Amaravati, and it influenced the art of Java and Cambodia and Thailand.

Pallava kings started to sponsor the construction of Hindu monuments; they were emulated by later Hindu royals in India. They were worshippers of Siva and Vishnu, and their ideology influenced their art and sculpture.

Three Pallava kings are known to have constructed monuments at Mamalapurum; the patrons of a few monuments are not known. Although warfare with the Chalukya was a constant feature, there were sufficiently long peaceful periods between wars for culture to flourish. Mahendravarman I (580-630), a Jain convert to Brahmanism, abandoned the use of perishable building materials and built Siva cave temples all over the kingdom. He lost the Tamil-speaking Andhra regions to the neighboring Chalukya king Pulakesin during the first half of the seventh century. His son Nrsimhavarman I (630-668), also called Mamala, conquered some of the Tamil-speaking region from the Chalukya and developed Mamalapurum as a seaport. He constructed some of the finest monuments at Mamalapurum.

King Paramesvaravarman I (672-700) constructed the Trimurthy, Mahishamardini and Adi-varaha caves. Nrsimhavarman II (Rajasimha) (700-728) constructed the Olakanatha and Sea Shore temples at Mamalapurum. Later kings constructed temples at Kanchipurum and elsewhere. Monument construction by Pallava ceased in the late eight century or early ninth century, when the Telugu-speaking Cola replaced the Pallava regime.

The monuments at Mamalapurum, constructed of the hardest stones — granite, Charnockite or gneiss — repre-

sent the climax of the southern Indian art of the early Middle Ages. A variety of monuments were created from hard gray outcrops. An entire cliff was transformed into a sculptured panel. Rock-cut monolithic shrines were created from giant boulders and structural temples were built using granite blocks. In addition to shrines, they carved rock-cut throne seats, bolster blocks, cisterns and several animals including a realistically-carved monkey family. The monuments lack religious fervor and most carvings depict mythology. The carvings are so lovely that a spectator is lost in the beauty and does not feel the religious aspect, if any. Most of the monuments were left unfinished. The construction period of most monuments can be pinned down no more precisely than to the reign of a certain king.

The method of excavating caves in large granite boulders is described in the chapter on religious monuments. The execution of this technique can be seen on a large unfinished boulder in front of the Mahishamardini Cave and on left, unfinished corner of the Sculptured Cliff. Because of the hardness of the rock, the depth of the cave was kept to a bare minimum. The design of the pillars in the cave evolved from massive square pillars to pillars with a few facets to slender ornamented pillars with so many facets that they appear fluted or round, with various designs on the capitals. The squatting lions at the base of the pillars were developed during the Mamala regime. The lions evolved into roaring lions during the Rajasimha regime.

A characteristic feature of Pallava sculpture is the *Kudu*, a spade-shaped decoration enclosing figures of lesser gods in the center on the eave molding. Occasionally, overhanging cornices called *kaputa* were decorated with *kudu*; these are called *kaputa-cornices*. Above, an elaborate series of small pavilions or square miniature shrines with dome roof and single finial were added. The carving of Siva and Parvati in the Pallava temples on the rear wall of the sanctum behind a prismatic Lingam is called Somaskanda. It consists of Siva with his wife Uma and infant son Sakanda, sometime in the company of Vishnu and Brahma, indicating sectarian tolerance. The Lingam was not carved with a pedestal in any sanctum. It was carved from polished black basalt or Charnockite and transported to the sanctum to stand in a pit. Doorkeepers are mostly carved in awkward poses. In caves dedicated to Siva, the doorkeepers bear a pair of curved horns and hold a club in one hand. In caves dedicated to Vishnu, the doorkeepers are unarmed and without horns. The Pallava developed an ideal human form based on their own stature. Both males and females are slender and delicately built. Females have firm, long, slender limbs and small breasts; their hips and thighs are not particularly emphasized.

The largest and most elaborate sculpted composition in India is carved on an entire cliff of a large outcrop in the center of town (Fig. 2.196).

It covers two huge boulders, each 30m (92 ft) high and 50m (152 ft.) across, with a narrow crevice in the center. Both the boulders are carved with over one hundred figures of gods, men, floating *apsaras*, lions, tigers, elephants, fanciful beasts, *Kiratas* (wild hunters) and *kinnaras* (half bird, half human), all rushing to the vertical cleft in the center from both directions, giving a sense of harmony and purpose to the composition.

In Chad, sub-Saharan Africa, prehistoric man engraved a large frieze with silhouettes of cattle. The lower portion of the sculpture cliff is in a pit that was possibly dug to expose additional rock for carving and later converted into a small tank. The boulder on the right of the crevice on the top is carved with celestial beings and beasts. The flying couples and celestial beings appear to be floating with ease, exhibiting extraordinary beauty and nobility (Fig. 2.197).

Heinrich Zimmer describes them, saying, "the heavenly couples flying are the Pallava ideals of masculine and feminine beauty. The members of the two sexes in their outward appearance have more in common than contrast. They are angelic figures, full of subtle unearthly sensuality; for they do not share the weight and bulk of earthly beings. Made of mind stuff, 'subtle matter,' they are being carried along not by wings in the tradition of the west but by the nimble movements of their lovely air-like forms, like melodies or sentiments flowing on from sheer delight."

The narrow crevice in the center is carved with graceful *Nagaraja* and *Nagini* in deep relief with beautiful human upper bodies under hoods and long serpent tails, with hands held in salutation (Fig. 2.198). The snakes representing the river appear to be swimming upward. On festive occasions rain water collected in a cistern on the cliff was let into the cleft to create a waterfall. The tank below collected falling water.

Below in the pit is a herd of exquisitely carved and finely finished life-size elephants with frolicking young nestling between their legs. In front of the elephants, a cat is performing penance in the company of a group of mice, her forelimbs joined in salutation held above her head. One of the mice is also holding his forelimbs in salutation. Possibly this relates to a popular fable narrated in the Mahabharata, wherein unsuspecting mice meet a sad end at the hands of a hypocritical cat. Below, an old sage sits in front of a Pallava-style temple with the statue of a deity in the shrine cell. Below the temple are three disciples near the river, one carrying a pot of water on his shoulder, another wringing out water from a cloth, and

a third looking at the sun to find out what time it is. Beside the disciples a deer sits, scratching his nose with his hind leg — a marvel of keen observation of nature.

of a resting lion. The lower portion of the cliff is not carved, except for a lion resting in a cave and a deer standing in the right corner. The technique used to excavate the rock can



Fig. 2.196. Malapurum. Sculptured cliff. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 2.197. Malapurum. Sculptured cliff. Flying apsaras. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

To the left of the crevice the second boulder in the upper half is carved with a hermitage in the forest, men carrying loads, deer, tigers, flying *apsaras* and fanciful beasts (Fig. 2.199). Near the hermitage a fearless deer is standing in front

be seen at the left corner of the unfinished lower half of the boulder.



Fig. 2.198. Mamalapurum. Sculptured cliff. Right boulder. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 2.199. Mamalapurum. Sculptured cliff. Left boulder. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

It was believed that the composition presents the episodes of the descent of Ganges from her heavenly abode to the earth. According to one version of the myth, the earth was deprived of water by magic in the early stages after creation. The sage Bhagiratha (shown sitting in front of a Pallava-style temple, possibly at Gokarna in the south) to obtain the promise of water from Brahma. After obtaining the promise of water, by

performing penance he gained the grace and consent of Goddess Ganga to descend from her heavenly abode surrounding Mount Meru to earth for the benefit of mankind and to wash the ashes of his ancestors to the sea. To save the earth from the shattering impact of the river falling from heaven to the ground, the sage Bhagiratha obtained the consent of Siva to receive the Goddess Ganga onto his matted hair. The emaci-

ated ascetic, standing on one leg performing penance in the Himalayas beside Siva, is Bhagiratha. Ganga is also considered the second love of Siva. Siva granted the boon. Ganges, after descending onto the hair, became entangled in Siva's matted locks and meanders for ages, losing the shattering punch of impact, and she finally descends gently onto the earth to the welcome of all the creatures rushing to her.

Most scholars now believe that the legend depicts Arjuna's penance. According to the legend, demons sent a wild boar to kill Arjuna (the ascetic standing on one leg) as he was performing penance to obtain Siva's blessing and his magic weapon Pasupata for use against the Kauravas of the Mahabharata epic. Siva, disguised as hunter, intervened. Both Siva and Arjuna claimed to be victor over the wild boar. A fight ensued between Siva and Arjuna. Arjuna subdued Siva. Finally Siva revealed himself and, finding Arjuna a worthy opponent, granted him the use of the weapon. However, the absence of any wild boar in the panel casts doubts on this theory.

Beside the cliff a realistically-carved statue of a monkey family depicts the father grooming the mother, while the baby is suckling (Fig. 2.200).



Fig. 2.200. Mamalapurum. Monkey family. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A comparatively small, unfinished sculptured cliff some distance away to the south was possibly an experimental attempt.

Arjuna *mandapa* with beautifully decorated façade is carved next to the sculpture cliff on an outcrop (Fig. 2.201).

The *mandapa* in front has two rows of pillars. The front row of six faceted pillars is decorated with lions seated at the base with upright forelegs, a decoration characteristic of the Nrsimhavarman reign. The two-tiered bulbous top bears a square abacus and horses with riders. The parapet wall above the cornice is decorated with *kudus* and miniature shrines above. The inside of the *mandapa* is almost unadorned.

A noticeable feature of the cave is the protruding sanctum in the *mandapa* with wide passages on both sides. It is not separated from the matrix behind. The shrine is empty.



Fig. 2.201. Mamalapurum. Arjuna Mandapa. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 2.202. Mamalapurum. Krishna Mandapa. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The Krishna Mandapa a few meters from the sculptured cliff has another large panel carved on a boulder depicting the legend of Krishna lifting the mountain Govardhana, sheltered inside a *mandapa* that may possibly be of later origin (Fig. 2.202). The pillars at the base have a seated lion but the capitals are of indistinct type, with hanging lotus buds. The second rows of pillars inside the mandapa in front of the panel obstruct the view of the composition in entirety. The subject of the realistic and heartwarming composition is village life in the morning. This is the most poetic and endearing presentation of the legend in Indian or Angkor sculpture.

According to legend Lord Krishna convinced the villagers living around Govardhana Mountain to stop celebrating the thanksgiving festival to Indra for sending rain clouds, and persuaded them instead to give an offering to the hills, pastures and cows which provided their life support. When the villagers agreed, Indra in anger collected rain clouds and thunderbolts and sent a thunderstorm to chastise the villagers. Lord Krishna, to protect cowherd families and cattle

from deluges of rain and thunderbolts, picked up the mountain from the base at the center and held it over the village like an umbrella. The roof of the *mandapa* obscures the imaginary mountaintop, but both sides of the sculpture represent of the mountain ends resting on earth. The ends are carved with wild and mythological animals in addition to a Nandi on the left end. The legend indicates the fall of Indra from his eminent position as head of the last triad of Hindu gods.



Fig. 2.203. Mamalapurum. Krishna Mandapa. Lovelorn couple. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 2.204. Mamalapurum. Krishna Mandapa. Cattle. Woodcutter. Female carrying fodder and milk pots. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

With lions, griffins and sphinxes on the mountain ends resting on earth, the legend starts in the background of pastures with cows grazing all over, protected from the rains by the mountain umbrella held by Lord Krishna. The cows in the pasture are indicated only by their heads. Starting from the right, a love-stricken rustic youth is carved pulling his love by the hand (Fig. 2.203). She holds back, not relaxing her hand, but without any struggle — one of her legs is kept forward and there is no sign of agitation on her lovely face, which expresses delightful emotions of tender love.

Beside the couple a calf and a bull are standing idle (Fig. 2.203). A beautiful female is standing next to the bull, holding a sling with a pile of milk pots arranged one above another and balancing a bundle of fodder on her head (Fig. 2.204).

A woodcutter stands behind the damsel with his ax resting on his shoulder, gazing into space, possibly deciding where to cut the wood for fuel. Next, a man is milking, with a charming herd of cows in the background pasture (Fig. 2.205). The carving of a cow licking the calf, twisting its tongue, is naturalistic. Behind, a mother with a child sitting on the thigh of her bent leg is watching a cowherd playing a flute. Balarama is standing next to the cow, with his left hand on the shoulder of a companion and his right hand on his hip. Balarama, brother of Lord Krishna, was an avatar of Vishnu, born during the same age as Lord Krishna.

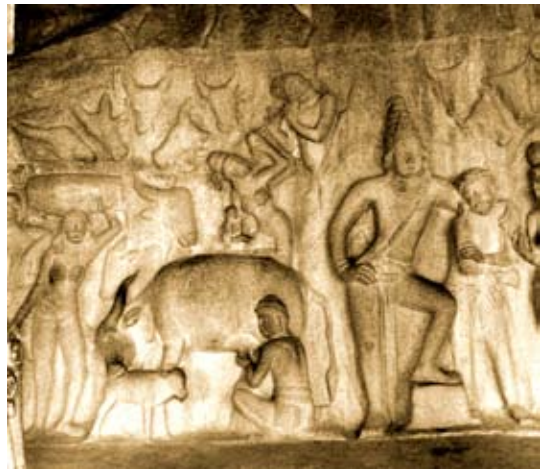


Fig. 2.205. Mamalapurum. Krishna Mandapa. Milking cow. Female listing flute music. Balarama and companion. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A delicately-built village damsel is next in line (Fig. 2.206).



Fig. 2.206. Mamalapurum. Krishna Mandapa. Lord Krishna holding mountain surrounded by Gopies. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

Larger than life, Lord Krishna stands holding Govardhana Mountain high in his left hand. He is holding his right hand in a boon-giving gesture, surrounded by a group of three lovely maidens on the right. They are gazing at Lord Krishna in amazement. A beautiful female balancing a pile of milk pots on her head is holding the hand of a boy. Another boy, standing in front, is looking with awe at the woman with the milk pots. An old man is standing at the end of the panel, carrying a baby on his shoulder. The composition, dominated by cows, milk pots and village girls, is poetic and simple; it depicts love, beauty and the chorus of morning life in a village. There is no sign of the storm's fury sent by Indra, only the calm and peace of the morning prevails.

The hill area behind the sculpted cliff has monuments, some with exceptionally beautiful sculpture. Ganesha Mandapa, a monolithic freestanding temple carved out of an outcrop, is located about 50 meters (150 yards) to the left of the sculpted cliff (Fig. 2.207).



Fig. 2.207. Mamalapurum. Ganesha Mandapa. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The three-storey-high roof of the *mandapa* has a wagon-shaped structure on top. Most of the decorative designs carved on the temple towers and gateways on temples in southern India can be seen on this *mandapa*. On the top of the wagon-shaped roof are nine vase-shaped finials arranged in a row, a decorative motif followed by the later gateways (*gopurum*) of the south Indian temples. The wagon-shaped roof at one end has a human head with a trident-shaped headgear. The central prong of the trident is long and narrow. A similar decoration expected on the other end is missing. The superstructure is decorated with small chaitya windows, pavilions and a human head with trident-shaped headgear. The sides

and back walls of the temple are decorated with pilasters without sculpture in between. The facade of the shrine has a porch supported by two pillars with seated lion bases. Two pilasters near the corners are carved with seated lions facing each other. Guardians flanking the ends of the façade are carved between pilasters. The temple was dedicated to Siva, but a statue of Ganesha occupies the shrine cell now. On the basis of the seated lion, the Ratha is assigned to the reign of Nrsimhavarman I (630-668).

Trimurthy Cave is located a short distance away to the right of Ganesha Ratha. It is assigned to the reign of Paramesvaravarman I (672-700). The cave consists of three similar single cells excavated in row in an outcrop (Fig. 2.208).



Fig. 2.208. Mamalapurum. Trimurthy Cave. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The façade of the cave is shared by all the cells and is decorated with eaves carved with *kudus* and other decorative motifs. None of the cells has a front porch. Doorkeepers stand between two pillars flanking the entrance of each cell. There is a flight of three steps in front of each cell. The left shrine is dedicated to Brahma, the central shrine to Siva and the right shrine to Vishnu. The central Siva shrine is comparatively larger, with a slightly projecting entrance. The cell is enshrined with the Lingam carved from a separate stone and installed in the cell. A four-armed Siva stands on the rear wall with potbellied flying dwarfs in the corners and two male worshippers kneeling beside him. Kneeling devotees and flying figures attend Brahma and Vishnu in their shrines. To the left of Vishnu's shrine is a Durga-worshipping area, with Durga carved on the face of the boulder. There is a flight of a few steps reaching the feet of the deity, even though she is not carved in a cell. The eight-armed goddess with a delicate, lovely body, is standing erect without any body bends, on a buffalo head. She is carved between two pilasters topped with a *makara* arch with foliated curling tails hanging down. Her diaphanous lower garment, tied at the waist, reaches her ankles.

Varaha Cave is located few meters to the left of Ganesha Ratha (Fig. 2.209).



Fig. 2.209. Mamalapurum. Varaha cave. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The cave was excavated during the reign of Nrsimharman I (630-668). A small shallow rectangular tank is cut in front of the cave with steps on opposite sides of the tank, facing the main shrine in the cave. To enter the shrine a pilgrim had to walk across the tank. The façade on the roof is carved with *kudus*, *salas* and *stupis*. The cave consists of a rectangular hall with two almost cylindrical pillars and two pilasters with seated lions at the base and cushion capitals supporting square abacus and brackets with wavy margins. The rectangular hall has the only decorated ceiling in Mamalapurum.



Fig. 2.210. Mamalapurum. Varaha cave. Vishnu as Bore. 7<sup>th</sup>. Century. Granite.

The sanctum projects into the hall. Doorkeepers guard the empty shrine. The cave is carved with the most vibrant Pallava sculpture. Four panels in undecorated niches are carved with large figures. On the right side wall of the hall is a delightful panel carved with a gigantic boar, the incarnation of Vishnu, tenderly holding the beautiful Goddess Earth seated on the thigh of his right leg, which is pressing on the head of Sesha after rescuing Earth from the depths of the cosmic ocean (Fig. 2.210). His left leg is firmly planted on the ground. The boar dominates the panel in the center and appears all-powerful. Its snout and head have been carved in detail and emerge in natural way from the human neck. He holds his emblem wheel in one hand and a conch in other hand.

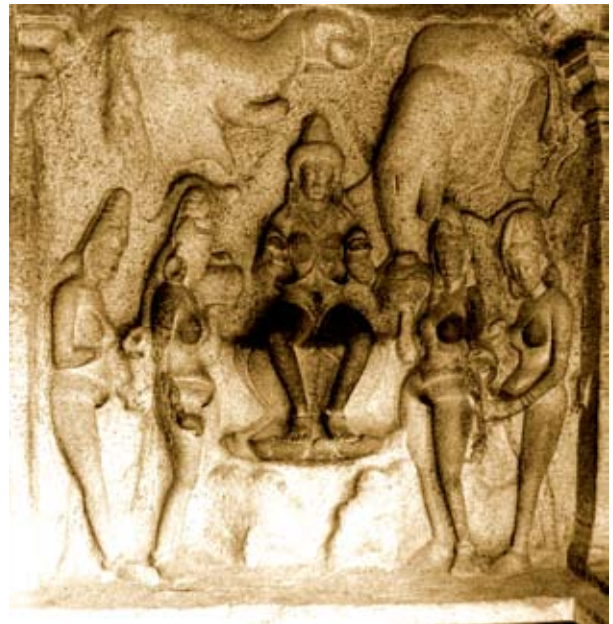


Fig. 2.211. Mamalapurum. Varaha cave. Gajalakshmi. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

His third hand is thrown around the hip of the earth goddess seated on his thigh, while a fourth hand holds her right leg. Sesha is emerging from the water, as indicated by his lower body hidden by water ripples, lotus leaves and flowers. Beside Sesha is his lovely consort, in human form, with bent head and hands in salutation, standing in the water. Brahma is carved beside the Boar on the left and the sage Narada is carved on the right. Over the top are Chandra and Surya, emerging from the clouds, with hands held in salutation. According to the legend, the land was submerged in the cosmic ocean when man and woman were created. They asked Vishnu for a place to live. While he was still thinking, a tiny boar dropped from his nostril, grew to gigantic proportions, and dived into the cosmic ocean. In Hindu mythology



the boar came into existence before humans, and ranks above man. While the boar was searching for the earth in the cosmic ocean, the lord of demons Daitya Hiranyaksa attacked him. Vishnu killed him and rescued the earth from the cosmic depths for human habitation.

To the right, a delicately built beautiful Goddess Gajalakshmi, representing prosperity, abundance and auspiciousness, is carved seated on a full-blown lotus with her pendent legs resting on an open lotus in the lotus tank below (Fig. 2.211).

She is wearing a conical headdress. On each side of the goddess are two beautiful worshippers. The females in front on both sides are carrying round water pots in their open palms. The two females standing behind them are carrying their pots on their waists. Two heads of elephants are carved in the corners. One of them is pouring water on the head of Lakshmi from the water pot held in his trunk. The other elephant is coiling his trunk around the pot to lift it from the raised hand of the second female. The physical world in the carving has no need to exaggerate to create dramatic effects. The elephants do not appear reduced in scale; only the heads are shown. The goddess is equal in size to the worshippers standing beside her but she is placed higher, on a throne, to denote her higher status.

The panel to the left of the cell entrance depicts a four-armed Goddess Durga holding a wheel and discus in her raised hands (Fig. 2.212).



Fig. 2.212. Mamalapurum. Varaha cave. Head offering to Durga. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

One of her front hands is raised in a reassurance gesture and the other hand is resting on her slender thigh. She is tall, slim, charming and standing straight, with a narrow waist,

slightly rounded hips and thighs. She is wearing a girdle and a band around her chest. The elongated crown and parasol held above indicate her universal sovereignty. On the top of the parasol is carved the head of her mount, the lion, on one side and on the other side is the head of the antelope. Two worshippers are at the foot of the Goddess; one worshipper, carved in the back profile, is holding a lock of his long hair in one hand and a long sword in other hand to cut his head as a sacrificial offering to the Goddess. Another male devotee is kneeling before the goddess. In the upper corners are pot-bellied dwarfs.

On the left side wall is a sculpture of Vishnu as Trivikrama, the conqueror of the three worlds (Fig. 2.222). To get rid of King Bali, who was popular with mankind but was threatening the authority of gods, Vishnu assumed the form of a dwarf and obtained Bali's promise to give him all the ground he could cover in three steps. Being generous to man, Bali granted his request. Vishnu then assumed gigantic proportions and covered the entire earth in his first step, the space between heaven and earth in his second step, and with his third step landed on the head of King Bali, killing him. The eight-armed Vishnu, wearing an elongated headdress, is shown with one leg planted on the ground and the other leg raised above his shoulder, resting in heaven. Beside the standing leg, a three-headed Brahma sits washing Vishnu's foot. His front left hand is raised above his head with palm upturned and all the other arms carry emblems and weapons. A four-armed Siva is seated on the right. Below Vishnu's raised leg is the dead body of Bali, falling head first. At Vishnu's feet, two worshippers on each side are seated in frontal view. The rest of the panel is filled with flying figures.



Fig. 2.212. Mamalapurum. Varaha Cave. Trivikrama. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

Mahishamardini Cave, a monolithic Siva shrine commissioned by Paramesvaravarman (670-700) is excavated in a large outcropping near the new lighthouse (Fig. 2.213). The complete outcropping appears to be dressed. On the top of the outcropping is a tower-like square structure called Olakanatha Temple.



Fig. 2.213. Mamalapurum. Mahishamardini cave and Olakanatha temple above. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The façade of the Mahishamardini Cave has four polygonal pillars (two of them repaired) and two pilasters. The original pillars have cushion capitals topped by a square abacus. There are three cells in the cave. The projection of the central cell into the hall forms a portico with two pillars in front with squatting lion bases (Fig. 2.214). The square platform possibly gave rise to the vestibule of the future shrines. Armed doorkeepers guarding the main shrine are carved between the pilasters flanking the entrance of the Siva shrine. One of the doorkeepers has horns on both sides of his head.



Fig. 2.214. Mamalapurum. Mahishamardini cave. Facade. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

There is a circular socket cut in the floor of the oblong shrine but the Lingam is missing. Siva is carved as Somas-

kanda on the rear wall. The pendant legs of Siva and Parvati rest on the back of a seated Nandi carved on the floor below. A devotee is seated on the floor. Four-headed Brahma and Vishnu stand behind Siva. The cells on the sides, despite being guarded by carvings of doorkeepers, are empty.



Fig. 2.215. Mamalapurum. Mahishamardini cave. Vishnu sleeping on Sesha. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A large panel on the left side of the cave shows Anantasyana (sleeping) Vishnu (Fig. 2.215). According to Hindu mythology, the universe is periodically created and reabsorbed by the supreme deity Vishnu. Before the recreation phase, the deity rests reclines on a couch formed by the coiled body of serpent Ananta, the lord of the serpents floating in the cosmic ocean. The two-armed unadorned Vishnu is carved wearing a conical headdress (characteristic of Palava sculpture), in calm repose under the canopy of the five-hooded head of Ananta. While Vishnu is awakening to renew all creation, a lotus flower rises from his navel Vishnu and Brahma, the creator, is born on the lotus flower. Vishnu's first action after awakening is to destroy the two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, who threaten the creative forces embodied in the newborn Brahma.

The furies of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha, standing at the feet of Vishnu, brandishing weapons, enhances by contrast the calm and peaceful expression on Vishnu's face. Brahma and the lotus growing from the navel of Vishnu is absent in this carving. Two emblems of Vishnu, the discus and sword, are personified as a pair of beautiful youths carved beside the awakening Vishnu to request his permission to kill the demons. The flying dwarfs carved on the rear wall above Vishnu personify the two other emblems of Vishnu, the club and the conch. The goddess Sri Devi with a beautiful headdress is kneeling at the feet of her lord (Fig. 2.216). Her dress cleaves to her body and is engraved with beautiful designs. She wears simple ornaments on her hips, hands and legs.



Fig. 2.216. Mamalapurum. Mahishamardini cave. Goddess Sri Devi. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The carving on the left side wall depicts the goddess Durga fighting the buffalo demon Mahisa to rescue the universe from the tyranny of the demon. According to the legend Mahisa became so powerful that he prevented the gods from exercising their powers, and ruled the universe with reckless tyranny. The gods, unable to subdue the demon, went to Brahma, who took them to Vishnu and Siva. When told of the tyranny of Mahisa, Vishnu, Siva and the other gods in anger blew fiery flames from their mouths, exhaling the strengths of their particular natures. The flames combined, grew large, then condensed and eventually assumed the shape of the eight-armed all-powerful mother goddess, the supreme power of motherhood. Each part of her body was developed by the particular nature of energy of one god. In the panel the goddess, riding ferocious lion, her mount, and brandishing different weapons in her eight arms, leads her army of women warriors and potbellied dwarfs wielding bow and arrows, swords, daggers, and clubs (Fig. 2.217). The buffalo demon (with human body and buffalo head), wearing a crown, is larger than the goddess. His head is blended artistically with its human neck. He holds the handle of an iron club in one hand and the end of the club in the other hand, exuding brutal force. Balancing the club in both hands he is awaiting an opportunity to strike Durga.

In addition to the heavy club, he has a long sword stuck in his waistband. He stands, leaning back amidst his fallen and dispirited retreating army. One warrior holds a parasol over his head while another warrior fights with a dwarf. One

warrior is falling on the sword of a female warrior; another has fallen dead and one more is collapsing. Some are retreating, carrying their shields and swords, and some are kneeling down. Durga is holding a taut bow in her outstretched hand while another hand is holding the bowstring stretched behind her ear, arrow apparently cocked. The figure is so majestic, powerful and engrossing that, although the arrow and bowstring are not carved, the omission is hardly noticed (Fig. 218). With sword and dagger she is thrashing and stabbing the enemy. With bow and arrow in her other hands she is shooting arrows at the demon. The carving, combining her slender, graceful, feminine body with the war-like posture exhibiting dashing courage and exuberant confidence is entirely unique. Energy seems to be pouring out of her body.



Fig. 2.217. Mamalapurum. Mahishamardini cave. Durga fighting Buffalo demon. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 218. Mamalapurum. Mahishamardini cave. Durga and her army. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A female warrior kneeling below Durga is striking a Mahisa soldier with a sword. She is graceful and powerful. Be-

low the darting lion, a dwarf is fighting with bow and arrow. Three more dwarfs behind and above Durga are fighting with shields and swords. Other dwarfs, flying above, are carrying offerings. Two dwarfs are holding a parasol above Durga. The parasols over the heads of both the adversaries signify that the battle is not over. But no one is left in doubt as to the final outcome of the conflict.

King Nrsimhavarman II (Rajasimha) (700-728) constructed the Olakanatha temple on the top of the boulder excavated with the Mahishamardini cave. The small extant base of the temple indicates that possibly there was not much mother rock remaining to carve the superstructure above. Most possibly, it was carved as a decorative motif above the Mahishamardini cave. The grayish granite base of the temple is carved on each side with Siva as Nataraja, yogi Siva meditating under a tree, and other incarnations between pilasters of roaring lion bases.

Adi-varaha Cave is located near the old lighthouse. It is in daily use and is under control of the Brahmin who officiates at the temple near the sculpted cliff. It is mostly kept locked and one has to seek out the Brahmin to enter the cave.

Excavation apparently started during the reign of Nrsimhavarman I (630-668) and was completed during the reign of Paramesvaravarman (672-700). The cave layout, similar to Krishna mandapa, consists of a concave surface on a large boulder with a protruding sanctum excavated in the center. Four pillars with squatting lions and two pilasters support the ceiling of the hall in front of the cave. On either side of the sanctum entrance niches are carved enclosed in pilasters. One niche is carved with King Mahendravarman I leading his two queens, and holding the hand of his senior queen (Fig. 2.219).



Fig. 2.219. Mamalapurum. Adi-Varaha cave. King leading his queens. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

In another niche the king is seated on a throne with his queens standing alongside. The senior queen in both panels is draped in transparent cloth reaching to her feet while the junior queen is naked. Vishnu is carved holding the wheel and conch in his rear hands, with his front right hand in a protection gesture and left hand on his hip. Two devotees are sitting near his feet. The carving to the right of Vishnu is possibly of Ananta, the king of the sea serpents.

The carving of Lakshmi seated on a throne is similar to the carving in Vihara Cave, but here Lakshmi has a pointed face, a large round headdress and large earrings (Fig. 2.220).



Fig. 2.220. Mamalapurum. Adi-Varaha cave. Lakshmi. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

Multi-armed Durga with her delicate body in three body bends is standing on a buffalo head (Fig. 2.221). She is holding a sword, shield, bell and other emblems in her hands. Two devotees sit beside her. The male is cutting his wrist with a pointed object to offer sacrificial blood to the goddess. Two more females are standing in various postures and body bends while dwarfs occupy the upper corners. This is the only carving of Durga with body bends at Mamalapurum.



Fig. 2.221. Mamalapurum. Adi-Varaha cave. Durga. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A group of five exquisite monolithic shrines called Rathas are located about 3 km (1.8 miles) from the center of town, to the south, constructed by King Nrsimhavarman I (630-680). Perhaps the construction stopped upon the death of the king, as none of the monuments has been completed and most of the carvings are left without polish. A *Ratha* is a chariot used to carry the image of a god in a street procession. None of these monuments resembles a chariot, however, and it is not entirely clear why the name is used; possibly because of their small size and religious significance. Each shrine consists of a cell, superstructure and crowning element (Fig. 2.222).



Fig. 2.222. Malapurum. Five Rathas. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The south Indian temple was not fully developed by the seventh century. Only a few units of the modern temple were in existence. Four of the Rathas are carved from a single large granite outcrop the height of which increases from north to south. The shortest Ratha is at the north and the tallest Ratha is at the south end. A fifth Ratha, not in line with the other four, and various monolithic larger-than-life animals were carved from other boulders. All the Rathas display beautiful decorative sculpture and most have figurative sculpture as well.



Fig. 2.223. Malapurum. Five Rathas. Draupadi and Arjuna Ratha. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The architectural styles of two of the Rathas evolved into different principal components of south Indian monuments. Two Rathas are prototype of the future gateway (*gopurum*) of southern Indian temples. The decorative sculpture devel-

oped here came to be commonly used to decorate south Indian temple exteriors.

Draupadi Ratha (also known as Durga Ratha), standing at the north end of the row, is dedicated to Goddess Durga (Fig. 2.223).

It is the smallest, most elegant monolithic shrine of the group; it is shaped like a wooden hut with a steep, sloping roof supported on four corner pilasters. The corners of the roof bear foliate decorations. The dislodged crowning element, a round pot with finial, is kept near the Ratha. The Ratha has 3.7m sq. (11 ft. sq.) base and is 6.5m (20 ft.) high. Beautiful females with three body bends are carved in flanking niches guarding the shrine entrance. The rear wall inside the cell is carved with a beautiful four-armed goddess Durga, standing straight, attended by females, with two male worshippers kneeling before her feet and flying dwarfs overhead (Fig. 2.224). One of the male worshiper is holding a lock of his long hair in his left hand and a sword in his right hand, ready to hack off his head as an offering to the goddess. The exterior walls on side are carved with Durga standing in niches in the center. On the rear wall she is standing on the severed head of the buffalo demon. This all-female shrine (except the two male worshippers) possibly represent the Shakti movement. Her mount, the lion, carved larger than life from an outcropping in front of the shrine; it is not detached from the mother rock. The lion is placed in the ritual position facing the goddess.



Fig. 2.224. Malapurum. Draupadi Ratha. Head offering to Durga. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The offering of one's head to the goddess was the ceremonial offering of the flesh from nine parts of the body, culminating in the offer of one's head, by both men and women. Offerings of human blood or body parts were not rare in the Hindu religion. It is mentioned that a certain sect used to cut off their heads or tongues as sacrificial offerings to the goddess in a *mandapa* especially built for that purpose.

The head offering is related to a story with many versions. In one version Viravara, a Brahmin, offered the head of his son Sattvavara to the goddess in order to prolong the life of his master Sudraka. His daughter died of grief. His wife resolved to throw herself on the funeral pyre on which the bodies of the children were laid. Meanwhile Viravara decided to gratify the goddess by offering his own head, and after singing a hymn praising the goddess, duly cut it off. The king, touched by the devotion of his faithful servant, was about to cut off his own head. But a voice from heaven prevented him. Finally all were brought back to life. This motif is carved in a few Pallava temples.



Fig. 2.225. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Arjuna Ratha. Carvings on exterior wall. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

Arjuna Ratha, standing next to Draupadi Ratha, is a small and simple Dravidian temple with pillared portico, empty, square sanctum and multi-tiered four-sided tower. It is more advanced than Gupta Temple at Sanchi, with a tower and plentiful decorations on the walls. Alternating elephants and lions are carved all around the base of the Ratha. On the west, a flight of steps leads to the portico that is supported by two pillars and two pilasters. The shrine was abandoned before construction was completed, possibly because of a crack that developed in the boulder during carving. The central cell is empty. The pyramid-shaped two-tiered roof is decorated with *stupis* and *salas* and crowned by an octagonal *sikara*. Miniature arched *stupis* are placed at the corners of the upper levels. The eaves are decorated with spade-shaped finials enclosing figures of lesser gods (*kudus*). Both stories of the

tower are decorated with pilaster niches, some carved with loving couples. Huntington suggests that the Ratha was perhaps dedicated to a popular local south Indian village deity Murukan, or Aiyandar-Sasta, favored by lovers.

The exterior walls of the shrine have sculptured niches delineated with pilasters, a characteristic feature of south Indian temples. There are five sculpted niches on the south wall of the Ratha (Fig. 2.225). The central niche carries the image of Siva leaning on a bull, flanked by beautiful loving couples carved in the Pallava ideal of human beauty. Male attendants occupy the corner niches. One of the loveliest pair is carved on the walls of this shrine (Fig. 2.226).



Fig. 2.226. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Arjuna Ratha. Exterior wall. Loving Couple. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 2.227. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Arjuna Ratha. Exterior wall. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 2.228. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Arjuna Ratha. Exterior wall. Apsaras. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

On the east wall Indra is carved standing with elephant (Fig. 2.227).

To the left of Indra stands a beautiful pair of females (Fig. 2.228). A figure in the central niche on the rear wall appears to have been chiseled out. A magnificent colossal unfinished couchant bull is located behind the temple. It is not detached from the bedrock. A life-sized elephants carved from a separate boulder stands in front of the Ratha. Because the elephant is the mount of Indra, some believe that the shrine was originally dedicated to Indra. The elephant is not detached and is placed in the ritual position facing the temple.



Fig. 2.229. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Bhima Ratha. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

Bhima Ratha, the largest ratha, measures 6.5m (20 ft.) long, 3.9m (12 ft.) wide and 9.7m (30 ft.) high. It is dedicated to Vishnu in Anantasayana form (Fig. 2.229). It is a two-storey structure with a barrel-vaulted roof representing the prototype of future gateways of south Indian temples. The upper level is decorated with miniature barrel-vaulted shrines, round *stupis* and chaitya-window ornamentations. The façade of the ratha has four pillars with seated lion bases. The entrance to the shrine is through the long side. There is a partially cut stone running along the long axis inside. Possibly it was intended for to be carved with a sleeping Vishnu. The shrine is incomplete and has no figurative carvings.

Dharma Raja Ratha, dedicated to Siva, is the tallest unfinished ratha; it has a square base. It is located at the south end (Fig. 2.230). It is larger and more elaborately carved than Arjuna Ratha. The front façade is supported on four pillars with seated lions at the bases. It has a three-storey high four-sided pyramidal superstructure — the forerunner of the future south Indian temple towers.



Fig. 2.230. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Dharma raja Ratha. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

King Nrsimhavarman I is carved in a stiff pose in a niche. Each of the stories is decorated with miniature barrel-shaped shrines, round *stupis* and *kudu* ornamentations. The crowning element, the *sikara*, is octagonal. For construction of this monument stonecutters commenced excavation from the top of the boulder; moving downwards they excavated two stories and enshrined a relief of Somaskanda flanked by Brahma and Vishnu. These stories are connected by steps. The ground chamber was not excavated. It is solid rock. Siva, Yogi Siva and Ardhanari are carved on the exterior walls of the Ratha. Ardhanari, with a perfect balancing of the masculine features of Siva and the graceful anatomical details of Parvati, is very attractive (Fig. 2.231).



Fig. 2.231. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Dharma Raja Ratha. Ardhanari. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A large part of the monument was excavated during the reign of Nrsimhavarman I (630-668). After his death, two of his successors continued the construction. The Somaskanda panel in the upper storey shrine was carved during the reign of Nrsimhavarman II (700-728).

Nakula-Sahadeva Ratha, near Draupadi Ratha, is carved from a separate boulder and is not in line with the other Rathas. It faces south, in contrast to the westward orientation of the other Rathas (Fig. 2.232).



Fig. 2.232. Mamalapurum. Five Rathas. Nakula-Sahadeva Ratha. Ca. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

It is believed that the Ratha is dedicated to the twin heroes of the Mahabharata, Nakula and Sahadeva. The Ratha is apsidal in shape, a rare configuration in Hindu temples. The slightly extended porch is supported on two pillars with sitting-lion bases. The back of the temple is semicircular but the interior of the empty shrine cell is square. The tiered roof has decorations similar to those of Arjuna and Dharma raja Ratha, but the barrel-shaped crown is smaller than that of Bhima Ratha.

The Shore temple, located on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, is shown in old photographs surrounded by the sea and literally licked by the waves. Rajasimha (700-728), in the early eighth century, constructed the temple about 1 km (0.6

miles) from the town center (Fig. 2.233). It is the first large structural stone temple constructed in south India and it influenced the construction of Virupaksha temple at Patadkal in Karnataka, and some Cola monuments.



Fig. 2.233. Mamalapurum. Shore temple.

Side view. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The Shore Temple is composite of three shrines: a large Siva shrine facing the sea, a small Siva shrine facing the land (both with towers) and a small Vishnu shrine sandwiched between the front and rear Siva shrines, without any tower on the sanctum. On the right side of the front shrine a small shrine was discovered buried in the sand. It has a small monolithic boar standing on four legs beside a Lingam-shaped shrine. A small gap visible on the left side wall of the shrine is the abrupt end of the outer wall of the temple, left unconnected.

The outer walls of the temple enclose the circumambulatory passage of the large Siva shrine on the front and sides, but the passage on the rear is blocked at the end of the Vishnu shrine, leaving the circumambulatory passage incomplete. The outer wall of the temple on the side where the passage is blocked shows a small gap between the outer wall and temple. The vast courtyard of the temple is enclosed in a short wall with numerous weathered statues of Nandi on the wall. The temple stands on a low platform. The exterior walls and cornice were embellished with sculpture, now eroded.

The small shrine facing the land has a comparatively small three-tiered tower decorated similar to the large Siva shrine on the rear (Fig. 2.234). The first storey face is decorated with a large squatting Nandi.





Fig. 2.234. Mamalapurum. Shore Temple. Front Siva shrine. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The shrine entrance is decorated with flanking pilasters. Doorkeepers standing inside the entrance were incompletely carved or else they have eroded. The pilasters at the corner and the shrine façades feature springing lions with riders. Somaskanda sculpture decorates the rear wall of the sanctum cell. There is no Lingam in the sanctum. The gateway in front of the shrine is dilapidated and has a few weathered panels, possibly depicting Pallava history. The pedestal of the emblem column of the temple stands in front of the temple. An inscription on the outer walls states that Rajasimha constructed all the units of the temple. The temple appears not to have been very well planned, and possibly changes were made after construction started.

On the left of the front shrine is a statue of a large lion on a pedestal with a diminutive Goddess Durga seated on its right leg (Fig. 2.235). The small square cavity cut in the chest of the lion is also carved with the image of Durga on the rear wall. A skillfully-carved lifeless, limp body of a deer lies near the pedestal of the lion.



Fig. 2.235. Mamalapurum. Shore temple. Durga sitting on lion leg. Lifeless body of deer beside. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The Vishnu shrine attached to the back of the front Siva shrine, in fact sandwiched between the front and rear Siva shrines, is a small rectangular flat roof cell without superstructure.

A side entrance with few steps located near the large lion statue leads to a passage that branch to the right leading to the left arm of ambulatory passage of seaside Siva shrine. Straight ahead the passage is a dead end. Midway in this passage is the entrance to the single-celled Vishnu shrine on the left. The shrine faces east, as does the front Siva shrine. The sanctum is enshrined with a four-armed unadorned Vishnu sleeping on a rock bed, without attendants, emblems or lotus emerging from his navel.



Fig. 2.236. Mamalapurum. Shore temple. Siva shrine facing sea. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The large Siva shrine on the back of the temple faces east (Fig. 2.236). The entrance to the shrine is through the left arm of the ambulatory passage. There is a large opening on the temple wall facing sea that resembles an entrance to the Siva shrine. But there are no steps to climb and enter the shrine from seaside. It was possibly made to make the Siva shrine visible to the fishing ships going to sea in early morning and returning in the evening. As the temple was constructed using large granite blocks, the comparatively large Siva shrine facing the sea was given a soaring pyramidal tower with several ornamental stories. The tower also served as a beacon for seafaring fishing ships. Each storey is decorated with barrel-vaulted units (*sala*) and small rounded *stupi* at the margins. The top of the towers is crowned with narrow elongated *stupi*. The outer wall facing sea continues on both side of the Siva shrine, forming an ambulatory passage on three sides. All the surfaces of temple walls including the interior surface of the ambulatory passage were embellished with sculpture, now eroded. The shrine has a small front porch reached by a flight of steps. The side walls of the porch are carved with Somaskanda. The sanctum is enshrined with a fluted basalt Lingam and Somaskanda carved on the rear wall. A broken emblem column stands in front of the large opening.

The abrasive action of wind-blown sand and salt-water spray from the sea has damaged all the carvings on the temple walls beyond recognition. Under a recent reclamation project, the silt and sand deposited around the temple were removed and the temple protected from the sea, encroaching on the west, by construction of a massive sea wall and from sand and salt spray by the planting of a wind break along the shoreline. But weathering has already done considerable damage.

Yali Cave is situated 4 km (2 ½ miles) from Mamalapurum on a deserted beach (Fig. 2.237).



Fig. 2.237. Mamalapurum. Yali cave. 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

A large circular niche in the center of a big boulder is carved with the eleven horned heads of the mythological lion Yali on the periphery. The size of the heads progressively decreases from the top to the bottom of the niche. The empty shallow niche in the center, reached by a flight of steps, is flanked by two pilasters with a roaring lion base. On the left of the boulder, two elephants are carved in frontal view, with shrines on their backs in the shape of square deep niches cut with images of deities on the rear walls. A shallow image of a horse comes next. The ditch in front of the cave collects rainwater. It was possibly filled with seawater during festive occasions. The cave may have been used as a pavilion during the Indra festival, when the deity was brought to the seashore in a procession and installed in the pavilion.

#### 14. THE TEMPLES AT BHUBANESVARA (650–1275)

Bhubanesvara, the capital of the Orissa in east India, is situated 348 km (209 miles) southeast of Calcutta and 1224 km (735 miles) northwest of Chennai by rail. It is a religious center with more than a hundred standing temples in various states of preservation, rivaling Aihole in southern India and Khajuraho in the north. The temples of Aihole represent the developmental stages of the Indian temple, whereas the temples of Bhubanesvara represent the adaptation of the basic temple model to the regional preference. The developmental record of Kalinga architecture and sculpture over the centuries can be seen at Bhubanesvara.

The Sun Temple, a World Heritage Monument, stands 66 km (40 miles) southeast of Bhubanesvara at Konarak. The Jain caves at Udayagiri and Khandagiri (possibly excavated in the first century BCE) with some sculpture similar to the Sanchi carvings, are located 12 km (7 miles) southeast of Bhubanesvara. The temples at Bhubanesvara have not been declared World Heritage Monuments, possibly because some of the noteworthy temples are under the control of temple officials and have entrance restrictions.

Kalinga (parts of modern Orissa) became known when Emperor Ashoka conquered the tribal kingdom of Kalinga in about 260 BCE. The conquest provided an opportunity for Buddhism to secure a strong foothold and flourish. During the first century BCE a Jain dynasty appeared in Kalinga. The names of only three kings of the Chadi Jain dynasty are known, from inscriptions in the Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves. The third King Khara-vela of the Chadi dynasty invaded western and northern

India and brought back enough wealth to construct temples and caves at Udayagiri and Khandagiri.

After 72 BCE, the history of Kalinga again became obscured. The Chadi dynasty ended and Jainism lost royal patronage, though it retained regional influence for a long time. Buddhism became the prominent religion of the region. By the fifth century the Saivite Pasupata sect in Bhubanesvara started to flourish under the organization of the Lakulisa and eventually became the dominant religion of the region.

In the second quarter of the sixth century, the Sailodbhava dynasty came to power. They ruled Orissa till the second half of the seventh century. Buddhism was again encouraged in the early eighth century for a short period during the reign of Buddhist king Dharmapala (770-810). The Sailodbhava probably initiated the temple-building tradition that continued for the next seven hundred years, notably under the Somavamsi dynasty from the tenth century, and later by the Ganga dynasty.

A number of existing temples at Bhubanesvara are Pasupata temples. During the Ganga dynasty in the mid eleventh century, Vaisnavism gained prominence. The Jain did not excavate caves after the first century BCE, possibly because of the poor quality of the stone and absence of suitable sites; but they built some structural temples on the crest of Khandagiri hill in the first century BCE. Buddhists and Hindus possibly, for the same reasons, also did not excavate caves.

Early monuments constructed of perishable materials have not survived and not much is known of the influence of earlier Kalinga dynasties on later architecture. By the seventh century, the modern freestanding stone structural temple was fully developed, with the north Indian curvilinear tower, developed probably by the Chalukya of Karnataka, and the basic temple design was adopted by the Sailodbhava.

The earliest extant Parasurameshvara temple, built by King Sasaka of the Pasupata sect, in the second quarter of the seventh century, shows the influence of the western Chalukya and the art of Sirpura (Madhya Pradesh).

The earliest built temple at Bhubanesvara had a tower similar to the tower developed by the Chalukya, which changed in size, became round and was embellished with regionally developed architectural decorations in the next 700 years. The flat roof of the Chalukya temple was modified to a two-tiered roof by the time of the early temples still extant, and finally emerged with a distinct curvilinear shape and form. The final product was a distinctly new entity.

In 1264 the tallest tower in India was built on the Sun temple at Konarak. After the construction of the grandest Hindu temple at Konarak, temple building by Hindu dynasties came to an end.

#### SOME DEFINITIONS

North and south Indian temples differ in appearance as well as internal decorations. The temples of northern and eastern India, bearing curvilinear towers on their sanctums, are called Nagara temples. The crowning element of the tower in northern and eastern Indian temples is the *amalaka*, the flat ribbed disc and the *kalasa* or water pitcher above.

The temple tower is decorated with small pieces of ribbed discs placed on the corners of usually every fifth horizontal unit, dividing the tower into a number of *bhumi*, which is a fair measure of the comparative height of towers. The sanctum and tower combined is referred as the *deul*, and the sanctum and curvilinear tower is the *rekha deul*. All the temples at Bhubanesvara have *rekha deul*. The *deul* sometimes denotes the complete temple. The south Indian temples bearing a four-sided pyramidal tower with similar repetitive units of progressively decreasing size are called Dravidian temples. The crowning element is a round or oblong dome bearing a finial. The similar repetitive units of the tower are decorated with elements called *sala*, *kudu* and *stupi* on the façade. The combined sanctum and tower is referred to as a *vimana*.

The temple unit in front of the sanctum in north and east India is called the *jagamohan*. The pyramidal roof on temple units, constructed of horizontal layers, is called *pidha deul*. The *jagamohan* of most temples in Bhubanesvara has a *pidha deul* roof and is devoid of internal pillars and decorations. In fully developed temples the *nata-mandir* (festive hall) and *bhogamandapa* (offering hall) were added in front of the *jagamohan* on the sanctum-and-jagamohan axis. In the *mandapa* the equivalent of the *jagamohan* in southern Indian temples

is a pillared hall with a flat roof and a profusely decorated interior. In large temples the *mandapa* is divided into a small front unit (*ardha mandapa*) and a large rear unit called the *ma-ha-mandapa*. All the units of the temple have a flat roof.

The temples at Bhubanesvara are built of huge sandstone blocks, without mortar, stabilized by iron cramps, dowels — and gravity. The hills of Udayagiri and Khandagiri were the source of the sandstone. The stone blocks were hauled onto the tower over ramps constructed with the soil from the tank excavated in the vicinity of the temple. In the case of small temples, the stones were hauled over an inclined board tied to poles.

The sculpture on the exterior walls varies in character. On the Vitthala, Sirisresvara and Markandeyesvara temples the deities are dignified, self-composed, graceful and elegant. The Rajarani, Brahmesvara and Lingaraja temples are carved with slender and supple females in captivating poses, with ineffable smiles, engaged in leisurely activities. Most of the females on Ananta-Vasudeva, Sri Devi and Yamesvara temples are overly ornamented and lack originality.

Most of the temples built in the early seventh century are in ruins. The best preserved of this group of temples is the Parasurameshvara temple, constructed in 650-80 by King Sasaka, ruling Bengal (West Bengal and Bangladesh). The rectangular temple facing west is located in a pit surrounded by compound walls that rise just above the street level (Fig. 3.1).



Fig. 3.1. Bhubanesvara. Parasurameshvara temple. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

It is possible that the soil accumulated outside has reached the top of the compound wall. Unlike other temples in Bhubanesvara the temple lacks a platform. The two-layered roof of the *jagamohan* has a clerestory between the roofs that admits light to the interior. It is the earliest type of roof

evolved in Orissa and resembles somewhat the roof of Lad Khan temple at Aihole, suggesting Chalukya influence. The *jagamohan* has entrances on the west and south. The exterior walls are divided into three horizontal divisions (Fig. 3.2).



Fig. 3.2. Bhubanesvara. Parasurameshvara temple. Right side of the side entrance. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The two upper levels are carved with highly decorated chaitya windows with human figures and the lower level is carved with Siva, Siva with an erect phallus, Siva and Parvati, Lakulisa and other gods in panels separated by decorated pilasters. The doorframe of the east entrance is carved with *mithuna* couples. Lattice windows on the north, south and west admit light to the interior. The window on the west has a carving of dancers and a musicians group installed in front of the window (Fig. 3.3).

The exterior sanctum wall on the south is decorated with Ganesha in a niche (Fig. 3.4); he is usually placed near the entrance of the *jagamohan*. The corresponding niche on the east side has an image of a highly decorated Kattrikeya (Fig. 3.5). He is holding a spear in one hand and has citron in the other hand. His mount, the peacock, shown at the bottom, is killing a serpent. The positioning of Kattrikeya on the rear niche (generally reserved for the key icon of the temple) indicates the importance of Kattrikeya to the Pasupata sect.



Fig. 3.3. Bhubanesvara. Parasurameshvara temple. Carvings on window. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.4. Bhubanesvara. Parasurameshvara temple. Ganesha on Deul wall. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The almost square tower, 13m (40 ft.) high, is compact and stout with five horizontal levels. Highly decorated chaitya windows filled with human figures and deities are carved around the tower. One is carved with a Buddha-like figure. Another similar chaitya window is carved with a multi-armed figure, probably Durga, brandishing weapons and killing the buffalo demon. On the west above the roof of the *jagamohan* a chaitya window with two circles is carved with Ravana shaking Kailas (Fig. 3.6).



Fig. 3.5. Bhubanesvara. Parasurameshvara temple. Kattrikeya on Deul wall. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Ravana, sitting at the bottom of the window in a circle representing a cage, is shaking Mount Kailas with his twelve hands (carved in semicircle attached to the first circle). A few of Siva's attendants standing in the first circle appear to be tumbling down.



Fig. 3.6. Bhubanesvara. Parashurameshvara temple. Chaitya window on Deul. Ravana shaking Kailas & Nataraja. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Some attendants in a second circle appear to be brandishing weapons. The scene conveys a sense of consternation and confusion. Siva, sitting between the two circles on the top, is calmly fondling Parvati while she holds his erect phallus in her right hand. Possibly because of the small size, crowding of figures, and damaged image of Ravana, the carving does not appear dramatic and impressive. The chaitya window above is carved with Nataraja with ten arms. A few small erotic couples are carved in a band on the tower.



Fig. 3.7.  
Bhubanesvara.  
Vitthala temple.  
7<sup>th</sup> Century.  
Sandstone.

Unlike other temples, the interior of this *jagamohan* has six pillars — suggesting the influence of the Chalukya of Badami and Somavamsi — the builders of Sripura temple in Madhya Pradesh. The interior of the *jagamohan* is without sculpture. The sanctum is empty.

Vitthala temple, possibly constructed in the seventh century, is small and enclosed in irregular compound wall (Fig. 3.7).

The two-layered roof on the *jagamohan* is similar to the roof of Parashurameshvara temple, with clerestory windows bringing light inside. The *jagamohan* bears small towers on all four corners. The exterior walls are undecorated. It has a perforated window on the south. The post in front of the *jagamohan* is carved with two Buddha figures. The exterior walls of the sanctum are divided into vertical panels carved between highly decorated pilasters, separated by recesses in between. The panels bear beautiful plastic sculpture that appears three-dimensional. On the back wall of the sanctum facing the street five panels are carved. In the central panel Siva with four arms in the incarnation of Ardhanari is carved with his mount Nandi standing beside him (Fig. 3.8). Parvati contrasts dramatically with the masculine features of Siva, wearing different ornaments, hairstyle, and heavy earrings and displaying a full breast and bulging hip. Siva is holding a rosary in one hand and another hand is resting on his mount, Nandi. A bird is perched on one hand of Parvati and her other long arm is resting lazily to the side. This must be one of the best carvings of Ardhanari, with a masterful combination of masculine and feminine features, but in overall effect it is not very impressive. Beautiful females in separate panels flank Ardhanari on each side.

Fig. 3.8. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Carvings on Deul wall. Ardhanari. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



These elegant damsels, not as tall and slim as on Rajarani temple, have all the attributes of feminine pulchritude and they are carved in various acts that enhance their beauty. One damsel is arranging a scarf gracefully around her neck, tilting her head (Fig. 3.9), and another dramatically thrusts her shapely hip to the side, shifting her body weight to one leg and resting her hand on a small pillar; she is holding flowers in her other hand (Fig.

3.10). A third damsel stands with her hip to the side, hand on hip, idly holding a tree branch in her other hand (Fig. 3.11).



Fig. 3.9. Bhubanesvara. Vittal temple. Deul wall. Damsel adjusting scarf. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Fig. 3.10. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Deul wall. Apsara holding flower. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.11. Bhubanesvara. Vittal temple. Deul wall. Apsara standing under tree. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.12. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Deul wall. Apsara applying vermilion to forehead. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Another damsel is applying vermilion to her forehead, while holding a mirror in her hand. Shifting her weight by bending one knee, adding to her curves (Fig. 3.12). A panel carved with damsel caressing bird has a repaired broken leg.

On the narrow side of the sanctum wall eight-armed Durga is carved between decorated pilasters killing the buffalo demon, carved as a human with a buffalo head sitting on his hind legs. The upturned buffalo head is pushed and held on the back of Buffalo by the hand of Durga. With one leg on the shoulder of the demon, she is pressing him to the ground and her trident is piercing his chest. Self-confident Durga holding a snake, bow, thunderbolt, sword and shield, radiates confidence (Fig. 3.13).



Fig. 3.13. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Deul wall. Durga killing demon. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Flanking Durga, the vertical panels are divided horizontally into two. The panels at the bottom are carved with loving couples. The panels above are carved with two men seated on rampant lions facing opposite directions, crushing swordsman below. The panels are highly decorated.

On the other narrow side of the sanctum wall, the central panel between decorated pilasters is carved with a lovely four-armed Parvati holding a water pot, rosary and trident accompanied by attendants and flying figures above (Fig. 3.14). The flanking panels are carved similar to the panels flanking the Durga panel, with a four-armed seated Siva, Parvati and loving couples. Carvings of beautiful females, at the corners, in striking poses, are damaged.



Fig. 3.14. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Deul wall. Parvati. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The 11.6m (36 ft.) high oblong wagon-shaped tower is embellished all over with architectural decorations. The tower is decorated in between the horizontal bands at intervals with carvings of seated lions, marching elephants, and horses (Fig. 3.15).



Fig. 3.15. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Decoration on tower. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The *amalaka* (ribbed disc) is replaced by horizontal bands carved with animals and a finial of pitchers in a row on the top. The horizontal bands on the tower are separated by rows of marching elephants and lions. A highly decorated chaitya window bearing flying figures is carved with a Buddha-like figure sitting with erect phallus.



Fig. 3.16. Bhubanesvara. Vitthala temple. Deul windows. Nataraja with erect phallus and Surya riding chariot. 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Above the *jagamohan* the projecting façade of the tower is dominated by two highly decorated chaitya-windows (Fig. 3.16). The lower window is carved with Surya, with sweet smile. Surya is flanked by females carrying bows and arrows to drive away the darkness. A female sitting in front is driv-

ing the seven-horse chariot. Female flying figures are carved near the upper margin of the window. The upper window is carved with a ten-armed Nataraja dancing (with erect phallus) and a female beside him. The interior of the *jagamohan* has no sculpture. The sanctum is reported to contain sculpture depicting a horrific scene. The goddess Chamundi, with eight arms, is reportedly seated on a corpse surrounded by an owl, jackal and a host of allies. The priest of the temple has the gods dressed up and does not permit photography.

Sisresvara temple in the compound of the Vitthala temple, which it resembles, was possibly constructed at around the same time. Adjacent private buildings stand very close to the temple. On one long side the temple is completely blocked by private residences and the space on the back is very narrow and full of debris. The temple is kept locked at all times. The sculpture on the exposed side of the temple walls and tower shows same plastic quality and similar architectural embellishments as the Vitthala temple.



Fig. 3.17. Bhubanesvara. Muktesvara Temple. Front view. 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Muktesvara temple, facing west, was constructed on a low basement amidst a group of temples during the third quarter of the tenth century in the reign of Yayati I of the Somavamsi dynasty (Fig. 3.17). It introduced the pyramidal roof on the *jagamohan* marking the transition from two tiers to a pyramidal roof. The temple, with elegant proportions, excellent decorative sculpture and exquisite surface treatment, is considered the gem of Orissa architecture. It is separated from other temples by a low compound wall that follows very closely the contours of the temple and leaves a very narrow passage between temple and compound wall. In the



back, a tank is located outside, attached to the compound wall without any passage between the compound wall and tank. There is a beautifully decorated arch in front of the temple entrance located outside the compound wall. The *jagamohan* is rectangular, with offset walls on the exterior and interior (Fig. 3.18).



Fig. 3.18. Bhubanesvara. Muktesvara Temple. Side view of Jagamohana. 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A small extension of the extended façade of *jagamohan* pyramidal roof is decorated with a lion sitting on its hind legs. The side walls have large perforated windows on both sides flanked with decorative pilasters. The highly decorated upper projections of the pilasters extend to the pyramidal roof of *jagamohan*. The exterior walls are carved with decorative sculpture, pilasters entwined with *naga*, *nagini* with beautiful human upper bodies and lovely females exhibiting their charms. A *kalasa* stands on the top. The interior of the temple is richly decorated, including the ceiling. This is one of the two temples in Bhubanesvara with a decorated interior.



Fig. 3.19. Bhubanesvara. Muktesvara Temple. Decoration on Deul. 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The tower is 10.5m (32 ft.) high with round corners and is more slender than the tower of the Parasurameshvara temple. Every inch of the tower is carved with delicate, distinctive decorative patterns, architectural divisions and sculpted figures. A typical temple decoration called the “bho,” possibly developed here, appears frequently on later-built towers of Orissa temples. It consists of a highly ornate chaitya window crowned by a masked demon head and flanked with dwarf figures (Fig. 3.19).

The sanctum walls are carved with beautiful damsels exhibiting feminine charms in three-body bends engaged in various activities and pilasters entwined with graceful *naga* and *nagins*. Elegant carvings show women warriors on lions’ or griffin backs. The sanctum is cubical inside with offset walls on the exterior.

In front of the compound entrance is a thick, squat gateway through a thick semi-circular arch. Possibly the architects wanted to construct an arch with as much area as possible for decorative carving but still in proportion to the other units of the temple. The heavy, solid, thick pillars are placed at a distance slightly greater than the combined thickness of both pillars. The elaborate capitals of the pillars hold the arch. Constructed by overlapping stone slabs, it is not in fact a true arch (Fig. 3.20).



Fig. 3.20. Bhubanesvara. Muktesvara Temple. Carving on arch. 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A thick ridge running on the top of the arch delineates its outer and inner faces and a *kalasa* is mounted on the top of the arch. The arch, with *makara* ends, is richly decorated on both sides with chaitya windows bearing human heads, round niches, floral and vine patterns, beautiful reclining damsels near the ends with what may be monkeys at their feet, and meditating figures seated with crossed legs.

There is a row of six small temples with empty shrines in front of the Muktesvara temple. Siddesvara temple on the northeast of Muktesvara exhibits all the architectural embellishment of a fully developed Orissa temple. South of Siddesvara lie the Kedaresvara and Gauri temples.

Gauri temple has a rebuilt tower top, painted white. The sanctum walls are carved with attractive females displaying their charms and the tower is decorated with *bho* decorations. The dilapidated *jagamohan*, replaced some sixty years back, resembles the *jagamohan* of Muktesvara temple in external decoration.



Fig. 3.21. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Rajarani temple, possibly constructed by the end of the tenth century, excels in carvings of beautiful, elegant, tall, slender and graceful females (Fig. 3.21). The temple was constructed of dull red and turbid yellow sandstone locally called “Rajarani.” It was possibly dedicated to Siva. The temple stands on a platform with three moldings. The slightly projected entrance to the temple is flanked by round, thick columns entwined by *naga* on the left. The *nagini* entwined on the right column has a beautiful human upper body. The architrave of the *jagamohan* above the entrance is carved with nine planets. The *jagamohan* exterior on both side walls is carved with balustrade windows with central projections flanked by thick pilasters resting on lions riding elephants. The carvings are incomplete. A small pyramid-shaped extension of the *jagamohan* on the entrance is topped by a lion seated on its hind legs. The pyramidal roof of the *jagamohan* is plain except the *kalasa* on top.

The 18m (55 ft.) high tower is clustered by miniature towers with double crowning elements and appears round, like the towers of the Khajuraho temples. The flat ribbed

crowning *amalaka* and *kalasa* on the tower are surrounded by four squatting figures.



Fig. 3.22. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duel. Varuna. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The projections on the corners of the towers are carved with gods. The finely finished carving of Vedic god Varuna, a smile on his face, noose in one hand and the other hand in a boon-conferring gesture, is very elegant (Fig. 3.22).



Fig. 3.23. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duel. Agni and Apsaras. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A bearded Agni stands on his mount, the goat, surrounded with beautiful damsels in other niches. He is fat, with a slightly bulging belly (Fig. 3.23). Many gods and goddesses are carved on the tower.

The tower is mostly decorated with graceful, slim, tall females carved in deep relief, standing on elaborate pedestals, flowers or surrounded by plant motifs, in various moods, exhibiting feminine charms. They are more elongated and ac-

centuated in pose compared to the females on other temples. Their jewelry and costumes are exhibited in great detail. Their faces, with chiseled noses and large eyes, smile sweetly. In highly decorated niches, sparsely clothed charming females in three body bends with round hips are engaged in activities like fondling a child, leaning on a tree trunk, showing off an anklet (Fig. 3.24) or holding a tray in hand (Fig. 3.25).



Fig. 3.24. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duell. Apsara wearing anklet. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.25. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duell. Apsara holding tray. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Another damsel is studying herself in a hand mirror (Fig. 3.26). Loving couples are interposed between single females. A male is disrobing his love, who stands with downcast eyes and a shy smile on her face (Fig. 3.27). Erotic couples are carved in deep recesses of the tower walls (Fig. 3.28), engaged in various sexual activities.



Fig. 3.26. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duell. Apsara holding mirror. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.27. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duell. Mithuna couple. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.28. Bhubanesvara. Rajarani Temple. Duell. Mithuna couple. 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Brahmesvara temple was constructed during the reign of the Somavamsi king Uddyotakesari in 1060. It is enclosed in a compound wall with four minor shrines at the corners (Fig. 3.29).



Fig. 3.29. Bhubanesvara. Brahmesvara temple. 1060. Sandstone.

The pyramidal roof on the *jagamohan* is capped with an inverted bell and *kalasa* on the top. The exterior walls of the tower are decorated with architectural embellishments. The north and south faces are carved with musicians and dancers, females with large hips, and a dancer posing gracefully.

The entrance doorframe of the *jagamohan* is carved with floral and creeper motifs and the architrave above is carved with nine planets flanked with loving couples. The interior of the *jagamohan* with columns has a decorated interior. The center of the ceiling is carved with a full-blown lotus. This is the second temple with a decorated *jagamohan* interior in Bhubanesvara.



Fig. 3.30. Bhubanesvara. Brahmesvara temple. Carvings on deul. 1060. Sandstone.

The 18.3m (56 ft.) high pyramidal tower is heavy looking (Fig. 3.30). It is covered with architectural embellishments like *bho* and *Vidalia*, rampant lions standing on dwarfs looking back, deities, pretty women

(Fig. 3.31) and erotic couples (some engaged in sex) with a monkey-headed male. Four small minor shrines are located on the corners with pyramidal tower similar to the main tower but smaller and without sculpture.

Fig. 3.31. Bhubanesvara. Brahmesvara temple. Tower. 1060. Sandstone.

Lingaraja temple, the epitome of the temple architecture in Bhubanesvara, was constructed in the eleventh-twelfth century. It is enclosed in a 140m (434 ft) wide and 150m (465 ft.) long rectangular high



compound wall. This temple is not classified as a World Heritage Monument, possibly because entrance is restricted, making it impossible for critics to study it. Even the late prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, was denied entrance to the temple, because she was married to a Parsee.

There are numerous temples and shrines in the compound constructed at various times. The main temple entrance is on the east. There are two smaller gates on the north and south. The temple consists of a *bhogamandapa*, an offering hall with pyramidal roof at the front end, followed by a *natamandira*, a dance hall with a relatively flat roof sloping in few stages. The *jagamohan* with its tall pyramidal roof is followed by the tallest tower in Bhubanesvara, on the sanctum. The height of the roofs of various temple units increases gradually from the front of the *bhogamandapa* to the *jagamohan* roof. The temple tower is twice as high as the *jagamohan* roof, breaking the gradual increase in height from the front units to the tower. The *jagamohan*, sanctum and temple tower were probably constructed during the Somavamsi rule in the eleventh century. A century later the *bhogamandapa* was constructed in front of *jagamohan* as a separate unit with space left between the two. The *bhogamandapa* was first used as a *natamandira*. Later a comparatively small *natamandira* was squeezed into the vacant space between *bhogamandapa* and *jagamohan*.



Fig. 3.32. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Bhogamandapa. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The *bhogamandapa* has doors on all sides and the exterior walls are embellished all over with pilasters, decorative sculpture and carvings of men and beasts (Fig. 3.32). The emblem pillar stands slightly to the side of the front entrance door. The pyramidal roof is made up of several horizontal layers arranged in two groups with an intervening platform. It bears an inverted bell with *kalasa* on top. The *natamandira* has two side entrances on one side and one entrance on the other (Fig. 3.33).



Fig. 3.33. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Natamandira. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The exterior sidewalls are carved with decorative elements, lovely females and couples engaged in sex on the exterior walls. Its roof is relatively flat, sloping in stages. There are thick pylons inside the Natamandira similar to the pylons on the platform of the dance hall at Konarak.

The 30m (93 ft.) high *jagamohan* has entrances on north and south (Fig. 3.34). The exterior walls are extensively decorated. The pyramidal roof of the *jagamohan* with several horizontal layers is separated into two units similar to the *bhogamandapa* roof. The façade of both units is decorated with chaitya windows with a lion sitting on its hind legs on top of the window. The inverted bell above the second unit is decorated with a *kalasa* and lions. The massive tall tower of the *jagamohan* was constructed by successively superimposing vertical chambers, complete with floor and ceiling.



Fig. 3.34. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Side view of Jagamohan. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The massive 60m (186 ft.) tall pyramidal tower on the sanctum was constructed similarly to the *pidha* roof of the *jagamohan* (Fig. 3.35).

It is covered with decorative designs and seated lions projecting from the walls. The round, flat, ribbed *amalaka* and *kalasa* above are supported by squatting figures. The sanctum is square inside. The temple is dedicated to Harihara,

the combination of Siva and Vishnu. Subsidiary shrines are attached to the main sanctum exterior on the north, south and west.



Fig. 3.35. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Jagamohan and rekha deul. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The tower walls are embellished with lovely females standing in various moods and poses with three body bends.



Fig. 3.36. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations on Deul. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Agni is carved more frequently. A Buddha-like carving in a niche is flanked by mythological animals. Most of the deeply carved attractive females are standing in elaborately carved surroundings with three body bends, displaying their best features, engaged in actions like carrying a baby, caressing a bird, applying vermilion to their foreheads (Fig. 3.36).

Some of the lovely females are standing under open flowers, flanking a goddess who stands under a cobra hood (Fig. 3.37).



Fig. 3.37. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations on Deul. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A lovely damsel with three body bends is holding tree branch in a highly decorated niche and another beauty is entertaining a male with flute music. Another full-bodied damsel is standing with stretched torso, exposing her feminine charms (Fig. 3.38).



Fig. 3.38. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations on Deul. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Another damsel has stretched her body by extending her hands behind her head resulting in push of her round firm breasts all the way out in front (Fig. 3.39).

One sensual female with full firm bust, narrow waist, round hips, and long legs with plump thighs visible through her diaphanous gown is holding her open lower garment; it is not clear whether she is tying the garment to her waist or undoing it to drop it to the floor. Her downcast eyes, the mischievous sweet smile on her square face and the act of hold-

ing the open garment makes the sculpture most attractive and endearing (Fig. 3.40).

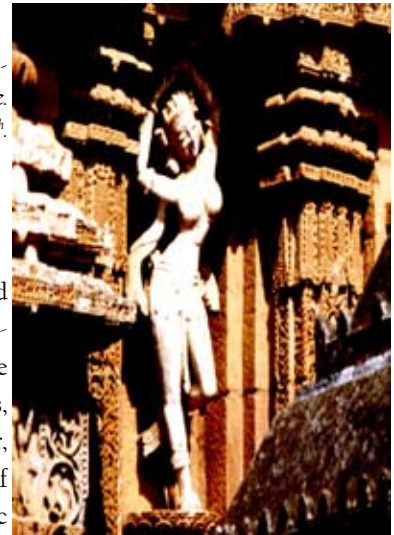


Fig. 3.39. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone

The walls, carved with detailed delicate decorations, are adorned with deities, females playing guitar, dancers with group of musicians and erotic couples — one mas-

turbating her lover (Fig. 3.41). She is looking at him with head thrown back, her face full of expectation and love. Beside them, a mother is feeding a baby from her bloated breast, holding the baby on the thigh of her bent leg.



Fig. 3.40. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations on Tower. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Somavamsi originally dedicated the temple to Siva. They were replaced by the Ganga dynasty in 1078. During the Ganga dynasty, the Vaishnava became dominant and the presiding deity of the temple was changed from Siva to Harihara

(combined Siva and Vishnu). Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, was given a place on the votive column in front of the *bhoga-mandapa* beside the bull. A number of Vaishnava rites became part of the worship at the temple. Ganga kings and their officers have left records of grants to Lingaraja temple.



Fig. 3.41. Bhubanesvara. Lingaraja temple. Decorations on Deul. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

Parvati temple is located in the compound of the Lingaraja temple. The temple was perhaps constructed during the reign of Ganga king Bhanudeva (1264-1279). It is similar to Lingaraja temple in design, decoration and plasticity of sculpture. The pyramidal tower and *jagamohan* have an exuberantly treated surface resembling the decoration of the Muktesvara temple. The decorative sculpture includes pilasters entwined with beautiful *naga* and *nagini*, mythological lions and damsels displaying their charms. The central projection on the tower is carved with the images of deities (from which Parvati is missing). One of the balustrade windows on the south side of the *jagamohan* has been converted into a door.

Chandradevi, daughter of Anangabhima III, in 1278 constructed the Ananta-Vasudeva temple (near the Lingaraja temple) during the reign of Ganga king Bhanudeva. The temple with four units, similar to Lingaraja temple, is dedicated to Vishnu (Fig. 3.42).



Fig. 3.42. Bhubanesvara. Ananta Vasudeva temple. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

It is constructed on a high plinth. The *rekha duel* is 18.3 (57 ft.) high with decorative features like the *bho*. There are subsidiary shrines near the sanctum. The deities installed in the sanctum are Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra, sister of Krishna. The central projections of the *jagamohan* have carvings of slim, tall, lovely maidens in body bends. In a group that resembles the carvings on the Lingaraja temple, the goddess in the center is standing under a *naga* hood while other lovely damsels stand under bunches of leaves. The hands of most of the females are broken (Fig. 3.43).



Fig. 3.43. Bhubanesvara. Ananta Vasudeva temple. Decoration on Deul. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

A balustrade window is carved with images of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Hanuman and a monkey attendant. Most of the niches are badly worn due to the softness of the stone. The courtyard of the temple now serves as a kitchen for the priests and devotees.

There are many neglected and ruined temples in and around the town. A temple near the Lingaraja temple, entwined in large tree roots, is undergoing restoration (Fig. 3.44)

Fig. 3.44. Bhubanesvara. Temple claimed by tree. 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Markandeyesvara temple was built during the reign of Ganga king Anangabhima II in the last quarter of the twelfth century. The front pilasters of the *jagamohan* with entwined ser-



pents resemble the pilasters of the Rajarani temple. The *jagamohan* is plain and unfinished, without crowning elements. The temple walls are carved with a few amorous couples, an inebriated man, doorkeepers leaning against their staffs, and gods. The 9.4m (29 ft.) high pyramidal tower is almost circular in appearance due to rounding of the corners.



## 15. THE MONUMENTS AT KHAJURAHO (10<sup>TH</sup>–12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

Khajuraho, in the Chatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh, northern India, was one of the capitals of the Candella dynasty in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is now a small, sleepy town near a little lake; farming and tourism are the main industries. A stunning collection of twenty-five temples, and the ruins of many more, remain to bear witness to the heights of architectural and sculptural art that were attained here.

Khajuraho has no railway link but is connected to many cities by road — albeit some of the worst roads in India. A six-hour road journey from Jhansi by so-called luxury buses is somewhat bearable. Travel back to any destination except Jhansi will result in the most unpleasant journey. An airport connects Khajuraho to Delhi by daily air service. Due to increasing tourism, a number of lodging and bearable boarding facilities have sprouted at Khajuraho. The ruins of the Candella capital are spread over an area of 14 square km (8 miles). UNESCO declared the monuments at Khajuraho as World Heritage Monuments in 1986.

After the end of the Gupta Empire a number of Rajput clans rose to power in northern India in 647. Gurjara-Pratiharas, the heirs to the Gupta Empire, ruled the Khajuraho region till 750. As the power of the overlords waned, Candella, a feudatory of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, became influential in the Bundelkhand region of what is present-day Madhya Pradesh. The sixth Candella prince, Harsha (905-925), and his son Yasovarman (925-950), gained power and prestige. Dhanga (950-1002) declared independence from the Gurjara-Pratiharas and with

Khajuraho as his capital founded the Candella dynasty. Dhanga's grandson Vidyadhara (1003-1035) was the most powerful ruler of his time.

After his death, the onslaught of the Kalacuri from the south and Muslim invaders from the north increased. In 1202, Qutabuddin Aibek defeated Paramardideva (1165-1203), the eighteenth ruler of the dynasty, and the power of Candella started to decline. They were pushed into the hilly regions and the dynasty ended in the fourteenth century with Hammiravarman (1288-1308) as the last ruler.

The Candella, even as feudatories, were patrons of the arts and builders of temples, sacred tanks, dams and hilly forts. Their greatest achievement was the construction of some eighty-five temples at Khajuraho. Twenty-five of them have survived, in various states of preservation. Such an uncommon aggregation of temples makes Khajuraho a significant religious center that rivals centers like Aihole (Karnataka) and Bhubanesvara (Orissa). The temples at Aihole show the various developmental stages of the Indian temple, starting with the open *mandapa*; at Bhubanesvara the beautification of the temple with regionally developed elements was achieved; and at Khajuraho the temples were given the sparkle and glow of a newly wed bride.

The region had a rich heritage of sculpture including Buddhist art at Bharhut, carved in 200 BCE, temples built by the Guptas from the fourth to sixth century, and by the Gurjara-Pratiharas from the eighth century. The Khajuraho temples have a distinct style which makes them stand out as a separate group. The temples are tall and relatively narrow, with symmetrical units, and are engraved with lovely females with long legs in bands along the temple walls. The elegant contours, balanced proportion of the components, treatment of the exterior surface with har-

monious integration of sculpture and architecture, elevate these temples to the status of masterpieces.

The most distinguishing feature of the temple is the tower that soars upward while curving inside. The soaring effect is produced by subsidiary *sikara* of varying heights, attached at different levels on the main curvilinear tower, creating the impression that the tower is rising in stages and the subsidiary towers are competing to reach heaven. This creates a mesmerizing effect seen nowhere else (Fig. 3.45).



Fig. 3.45. Khajuraho. Visvanatha temples. Deul. 950-1002. Sandstone.

The roofs of the other units of the temple are pyramidal. The heights of the pyramidal roofs increase from the front unit to the last unit of the *mandapa* and blend harmoniously with

the subsidiary towers of the main tower. All the elements add to the impression that the temple is rising gradually, from the front, trying to touch heaven (Fig. 3.46).



Fig. 3.46. Khajuraho. Visvanatha temples. 950-1002. Sandstone.

The temple in Orissa, by contrast, shows an abrupt break in the height of the *jagamohan* and the curvilinear temple tower caused by the absence of subsidiary towers on the main tower to blend with the pyramidal roof of the *jagamohan*. In addition, the curvilinear tower on the temples of Bhu-

banesvara lack the additional small *sikara* attached to make them appear round.

About twenty-five temples in fair condition and the ruins of another twenty-five temples are located in a 1.6 km square (1 mile) area of Khajuraho. The extant temples are located in groups on the east, west and south of the village. About twelve Hindu temples in the center of village, referred as the west group, are enclosed in a compound of recent origin. This group includes most of the renowned temples at Khajuraho. There is an abundant display of provocative erotic sex including acrobatic sexual acts with imaginative variations and sex with animals on Khajuraho temple walls.

The eastern group consists of three Hindu temples and four old and many modern Jain temples. The Jain temples are enclosed in a compound of recent origin.

The southern group comprises of two Hindu temples.

The Candella were possibly of tribal origin, with family ties to the Gonds, and worshiped a tribal goddess Maniya Devi. Her shrines are located at Mahoba and Maniyagadh on the bank of the Ken River in the region. Some of the Maniya shrines were built during the regime of Kirtivarman (1050-1060). None of the temples at Khajuraho is dedicated to the tribal goddess.

About half of the temples built by the Candella are dedicated to Vishnu and the most of the others to Siva. One is dedicated to the sun god Surya, and one to the sixty-five Yogini. Most of the temples were constructed between 900-1050. The building activity peaked during the reign of King Vidyadhara (1004-1035).

During the waning days of their rule, the Candella built small but equally artistic temples. Duledo, the last extant Hindu temple, was constructed in 1100-1150. Candella rulers and their chiefs commissioned the Hindu temples and the Jain mercantile community sponsored their construction in the tenth and eleventh centuries. All the Jain temples are located in the east group of temples.

The two earliest temples, Caunsat-yogini and Lalguan-Mahadeva, are constructed of granite. The body of the Brahma temple is constructed of granite and the tower is constructed of sandstone. All the other temples are constructed of fine-grained sandstone in shades of buff, pink or yellow. Possibly the temples were constructed by the descendents of the architects and artists who constructed the Gurjara-Pratihara temples in the region.

The temples of Khajuraho are compact, without compound walls, and stand on high platforms with flights of steps to allow entry. An open ambulatory passage is provided on the platform outside. Ornate moldings enhance the plinth and basement of each temple, and the entrance to the front

porches were decorated with decorative arches coming out of the mouth of the mythological crocodilian. These arches were as delicate as any carving on ivory, and have survived on only three temples.

The porch leads to the *mandapa*. The *mandapa* bears projections on the walls with openings at window level, with overhanging eaves, which serve as balconies to admit light and air to the interior. In the large temples with inside circumambulatory passages around the sanctum, balconied windows in the passage are placed high on the wall to provide light and air but not a distracting outside view. The *mandapa* in the large temples is divided into a front small hall (*ardha-mandapa*) and rear large hall (*maha-mandapa*). The *mandapas* are relatively small halls, as they are not intended for large gatherings. The large hall has four pillars supporting the framework of architraves bearing overlapping concentric rings that form the central dome ceiling. Brackets carved with beautiful females are fitted into the sockets on the pillar and architrave. The decorations on the ceiling differ in each temple. The vestibule leads to the sanctum, with an extraordinarily ornate entrance in a few of the temples. The larger temples have four small subsidiary shrines on the corners of the outside platform.

At the level of the balconied openings on the exterior walls of the *mandapa* two or three bands of exquisite females are carved in about half human size around the temples. The females are provocative, long-legged, slender, and showy, outnumbering the gods in the niches. The females attending the gods are as tall as the gods themselves; they have large, exaggeratedly round faces, curved eyebrows and elongated eyes.

Early Lakshmana and Parshvanath temples retained the classical Gupta stature with modest poses, generous volumes, feminine curvatures and serene expressions. In statuary developed later the females have lost some volume and bodily contour. They are tall, with thin bodies, lean hips and pole-like, tapering legs. Some of the females are carved with incredibly twisted bodies. The sculpture has lost much of its vitality on later Javari and Chiturbhuj temples. Like the flickers of a dying lamp, Duledo, the last extant Hindu temple, is decorated with a highly dynamic dancing *apsara* and flying figures.

The Caunsat (sixty-four) Yogini temple, on the granite outcrop, was possibly constructed in the beginning of the tenth century, making it the earliest temple at Khajuraho. Constructed of large, coarse granite blocks, it is simple and devoid of sculpture. In contrast to the circular shape of a few Yogini temples in Orissa, this temple is rectangular with an open courtyard in the center surrounded by sixty-five cells.

The entrance is on the north. It had ten cells on the front wall, twenty-two on each long side and eleven on the back wall, all facing the courtyard. Only thirty-five of these cells have survived. Each cell measures about 1m (3 ft.) high and deep with a small curvilinear tower. The large cell in the center of the back wall facing the main entrance was possibly enshrined with Durga, and each cell may have had a statue of a yogini. The three massive, squat statues of the goddess that survived are located in local Archeological Survey museum.

As yogini temples are dedicated to goddesses, the cells on the perimeter of the interior are considered more eminent, as an enclosed space is more expressive of the female. In the particular Tantrism that was prevalent during the time, more importance was given to females and the seat of the self and self-realization was supposed to be located in the yoni (vulva). To realize the self, greater sexual involvement was considered necessary. This concept flows through the sculptural decoration on all the temples, with females standing exposing their vulva. Chiturbhuj is the only temple devoid of erotic couples. In addition to enjoying women (particularly of low cast), drinking wine, eating flesh, human sacrifice and use of the human skull as a drinking vessel was considered to be the fastest way to achieve self-realization.

Three more early temples have survived in various state of preservation. Lalguan-Mahadeva Temple, facing west, was constructed of granite in the beginning of the tenth century; it is dedicated to Siva. The entrance porch is missing and the curvilinear tower over the sanctum has partly collapsed. The Varaha temple was built perhaps in 900-925 by Yasovarman to celebrate his victory over the Partihara. Its oblong open pavilion with pyramidal roof constructed of sandstone stands on a high plinth resting on fourteen plain pillars. The ceiling is carved with a lotus flower in relief. A monolithic 3m long and 2m high (9 ft. long and 6 ft. high) anthropomorphic boar (an incarnation of Vishnu) stands in the pavilion. The body of the boar, with a glassy luster, is carved with images of all the gods of the Hindu pantheon, in rows. Between the legs of the boar lies the body of the serpent Sesha, its head near a pair of female feet. Possibly the feet are from broken statue of goddess Earth. Vishnu as a boar and Sesha were associated with the rescue of the earth goddess from the cosmic ocean. Matangesvara Temple, possibly built by about the year 1000, is still in active use. It introduced balconied windows with eaves on the *mandapa*. Both external and internal surfaces of the temple are plain. The sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam and the curvilinear tower is not decorated.

Prince Yasovarman (925-950), the Candella chieftain, constructed the Lakshmana temple to install a metal statue of Vishnu appropriated from his overlords, the Gurjara-Prati-

haras. His son Dhanga consecrated the temple in 954 (Fig. 3.47). The original statue was lost and was replaced with a stone statue.



Fig. 3.47. Khajuraho. Lakshmana Temple. 954. Sandstone.

The temple stands on a high plinth accessed by steps on the east. Friezes on the plinth and base moldings depict hunting and battle scenes, processions of horses, elephants, soldiers, and workers carrying heavy loads on their shoulders tied to long poles. Planetary deities are placed in niches on the plinth around the temple. The pyramidal roofs of the first three units of the temple increase gradually in height and each is crowned with a bell-shaped structure with *amalaka* and *kalasa* above. The tower appears round because of the five small towers attached to the main curvilinear tower. Chaitya arches decorate the main tower.



Fig. 3.48. Khajuraho. Lakshmana Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. 954. Sandstone.

The exterior walls with barely visible joints are carved with two bands of females and various forms of Vishnu and Siva around the temple. Lovely couples and beautiful females with three body bends are carved in three dimensions engaged in various activities, in three sculptured bands. One female figure is shown leaning forward, her hips thrust backward, and twisting around to tie back her hair, thus pushing her breast even further forward. Another female is applying color to her feet, assisted by an attendant. Others are standing idle, holding infants in their hands or on their hips, while

Vishnu and Lakshmi stand by, looking serene. In an other sculptured band a female with a beautiful body is applying vermilion to her forehead, holding mirror in one hand. A mit-huna couple nearby is teasing a monkey (Fig. 3. 48).



Fig. 3.49. Khajuraho. Lakshmana Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. 954. Sandstone.

A few goddesses are standing under open serpents' hoods. A female is carrying an infant on her hip, supported with one hand, and holding a long object in another hand. Vishnu and Lakshmi are onlookers (3.49).

A female with incredible twists of her body is playing ball (Fig. 3.50). The smile on her face suggests that she may be playing mischief, dropping the ball instead of throwing it. Charming females wearing a wide variety of ornaments and hairstyles are interposed with roaring mythological lions, with or without human riders.

Major icons are placed in niches surrounding the temple. These deeply carved figures appear slightly different at different times of the day due to the interplay of light and shadows and the changing position of the sun.



Fig. 3.50. Khajuraho. Lakshmana Temple. Exterior wall. Playing Ball. 954. Sandstone.

The lavishly decorated temple consists of an entrance porch, a small hall, a large hall, a vestibule and a sanctum with ambulatory passage. The front porch bears an elegant *makara* arch emerging from crocodile heads on the entrance. The ceiling of the porch is decorated with half-open flowers arranged in rings. In the large hall Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Durga are

carved in niches. The four pillars in the large hall support a number of brackets carved with beautiful *apsaras* engaged in various activities and in variety of poses (Fig. 3.51).



Fig. 3.51. Khajuraho. Lakshmana Temple. Mahamandapa. Bracket figure. 954. Sandstone.

There is a moonstone in front of the sanctum entrance. The doorframe of the sanctum is carved with various incarnations of Vishnu, Lakshmi, other goddesses and beautiful females. Planetary deities are carved on

the door lintel. Vishnu, wearing ornaments, is standing in the sanctum. He is carved with four hands and three faces in the round, surrounded by numerous miniature attendants. The front face of Vishnu is a human face and the flanking faces are those of the boar and the lion. The circumambulatory passage around the sanctum has balconied windows to admit light inside. The passage walls are carved with two rows of sculpted bands. The sculpture includes legend from Krishna's life, other incarnations of Vishnu, and beautiful full-bodied females.



Fig. 3.52. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. 950-1002. Sandstone.

There are four subsidiary shrines on the platform corners. All the shrines are identical to the pillared porch and the small sanctums are dedicated to three incarnations of Vishnu and one of Surya. The two front shrines face each other instead of the east, as is customary. The curvilinear

towers are devoid of any secondary towers to give round appearance. Below the platform of the temple, a fifth subsidiary shrine faces the main temple. It was dedicated to Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu. Presently it enshrines a goddess locally called Devi.

The first Candella king, Dhanga (950-1002), built the Visvanatha temple. The name of the architect is inscribed on the temple. It is similar to Lakshmana temple in design and layout, with similar internal units (Fig. 3.52).

Two of the subsidiary shrines on the platform are lost. Niches on the basement of the temple have statues of seven mothers, Ganesha and the goddess Parvati. Some carvings depict females covering their eyes with their hands while men are having sex with cattle. Three sculptured bands around the temple are carved with females exhibiting their assets, posing prettily and engaged in various beautifying activities like applying vermilion to their foreheads, dressing, and wringing their hair after bathing (Fig. 3.53). Other females are carved playing musical instrument and applying corrilium to their eyes.



Fig. 3.53. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Carving on exterior wall. 950-1002. Sandstone.

A variation of the acrobatic sex depicted on Kandariya Mahadeva temple is carved on the junction of the vestibule and sanctum of the temple. On Kandariya Temple one female is sitting on the phallus of a man who is standing on his head. Instead of the female sitting on the male, in this case a male is sitting on a female who is standing on her head, engaged in sex, with testicles visible from below. She is flanked by two supporting females (Fig. 3.54). She is masturbating one female with her finger while other hand rests on the ground to help hold the weight of the man.

The females carved on the temple, wearing ornaments and decorated hairdos, have chiseled noses and beautiful, expressive faces with curved eyebrows, elongated eyes, and sensual lips. Only some folds of garments or patterns on the textiles adhering to their bodies indicate they are not quite naked.



Fig. 3.54. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Exterior wall. Acrobatic sex. 950-1002. Sandstone.

The bracket figures mounted on the pillars supporting the dome in the center of large hall are badly worn. The temple is dedicated to Siva and the sanctum is enshrined with the Lingam.



Fig. 3.55. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara playing flute. 950-1200. Sandstone.

The circumambulatory passage around the sanctum is carved with the most striking carvings of females in Khajuraho. Most of these three-dimensional carvings are located in niches, in back view, with a three-fourth turn of the upper body exposing the full face and bust or in side profile exposing part of the face and bust. The pose of one female seen from behind, standing on a pedestal while playing a flute, with a slight forward bend of the body and a pronounced side thrust of the hips, exhibits the classical proportional female body (Fig. 3.55).

Fig. 3.56. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara. Dancing. 950-1200. Sandstone.

The mostly broken three-dimensional carving of a beautiful dancer with dynamic movement of limbs and tense body is another masterpiece (Fig. 3.56). Her tense, taut body is comparable to the body of the headless horse rider at Konarak.



Another such female is standing on a pedestal holding an infant on her hip, with a pronounced push of her hips to the side, providing a comfortable seat for the baby. Her head inclined towards the infant and the closeness of the infant to her body portrays the tender emotion of a mother (Fig. 3.57).

Fig. 3.57. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara holding child. 950-1200. Sandstone.



A female with beautiful face, slender body and shapely legs wearing ornaments on her arm and decorated short hair is applying dye to her left foot lifted behind her (Fig. 3.58).

A keen appreciation of female anatomy is evident in the carving of another female, presumably an *apsara*, trying to tie her bra behind her back. The twist of her body has exposed her beautiful, sleepy, square face with almond eyes. The curves of her body are accentuated by the twist and a pair of depressions is seen flanking the lower portion of her backbone (Fig. 3.59).



Fig. 3.58. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara applying dye to the feet. 950-1200. Sandstone.

hand she is searching for the other end of the bra on her back (Fig. 3.60).



Fig. 3.61. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara drying her hair. 950-1200. Sandstone.

Fig. 3.59. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara wearing bra. 950-1200. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.60. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara wearing bra. 950-1200. Sandstone.

Another female shows a depression at the back of her shoulder due to a twist of her arms. Another is holding her right breast with her left hand, while with her twisted right



Fig. 3.62. Khajuraho. Visvanatha Temple. Apsara applying dye to feet. 950-1200. Sandstone.

One female is drying her hair, looking into a hand mirror (Fig. 3.61). Another is applying color to a raised foot, supporting herself by leaning with her forehead on the front wall (Fig. 3.62).

The platform outside facing the temple has an open pavilion with a low parapet wall and a pyramidal roof resting on twelve pillars. A 2.3m long and 1.9m high (7 ft. long and 6 ft. high) statue of a squatting Nandi facing the temple stood in the pavilion facing the shrine.

Near the temple on the right is a hundred-year-old temple built by a Maharaja of Chatarpur. The temple reveals Mughal architectural influence. Nearby, a heavily restored Parvati temple has an image of Gauri and her vehicle Iguana in the sanctum.

The Jagadambi temple was possibly constructed by Ganda (1002-1027), successor to Dhanga. The temple stands on the platform of the Kandariya-Mahadeva temple (Fig. 3.63). It consists of entrance porch, hall, vestibule and sanctum. The basement molding of the temple is plain. There are erotic couples galore carved on the walls. This sculpture in-

cludes female masturbation and sex with animals. Some of the figures exhibits intense absorption and rapture, supposedly indicating transcendence from the physical to the spiritual realm.



Fig. 3.63. Khajuraho. Jagadambi Temple. 1002-27. Sandstone

A central niche on the façade is carved with Vishnu and Lakshmi (Fig. 3. 64). On the side of the central niche is a partially broken statue of a female sitting on a phallus while the male has grabbed her breast in his hands.



Fig. 3.64. Khajuraho. Jagadambi Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. 1002-27. Sandstone.

Another mithuna couple is standing face to face beside Vishnu and Lakshmi. The female is holding the erect phallus of the man in her hand (Fig. 3.65).

In another carving the male, standing in a trance-like posture, holds the female's breast as though he were trying to pluck some fruit (Fig. 3.66).

The decorated *mandapa* has a square ceiling. The temple was originally dedicated to Vishnu, but the sanctum is enshrined with a black image of Devi. There is no circumambulatory passage around the sanctum.



Fig.3.65. Khajuraho. Jagadambi Temple. Mithuna couple. Vishnu and Parvati. 1002-27. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.66. Khajuraho. Jagadambi Temple. Mithuna couple. 1002-27. Sandstone.

Ganda may have constructed the Chitragupta temple dedicated to Surya. It stands about 100m (600 ft.) to the north of Jagadambi Temple. It is similar to Jagadambi, with entrance porch, hall, vestibule and sanctum, but shows some advanced features over the Jagadambi temple. The (restored) friezes on the plinth of the temple depict groups of men carrying stones on poles, elephant hunting and other scenes.



The exterior walls are carved with embraced mithuna couples, oblivious to the surroundings (Fig. 3.67), and apsaras holding their lower garments open to expose their yoni (Fig. 3.68). Their faces exhibit intense absorption and rapture, transcending to the spiritual plane.



Fig. 3.68. Khajuraho. Chitragupta Temple. Mithuna couple. Apsara beautifying herself.

1002-27. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.69. Khajuraho. Chitragupta Temple. Apsara in a trance. 1002-27. Sandstone.

Such presentations are common on most of the temples. Like the Sun temple at Konarak, this temple is carved with much erotic sculpture and with females engaged in beautifying themselves. Surya is considered the progenitor of the human race. Possibly that explains the preponderance of sexual images on the temple walls.



Fig. 3.70. Khajuraho. Kandariya, Siva & Jagadambi Temples. 1002-35. Sandstone.

The ceiling of the large hall is octagonal. The door lintel of the sanctum is carved with an image of Surya. The sanctum is enshrined with a 2.1m (7 ft.) tall, partially-broken standing Surya holding lotus flowers. He wears an armored coat and boots. Seven horses are pulling his chariot. There is no circumambulatory passage in the sanctum.

Temple-building activity peaked during the reign of King Vidyadhara (1004-1035), who may have been the most powerful ruler of his time. He successfully stopped Mahmud of Ghazni from reaching Khajuraho.

Kandariya Mahadeva temple is the loftiest and most embellished temple in Khajuraho (Fig. 3.70).

After Kandariya, only small but still artistic temples were built. The temple, 32.8m (100 ft.) long 21.6m (66 ft.) wide and 30 m. (93 ft.) high, stands on a basement 4m (13 ft.) high. All the four subsidiary shrines on the platform corners are lost. The basement is carved with numerous ornate friezes depicting, processions of elephants, horses, warriors, hunters, acrobats, musicians, dancers, erotic couples and seven mothers in niches. Three sculpture bands decorate the temple walls with Siva, guardians of the eight directions and loving and erotic couples carved in half human-size interposed with mythological lions and *nagas* in recesses.

Most of the females on the temple walls have lost their classic stature. They are tall and slim but not very shapely. The hips have almost lost the bulge and the legs look like poles.



Fig. 3.71. Khajuraho. Kandariya Temple. Scorpion on leg of apsara. Apsara feeding Parrot. 1004-35. Sandstone.

Only a few females have retained some volume. One such female, carved by the side of Vishnu, is applying corrilium, looking into a mirror. A girl throwing a ball is shown in an incredibly twisted pose. In another carving Vishnu is flanked by two females, one holding open her lower, diaphanous dress, exposing her yoni; she is so engrossed that she is not aware of a scorpion crawling on her knee. The other

female is feeding fruits to a parrot sitting on her hand, from a broken tree branch held in her other hand.

In a similar scenario another female is standing, exposing her yoni, unaware of the scorpion crawling on her thigh. A male is embracing and masturbating a beautiful female with his finger to excite her (Fig. 3.72).



Fig. 3.72. Khajuraho. Kandariya Temple. Mithuna couple. 1004-35. Sandstone.

Such carvings are scattered all over this temple and other temples. The junction of the vestibule and sanctum walls is carved with sexually explicit figures. Khajuraho has the unique distinction of depicting sex by a group of females with a single male, in prominent niches. Sex between a group of three males with one female, as depicted in a south Indian temple, is not seen at Khajuraho. In one of the depictions a man is standing on his head, shown from the front. A beautiful female seen from behind is sitting on the phallus of the man, similar to the carving on Visvanatha temple, except that the female is sitting on the male. She is held in place by the legs of the man wrapped around her back and supported by two females standing beside the male. The man is simultaneously masturbating both the flanking females with his fingers. Similar carvings with variations have been carved above and below.

One explanation given for the carving of such figures is that an offshoot of Hindu tantric worship of Siva, prevalent during this period, had evolved some powerful magical drawings with secret power of unknown nature. These mystic magical drawings were highly secretive and not for the eyes of casual observers. These drawings were an essential part of the tantric worship and had to be carved on the temple walls. To hide these drawings, sexual scenes that could fit and obscure the symbolic portion were carved above the magical drawings.

The three percent of explicitly erotic imagery carved on the temples at Khajuraho does not diminish the beauty and appeal of the other carvings on these temples to a sexual miser.

The entrance porch of the temple is decorated with arches flanked by delicate images of the mythological crocodile heads (Fig. 3.73). The beautiful recessed ceiling of the *mandapa* with cusped circles has hanging pendants. Seated

Siva is carved in a large hall niche. The sanctum enshrines an enormous marble Lingam. The circumambulatory passage is carved with a couple engrossed in sex; a female with three bends playing a flute; and Yama, the god of death, with buffalo head (Fig. 3.74). The tallest curvilinear tower in Khajuraho, with 84 subsidiary *sikaras* gives a grand and round appearance to this temple.



Fig. 3.73. Khajuraho. Kandariya temple. Arch on entrance porch. 1002-35. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.74. Khajuraho. Kandariya Temple. Carvings in circumambulatory passage. 1004-35. Sandstone.

A dilapidated Siva temple called Devi temple is located between Kandariya and Jagadambi temples. The sanctum of the temple is lost but the portico holds a figure of powerful lion, which was emblem of Candella dynasty.

The eastern group of temples has three Hindu and four Jain temples. None of the Hindu temples is equal in grandeur to Lakshmana, Visvanatha or Kandariya-Mahadeva temples, although glimpses of that beauty can be seen in some of the carvings. A Jain temple contemporaneous to Lakshmana temple is carved with sculpture in classical style.

A Brahma temple, possibly constructed around 900, consists of a sanctum with a pyramidal tower. The *mandapa* is lost. The lintel of the sanctum door is carved with an image of Vishnu. The sanctum enshrines a four-faced Lingam

that was mistaken long ago for a four-headed Brahma — and the temple was named for him. It is devoid of noteworthy sculpture.

Vimana Temple, constructed in possibly 1050-1075, is dedicated to the Vimana incarnation of Vishnu. The exterior walls have two bands of graceful, tall, lean females and incarnations of Vishnu in the cardinal niches around the temple. The dome-shaped ceiling of the main hall, constructed of overlapping rings with cusped margins, stands on four pillars. It is similar to the ceilings of most medieval temples in western India. The sanctum enshrines a chubby icon of a dwarf Vishnu. The curvilinear tower is devoid of subsidiary *deuls*.

Javari temple (Fig. 3.75) was constructed between 1075-1100. The temple stands on a very high platform.



Fig. 3.75. Khajuraho. Javari Temple. 1075-1100 CE. Sandstone.

The exterior walls carry three bands of graceful figures. The portico with *makara* arch is followed by a *mandapa* hall, vestibule and sanctum. Vishnu is enshrined in the sanctum. It has a slender, soaring curvilinear tower.

Three Jain temples at Khajuraho were commissioned by the Jain Digambara sect. A Jain merchant dedicated the first one in 955. There are numerous icons of Tirthankaras Adhinatha, Parshvanath, Naminatha and Mahavir donated by devotees and kept in the temples.

Each of the Tirthankaras is accompanied by an attendant. These attendants are not same in all the locations. Eight-armed Chakreshvari riding Garuda and holding a discus is the attendant of Adhinatha. She is usually carved on the sanctum lintel. Padmavati, attendant of Parshvanath, has a snake covering her head from behind. Ambika, attendant of Naminatha, is carved holding a child and a branch with mangos. Sidhiaka, the attendant of Mahavir, is carved riding a lion.

The architecture of Jain temples differs very little from Hindu temples except for the absence of graceful balconied openings. There are no mithuna couples on the exterior walls.

Ghanti Temple was possibly constructed during the early part of King Dhanga's reign (950-570). It is similar in design to the Parshvanath temple but was nearly twice as large. The walls of the temple have collapsed. Only the tall pillars of the porch and mandapa with ornate ceiling and doorways with lintel have survived. The elegant, stately pillars are carved with a chain-and-bell motif giving the name Ghanti (bell) temple. The door-lintel of the *mandapa* is carved with eight-armed Yakshi Chakreshvari, the attendant of Adhinatha, seated on Garuda. The architrave mounted on the doorway is carved with the sixteen auspicious symbols dreamed by Jain's mother at the time of her conception of Mahavir. There is no carving of Tirthankara in the temple.

About one-half km south of Ghanti temple stands a group of four early and numerous modern Jain temples in an enclosure constructed on the ruins of old temples. Some of the temples were constructed using old stones bearing carvings salvaged about a hundred years ago.

Santinatha shrine is situated in an oblong enclosure of old shrine-cells displaying original sculpture, one of which could be a carving of Mahavir's parents (Fig. 3.76). The sanctum is enshrined with an image of Santinatha, the fifth Tirthankara, 4.3m (14 ft.) high.



Fig. 3.76. Khajuraho. Santinatha Temple. Parents of Mahavir. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The Jain temples Parshvanath and Adhinatha are unique in displaying carvings of Hindu deities on the external walls. Parshvanath temple was possibly constructed in 950-970 during King Dhanga's reign by a prominent Jain family. At the same time another prominent Jain family supposedly built another temple, which has possibly fallen into ruin.

The Parshvanath temple, one of the finest and the largest Jain temples at Khajuraho, was originally dedicated to Adhinatha, the first Tirthankara, but an image of Parshvanath, the twenty-third Tirthankara, was installed in the temple in 1860. It is oblong with the front projection serving as entrance and a back projection attached to the sanctum. The temple consists of entrance porch, small hall, large hall, vestibule and sanctum.

The outer walls of the temple, with perforated windows, are decorated with three bands of graceful females. The top band is mostly carved with flying couples, deities, a dancer flanked with musicians and possibly celestials watching from above. The sculpture, contemporaneous with Lakshmana Temple, is in classical style. The sculpture on the temple walls includes the Krishna legend and Hindu gods in various incarnations with their spouses. An *apsara* standing beside Vishnu and Lakshmi is removing a thorn with a sharp object. She is flanked by mythological lions (Fig. 3.77).



Fig. 3.77. Khajuraho. Parshvanath Temple. Apsara removing throne from leg. 950-70. Sandstone.



Fig. 3.78. Khajuraho. Parshvanath Temple. Apsara wearing bell anklet. 950-70. Sandstone.

A dancer wearing bell anklets in preparation for dancing is flanked by mythological lions (Fig. 3.78). Beside her stands a bearded Brahma, holding scriptures in his hand, and his spouse.

Even though Jain temples are not carved with erotic sculpture, a lovely female standing with crossed legs beside Vishnu and Lakshmi appears to be masturbating with an inanimate object (Fig. 3.79).

The entrance porch of the temple has an ornate ceiling with floral patterns, chains and a pair of flying couple. The door lintel of the large hall bears a carving of ten-armed Chakreshvari, the attendant of Adhinatha, riding Garuda and the sanctum door lintel is carved with Jain figures. The sanctum with circumambulatory passage is enshrined with Parshvanath. The curvilinear tower is similar to the tower of Lakshmana temple, but has better proportions.



Fig. 3.79. Khajuraho. Parshvanath Temple. Gods and apsara with crossed legs. 950-70. Sandstone.

Adhinatha Temple, dedicated to the first Tirthankara, is similar to Vimana Temple but with a curvilinear tower of better proportions. Possibly the temple was constructed slightly later. The exterior walls are carved with three bands of graceful females, Hindu deities, flying couples and mythological lions, and a dancer accompanied with musicians. In one band of sculpture a female is wearing an anklet and another is possibly writing letter. Yakshi Chakreshvari, Padmavati, and Ambika are carved in niches. Only the vestibule and sanctum have survived. The vestibule has an ornate ceiling. The door lintel has the sixteen auspicious symbols that Jina's mother saw in her dream at the time of conception.

The southern group of temples consists of two Hindu temples, Chiturbhuj (referring to the four-armed deity in the sanctum) and Duledo Temple.

The Chiturbhuj is the only Hindu temple without a display of erotic couples. It was constructed around 1100. Facing west, it is similar to Javari Temple in style except for the heavy curvilinear tower. The exterior walls are carved with three bands of graceful females, Vishnu and a rare image of Goddess Nrsimhi with a lion face and human body.

The niches on the south and east are carved with Ardhanari and Surya. The sanctum is enshrined with an image of four-armed Vishnu 3m (9 ft.) high.

Duledo Temple, dedicated to Siva, is the last Hindu temple constructed at Khajuraho by the Madanavarman around 1130. The temple consists of entrance porch, small hall, large hall, vestibule and sanctum. Three sculpture bands are carved on the temple walls. The top band is carved with rather lifeless flying couples. The other two bands are carved with monotonous, repetitive mythological lions alternating with sculpture that has lost most of the plasticity. Gods and goddesses are carved in the niches along with buffalo-headed Yama, Agni and Brahma.



Fig. 3.80. Khajuraho. Duledo temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Sandstone.

The carving of a dancing *apsara* with dynamic movements of limbs and tense body is remarkable (Fig. 3.80). The *apsaras* carved in the large hall attached to the circular corbelled ceiling are wearing crowns and plentiful ornaments; they have lost their charm and plasticity. Some of the fallen brackets are now located at the local Archeological Survey of India museum. The main curvilinear tower is attached with three sets of subsidiary *deuls*.



## 16. RAJARAJESHVARA TEMPLE AT TANJUR (1003–1014)

Tanjur (Thanjavur) lies 322 km (193 miles) southwest of Chennai in southern India. It is connected to Chennai by railway and road. Tanjur is the district headquarters and most important commercial center of the region; boarding and lodging facilities are available. UNESCO declared the majestic Rajarajeshvara temple a Human Heritage Monument in 1987, and in July 2004 two Cola temples, Gangaikondacholisvaram and Airavatesvara, at Darasuram, were added to the list of World Heritage Monuments.

The Cola were a prominent and long-lived south Indian dynasty. Ashoka mentioned them in the inscriptions in third century BCE. They are mentioned again in first and second century BCE inscriptions. They ruled parts of Tamilnadu from the end of the fourth to the middle of the sixth century. Vijayalaya (850-871), residing in the outskirts of what is now Tiruchirapalli in south India, wrested control of Tanjur from the local Muttarayar chieftain (who was possibly a feudatory of the Pallava of Kanchi) and established Cola rule. Tanjur was the capital of the Cola dynasty from 850 to 1279.

King Aditya (871-907) conquered the Pallava ruling the north and his son Parantaka I (907-949) defeated the Pandyas in the south, and invaded Sri Lanka. Rajarajadeva (955-1018), a military genius, ascended the throne in 985 and extended the empire throughout southern India. Sri Lanka, parts of Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), Malaya and Sumatra were under temporary control of the Cola. Rajarajadeva achieved his political and territorial ambitions in the first eighteen years of his reign. To celebrate his achievements and declare himself lord of southern

India, and to glorify Siva, he gathered craftsmen from all over his empire and constructed the Rajarajeshvara temple (also called Brhadesvara Temple) at Tanjur. It was built in seven years, from 1003 to 1010.

Construction of the Gangaikondacholisvaram temple at Darasuram was started by his son, Rajendra I (1012-1044), and completed in 1035. It has a 53m (164 ft.) high tower. The Airavatesvara temple was built by Rajaraja II (1146-1172) and has 24m (74 ft.) high temple tower. The Cola dynasty ended with king Rajendra III (1246-1279).

The Cola had a long artistic tradition of their own but in the early phase they followed Pallava and Chalukya traditions, with some modifications. Cola architecture is classified into early, middle and late architecture. During the early period, from the inception of the Colas' rule till the demise of Uttama Cola (971-988), few temples were built. During the second half of the early phase, repairs were made and old brick structures were replaced with stone temples. Queen Mother Sembian Mahadevi instigated most of the repairs and replacements. During this period the early traditions continued to be followed. Saivism was the religion of the state.

In the middle phase, the glory of temple architecture was achieved under Rajaraja I (985-1014) and his son Rajendra I (1012-44), who built the Rajarajeshvara temple at Tanjur and Gangaikondacholisvaram temple at Darasuram. Only the temple at Konarak matches the grandeur and majesty of the Rajarajeshvara temple. The most noteworthy feature of the late phase is the construction of Devi temples with profusely embellished towers, equal in magnitude and prominence to the main temple tower.

The characteristic decorative features of Cola architecture are the shape and ornamentation of niches. In Pallava monuments, the niches are wide and the tails of the floral ornamentation from the top arch fall to the side.

In Pallava sculpture the *kudus* — the round imitation windows — are carved with a shovel- or spade-shaped finial. In Cola architecture, the *kudus* are carved with a lion's head. The niches on Cola monuments are narrow and have decorated arches on the top. Cola pillars do not have lions carved at the base. The early temples have less sculpture and the carvings shows the naturalistic style and poses of Pallava figures. But with time, the number of sculptures increased. Artists with experience at Badami and Patadkal carved some of the images. Near the end of the middle Cola phase, during the early part of Rajarajadeva's reign, a decline in the quality of sculpture set in. During the last Cola phase the established ideals of feminine beauty and male stature were distorted.

The Colas have left their mark on the temple art of south India. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries five huge temples with vast courts, dance halls, marriage halls for the annual celebration of the gods' marriages, subsidiary temples for the consort and children of the gods, famous saints and holy temple ponds were constructed in the temple complex. By duplicating receding units, stacked above one another, they made the *Vimana* tall, even huge. The temple walls were decorated with pillar-framed niches with projecting images. Although the design and harmony of proportion make most of these temples attractive, the relative scarcity of monuments and poor quality of sculpture on the walls makes them less overpowering.

Temples featuring Cola architecture are found all over south India, in more than seventy towns. Most Cola temples have survived in good condition because hard stone such as granite, gneiss or Charnockite (metamorphosed granite and gneiss) was used for construction. The highest concentration of these temples is in the Kaveri River delta.

The temples constructed of stone in the late ninth and first half of the tenth centuries are small in contrast to later stone temples with brick superstructures on their towers. The tower of these temples rises in receding tiers and ends in a dome on a square neck (*sikara*) with *kalasa* finale. The roof of all other temple units is flat.

The Colas' extensive use of stone to construct temples was started during the reign of Sundara Cola (957-973). Old brick temples were lost or replaced by stone structures. After development of the basic blueprints of the temple in the eighth century, Hindu monarchs started the race to build the grandest temple with the tallest tower.

Rajarajeshvara Temple was the foremost architectural creation of its era. It was the largest known temple in India with the tallest tower, constructed of granite, the hardest of stone. The monumental tower of the Rajarajeshvara temple is an architectural achievement and the best example of the late

Cola phase of architecture. Some additions and alterations to the temple were made later.

A deep moat surrounds Rajarajeshvara, which is located on the banks of the River Kaveri. All the units of the temple are constructed of granite. The temple is situated in a courtyard measuring 241m long (791 ft.) and 121m (397 ft.) wide, inside a high compound wall. A two-storey high cloister with rectangular pillars was attached to the interior of the compound walls by one of the emperor's generals at later date. The entry to the courtyard is through two pyramidal gateways (*gopura*) which feature wagon-shaped superstructures similar to the Ganesha Ratha at Mamalapuram.

Historically, the height of gateway towers increased as the height of temple towers increased. But none of the gateway towers in India is taller than the tallest temple tower. After the Rajarajeshvara tower was constructed, interest in south India shifted to the gateways. By the end of the twelfth century the gateways of temples became taller than temple towers and they were now the most prominent visual part of the south Indian temple. But the tallest gateway tower, constructed by Krishnadeva Raya in 1516 on Virupaksha temple at Vijayanagara, reaching 52m (159 ft.) in height, is considerably shorter than the tower of this temple.

Unlike other units of the temple, distinct instructions for construction methods, arrangement of elements and iconographic display on the gateway do not exist in religious texts. The instructions for the construction of temple towers, written under the name of Prasada, were applied as well to the construction of gateways. The gateways of this temple are essentially subsidiary shrines stacked one above another with the sanctum placed in the center of each storey. A passage was cut through the ground storey to enter the temple compound. The gateways started to look much more like shrines. The gateways of Chidambaram temple are similar to the gateways of this temple.



Fig. 3.85. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Side view. 1003-1014. Granite.

The five- and three-storied gateways of the temple, facing east, are aligned with the sanctum (Fig. 3.85). The gate-



way construction was completed in 1014. The base of the gateways were constructed of stone and the superstructures are of bricks and mortar, to lessen the load on the tower. The brick superstructures of both gateways show weather damage. Both gateways end in barrel-shaped *sala* topped with *kalasa* (water pots). The superstructure of the first gateway, with an additional entrance in front, is taller and larger, with five progressively shorter tiers (Fig. 3.86).



Fig. 3.86. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara Temple. Outer gateway. 1003-1014. Granite & Brick.

The inner *gopura* is smaller, with a three-tiered superstructure. The façade of the superstructures of both gateways are profusely decorated with gods, goddesses, loving couples and *kudus*. The decoration is different on the façade of each storey. There is a shrine in the center of the each tier opening to the façade.



Fig. 3.87. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Inner gateway. Doorkeepers. 1003-1014. Granite.

The stone base of the inner gateway is horizontally divided into two sections (Fig. 3.87). The subdivided lower division is carved with events from the Ramayana. Above in the

upper division the decorative structure is carved in niches flanked by pilasters. The niches flanking the entrance to the temple are carved with Siva. The two-and-half times larger than human size Siva is standing on one leg with the other leg resting on the footrest of a large staff, his left hand raised. He is decorated with jewelry on his hands, legs, neck, and ears, and wears conical headwear. With four arms, and incisors protruding out of his mouth, he appears fearsome — but static.

Aligned with the two *gopura* and the sanctum about 64.5m (200 ft.) into the courtyard is the open-pillared Nandi pavilion (Fig. 3.88). It looks like a skeleton of a building. Four rows of four elongated, narrow pillars carved with females support the flat roof. It houses, in the center, an enormous, finely-carved monolithic black squatting Nandi measuring 6m (18.5 ft.) in length, facing the temple.



Fig. 3.88. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara Temple. Nandi pavilion. 1003-1014 CE. Granite.



Fig. 3.89. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Temple side view. 1003-1014 CE. Granite.

The temple stands on a plinth 4.5m (14 ft.) high 16m (50 ft.) wide and 58m (180 ft.) long (Fig. 3.89). Above the plinth base a broad band around the temple is inscribed with the events of the Rajarajadeva reign. A band of mythological tiger heads separates the plinth from the temple wall. The temple consists of pillared porch, two large pillared halls with flat roof, a vestibule and sanctum. Stairs with a decorated baluster curling up at the end leads to a pillared porch with flat roof. The parapet wall above the roof of the *mandapa* has a gap in the center that allows a full view of the tower with base, from a position standing in front of the entrance porch. The porch — a later addition — has eaves which appear to be protruding forward because of the short eaves constructed on the *mandapa* wall flanking the eaves of the entrance. The pillars and the ceiling of the porch are decorated with bas-relief carvings. Two huge doorkeepers with mustaches guard the *mandapa* entrance.

Following the entrance porch there are two large halls. The first pillared hall, with closely set pillars on one side, has a platform for bathing the god. The second *mandapa*, similar in size to the first, has thirty-six undecorated pillars. A comparatively small vestibule following the *mandapa* is three stories high. Side entrances accessed by stairs (similar to the stairs of the front-pillared porch) provide open to the ground floor vestibule. Two huge doorkeepers guard the entrances.

The 30.5m (95 ft.) square sanctum, 10.5m (33 ft.) high, has circumambulatory passages at two levels. It rests on a plinth 45.7m (142 ft.) tall. Three colossal sculptures of Siva are located inside the circumambulatory passage on the north, south and west. Paintings showing the inauguration of the temple by Rajarajadeva and other legends were discovered recently in the passage buried by paint during a seventeenth-century renovation. Drawn with dark outlines, the figures show vitality but lack naturalism. The color paintings look flat, with little or no suggestion of light and depth. Huge door-like windows on the sides and back of the sanctum provide air and light to the interior. The Lingam housed in the sanctum is 3m (9.5 ft.) high and 2.2m (8 ft.) in diameter. It is considered the finest in South Asia.

The most magnificent part of the temple is the tower. This is the tallest extant tower in India. Resting on the 26.5m (82 ft.) square flat roof base of the sanctum, the tower is about 61m (189 ft.) high (Fig. 3.90).

The tower is a narrowing pyramid with fourteen tiers diminishing in size; similar units of decreasing size are built one above another. The lower levels of the tower do not obscure the view of the units above, when viewed from below, close to the sanctum, whereas the lower levels of the curvilinear towers of northern India obscure the full view of the

upper levels. It ends in square platform capped with a monolithic *sikara* weighing 81 tons (81,000 kgs/178,200 lbs). The *sikara* was hauled from a nearby village by elephants on a 6.5 km (4 miles) long inclined ramp, constructed of soil. Remnants of the ramp still exist in patches. King Rajarajadeva in 1010 installed a gold-plated copper *kalasa* on the top of the *sikara* as a sign that construction was complete.



Fig. 3.90. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Temple Tower. 1003-10014. Granite.

The tallest tower built in India was that on the Sun Temple at Konarak — but it collapsed in the sixteenth century. It was 6m (18 ft.) higher than this tower. The Cola in southern India constructed two more tall towers. The tower of Gangaikondacholisvaram temple is 30m (93 ft.) tall with seven stories and the tower of Campaharesvara temple at Tribhuvanam is 50m (155 ft.) tall.



Fig. 3.91. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Decoration on temple walls. 1003-10014. Granite.

Sculpture bands divided the exterior walls of the temple. On the lower horizontal band some niches bear windows of geometric designs. Narrow niches are carved with pilasters bearing elaborate capitals and a vase motif at the base (*khumba panjara*). Some niches are carved with two slender pilasters without any vase motifs, flanked by slightly longer and thicker pilasters of the same design (Fig. 3.91).

There is one band of sculptures on the *mandapa*; the vestibule has three bands and the sanctum walls have two bands. The second sculptured level on the vestibule is dominated by two windows guarded by huge doorkeepers and the third level is partially carved. Both bands on the sanctum walls have large figures carved in the round, recessed in projecting niches (Fig. 3.92).



Fig. 3.92. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara Temple. Side view of Mandapa, Vestibule & Vimana. 1003-1014. Granite.



Fig. 3.93. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Nataraja. 1003-1014. Granite.

Thirty niches of the upper sculptured level of the sanctum and the niches on the vestibule are carved with identical images of Siva as Tripurantaka, the destroyer, with a single

arrow, of three powerful demons who combined to defy the gods. Perhaps identical images were used because only so many sculptors were available to carve all the images during the short construction period of the huge temple. On the lower band of the sanctum the figures look broad shouldered, some with flaccid, heavy faces lacking expression. Perhaps these sculptors were less experienced or less talented, or had less time, than some. The carving of the dancing Siva with dancing bells on his legs, however, is balanced and attractive. He is holding a trident in one hand and has a smile on his face (Fig. 3.93).

Ardhanari's face is carved with delicate features. Parvati is holding a flower in her hand and is decorated with jewelry but her bosom is comparatively flat. The thrust of her hips is prominent. Siva's leg appears stiff and his hand resting on the head of Nandi looks dislocated. He is holding the trident in his other hand (3.94). The smiling faces of Siva and Parvati, with delicate features and lean bodies, are attractive (Fig. 3.95). Durga, however, standing on a buffalo head, has a flaccid face and rigid body, and lacks the dynamic energy and beauty of her customary form (Fig. 3.96).

Fig. 3.94. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Ardhanari. 1003-1014. Granite.



Fig. 3.95. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Siva & Parvati. 1003-1014. Granite.

Siva, carved in a niche in side profile, is shown standing with his forward leg on a lion head, but his right leg, resting on the ground, is carved with the foot facing front. Some of

his multiple arms appear to be growing out of his back. He has large round eyes and a forced smile on his face, with protruding incisors. He is wearing a conical headdress mounted with a trident.



Fig. 3.96. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Durga. 1003-1014. Granite.

His multi-armed son Kattrikeya with spear and thunderbolt looks regal (Fig. 3.97). His vehicle, the peacock, is standing behind.



Fig. 3.97. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Kattrikeya. 1003-1014. Granite.

One of the best panels carved on this temple is located on the side wall of the north side entrance to the vestibule (Fig. 3.98). Lakshmi is sitting crossed legged in a niche with a pointed nose and almond eyes, bearing a sweet expression on her face. She is wearing a beautiful, long cylindrical headdress. Her firm, slender, round arms, neck and ears are decorated with jewelry carved in shallow relief. Her narrow

waist and broad hips looks natural and graceful. Two female attendants carrying *chamara* flank her. A parasol stands over her head and two flying deities are hovering at the corners. A stylized tree looms above the parasol.



Fig. 3.98. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Lakshmi. 1003-1014. Granite.

Most of the female figures lack naturalism, beauty and grace of form. Some of the carvings show the tendency to distort the feminine body. This tendency became more evident in the late Cola period.

Fig. 3.99. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Lakshmi. 1003-1014. Granite.



The sculpture of one deity in particular is carved with thick pole-like legs with swollen thighs, barrel-shaped hips, a narrow waist and balloon-like breasts set almost on the shoulder. She has flaccid face, flat nose and thick beak like lips (Fig. 3.99). Another similar deity is carved with barrel shaped hips divided into two (Fig. 3.100).

There are about eighteen huge doorkeepers standing with swords and shields the walls of the temple flanking

the doors and windows (Fig. 3.101). A few statues of princes, some with moustaches, are carved in the niches.



Fig. 3.100. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Lakshmi. 1003-1014. Granite.



Fig. 3.101. Tanjur. Rajarajeshvara temple. Carving on exterior wall. 1003-1014. Granite.

A shrine dedicated to Saint Candesvara is located to the right of the Nandi pavilion. Candesvara was a devotee of Siva. As a young cowherd, he used to erect Lingams from mud and wash them with the excess milk collected from the cows. His father once observed him in the act and, to prevent him from wasting milk, kicked down a Lingam. Candesvara was so enraged that without looking up he cut off the leg of his father. The shrine in the complex constructed to honor the saint was part of the original temple complex plan. It has a few beautiful sculptured panels of females on exterior walls.

The Subrahmanya shrine in the northwest corner of the complex is the finest addition by the Nayaka regime. Tanjur was governed for a time by viceroys of the Vijayanagara kingdom, called the Nayaka. When the Vijayanagara kingdom broke away, the Nayaks became independent.

The temple constructed by Raghunatha, the Nayak ruling Tanjur in the early seventeenth century, represents the culmination of Dravidian style. The temple is constructed on the east-west axis on a high platform. It consists of an entrance porch flanked by balustrade stairways bearing carved *yalis* and elephants. Carvings of wheels and leaping horses on the basement suggest a moving chariot. Overhanging double eaves of the porch are supported on piers with groups of square colonnades and lotus brackets. The entrance porch is followed by the *mandapa* with walls carved with part-circular pilasters with fluted and multi-faceted shafts and miniature lotus brackets. Sculpted niches on the exterior walls are carved with pilasters standing in pots supporting the *sala*-shaped structure above. The antechamber is provided with pierced windows of geometric designs to give light and air to the interior. The sanctum bears a square tower with ascending stories and the parapet walls are decorated with niches and carved with *kudu* and *sala* decorations. It is capped with a hemispherical *sikara*.

In front of the entrance porch a *mandapa* was added at later date. It has a triple bay opening on three sides, partly closed by the Maratha. The shrines for Devi and Ganesha in the complex are later additions.



## 17. THE STATUE OF BAHUBALI (10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

The world's tallest extant freestanding monolithic statue of Bahubali (locally called Gommateshvara) is located on top of a hill at Sravana Belgola in Karnataka, South India. The village of Sravana Belgola, "the Monk of the White Pond," is one of the oldest and most important Jain pilgrimage centers in India. It can be reached by road from Bangalore in a couple of hours, but there are no decent boarding or lodging facilities there.

In the South, the Ganga, a Hindu dynasty, patronized Jainism in the third century and helped spread the religion through the Deccan. The Ganga built many Hindu temples and practiced *ahimsa* — non-violence or the avoidance of killing any living thing.



Fig. 4.1. Sravana Belgola. Statue of Bahubali. 983. Schist.

Bahubali is not a Tirthankara but Jains have honored him with the tallest statue in the world.

Near the end of the Ganga reign in the tenth century the statue of Bahubali was carved out of a granite boulder on the crest of Chandragiri Hill, with 614 steps cut in the hill to allow visitors to climb. The Western Ganga King Rachamalla's army commander Chamundaraya commissioned sculptor Arisenemi to carve the statue in 983. The statue has a proportionate body, square shoulders, flat nose and thick lips.

He is standing in the *kayotasarga* ascetic pose with an erect body that looks stiff and with arms that do not touch the body. His look is serene and he appears lost in meditation, unaware of his surroundings. Growing vines have entwined his limbs and anthills have sprung up beside his feet. The snakes occupying the anthills indicate the long time that has passed since Bahubali first stood in meditation (Fig. 4.2).



Fig. 4.2. Sravana Belgola. Snake-infested anthills beside the Bahubali's legs. 983. Granite.

The story of Bahubali harkens back eons earlier than Mahavir. Mahavir, born of Jain parents who were followers of the twenty-third Tirthankara, Lord Parshvanath,

who is traditionally believed to have born in 817 BCE. Mahavir, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara and reformer of the Jain faith, is contemporary to Buddha. His father was chief of a warrior clan living around Vaishali in North Bihar. He may have been born in 540 BCE and died in 468 BCE at the age of 72 years at Pava, a village near Patna. After wandering and mediating for twelve years Mahavir achieved enlightenment at the age of 42. He gave up all his possessions, including clothing, because, like all possessions, clothes are believed to impede the liberation of the self by wrapping the body.

The Jains split into two groups in the last quarter of the first century CE, though the differences between the Shvetambara and Digambara sects are subtle. Believing that the ideals proposed by Mahavir set a very high standard, the Shvetambara allow some lenience to the laity in observing the law while the other group, the Digambara, follow the ideals to the letter of law. The Digambara include ascetics who eschew clothing; they are concentrated in South India.

The ultimate goal in Jainism is to achieve Moksa, deliverance from the cycle of rebirth by practicing Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Five vows to be followed are non-injury to living beings (Ahimsa), speaking the truth, not stealing — accepting only what is properly given, abstinence from sexual pleasures, and shunning worldly wealth. In Jainism everything, including a stone, has a soul. In a soul the number of senses ranges from five to one. Gods and men have five senses, where as stone has only one, the sense of touch. One-soul vegetable bodies are classified into a group of beings with a varying number of senses such as a tree, with one sense, and a turnip, which has countless senses. Thus the whole world is alive with senses and non-injury (Ahimsa) to all is important. In Jainism the soul, called Jiva (“life”), in its pure state is omniscient and is finite. Layers of subtle matter called Karma, flowing through the sense organs, affects the integument of the soul by forming layers over it. Cruelty and selfishness cause a heavy influx of inauspicious karma, and the soul cannot liberate itself unless the deposits are dissipated by good deeds. The number of souls in the universe is infinite, as many souls go on through transmigration indefinitely.

According to the Jains, not less than twenty-three Tirthankaras were born before Mahavir. The first Tirthankara was Rishabha, the king of Ayodhya. He had two sons. In old age the king appointed his elder son Bharata as ruler of Ayodhya and gave the principality of Podanapura to Bahubali. He became an ascetic and ultimately Tirthankara Adhinatha. Bharata acquired Chakra-ratna, the divine wheel, and conquered all the kingdoms of the region. He invited his brother Bahubali to accept him as universal monarch. Bahubali refused, renounced the world, and became an ascetic in his father’s religious order. His brother invited him again to

join him in celebration of his victories (*digvijaya*), as a mark of his obeisance. Bahubali refused to be under the supremacy of any ruler. To establish his supremacy Bharata declared war. A battle ensued between the brothers and blood started flowing. The elder statesmen intervened and suggested that the brothers settle the feud between themselves and stop the slaughter. Both brothers agreed. They started to fight by staring each other, and then they fought with water. Bahubali won both contests. In the third, a wrestling contest, Bahubali picked up Bharata and was about to dash him on the ground, but suddenly overcome by fraternal feelings he gently set Bharata down. In the worst moment of humility, Bharata ordered the chakra-ratna to attack Bahubali. The chakra made three rounds of Bahubali and stood suspended.

Bahubali was profoundly disillusioned by the pride and greed of his brother and set off for the forest, pulled out his hair, and stood in meditation in the *kayotasarga* ascetic pose for long time. In spite of all the mortifications, Bahubali did not attain peace. Bharata and his two sisters, worried by the condition of Bahubali, asked their father Tirthankara Adhinatha for help. Adhinatha, by his insight, found that Bahubali was disturbed by the thought that he was standing on land that belonged to Bharata. He asked Bharata to go and ask his brother to forgive him. They went to the forest and the sisters removed the vines from the limbs of Bahubali and shouted at him to wake up and come down from the elephant of his pride. Bahubali came out of meditation, looked around and understood what was happening. When Bharata paid obeisance to Bahubali, his resentment dissolved. He realized the right knowledge, right conduct and right faith and attained the state of moksa, freedom from the cycles of rebirths, to become the soul of the cosmic cycle and occupied a position similar to that of the Tirthankaras — even though he is not one of them.

There is a cloister built around the statue of Bahubali. Carvings of Mahavir sit in meditation surrounded by devotees and Vishnu stands with his emblems on the walls of the cloister, in addition to a *yaksa*.

There are other minor structures called *Channa Basti* and Mahanavami *mandapa* at Saravana Belgola. At Karkal, a 12.5m (39 ft.) high statue of Gommateshvara was carved in 1432. A third 10m (31 ft.) high statue at Enur was carved in 1604. Both these places in the South Kanara district of Karnataka are strongholds of Jainism.

On the way to the hilltop a small gateway arch is decorated with sculpture depicting elephants bathing Lakshmi, sitting under a *makara* arch. Lakshmi is presented as an ideal female but the elephants are cramped and do not look natural. The sculpture is in the ornate Hoysala style that matured a century later. Possibly the carving was installed a century after it was carved.



## 18. THE HOYSALA TEMPLES (1117–1268)

The most ornate Hindu temples in India are located at Belur, Halebid and Somnathpur in Karnataka, South India. Belur and Halebid can be reached by road in a couple of hours from Bangalore, and Somnathpur can be reached from Mysore by road in one hour.

The Ganga dynasty ruled large parts of East and South India from the second through the eleventh century. The eastern Ganga ruled Orissa and the western Ganga became prominent in parts of Andhra Pradesh in the tenth century, with Talkad as their capital. The Cola subjugated the Western Ganga dynasty in 1004. Meanwhile Taila II established his Eastern Chalukya dynasty in parts of Andhra Pradesh with Kalyana as capital in 973. By the end of 1000, the Cola of Tanjur and the Chalukya of Kalyana dominated southern India. The Hoysala at this juncture established their rule in the region close to the west coast hilly region of present-day Karnataka, adjoining the frontiers of the Cola and Chalukya empires, as feudatories of the Chalukya. In 1116 the Hoysala king Bittiga, who assumed the name of Visnuvardhana, penetrated deep into Cola territory and defeated the Cola governor at Talkad.

To celebrate his victory a Vishnu temple was constructed in Belur and consecrated in 1117. He tried to overthrow the suzerainty of the Chalukya. Although he failed in the attempt, the Hoysala became a powerful kingdom and were considered heirs to the Ganga dynasty of Talkad who were defeated by Visnuvardhana. The construction of the temple dedicated to Siva was started at Halebid to celebrate their new status. Ballala II (1173-1220), grandson of Visnuvardhana, with the help of Yadva of Devagiri, defeated the Chalukya king in 1190. He declared himself king and estab-

lished the Hoysala dynasty that governed from the twelfth through the early part of the fourteenth century.

In the thirteenth century the Cola became weak and the Cola Empire was incorporated into the Hoysala kingdom. But Pandya of Madurai soon pushed them back. In the early fourteenth century, armies of Delhi sultans appeared in South India. To keep the peace, Ballala III accepted the lordship of the Delhi sultan. Later Ballala III participated in the Vijayanagara uprising; he died in 1342 fighting the Muslim sultan of Madurai.

The earlier sandstone monuments built by the Hoysala reflect the Western Chalukya influence. Later monuments built with fine-grained chlorite schist evolved into an ornate style with unique innovations that were not followed by any other group, possibly because they were too individualistic and intricate. The chlorite schist, when quarried, is comparatively soft and excellent for fine carving with deep undercuts and greater detail. It hardens slowly when exposed. The core of the temples was built with granite blocks and veneered with large blocks of chlorite schist carved with sculpture. These veneered slabs are lost on some temples, exposing the granite core of the structure.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Hoysala built about one hundred temples in the Hassan and Mysore district of Karnataka. The Hoysala sculpture is the most detailed and meticulously executed art in India. The most ornate of these temples are located at Belur, Halebid and Somnathpur, with Halebid the most spectacular of all. Both Belur and Halebid temples have lost their superstructures. Rich citizens commissioned most of the temples. Hoysala kings commissioned only a few.

The late Hoysala temples are considered to be Vesara type, combining architectural features of north (*nagara*) and South Indian (Dravidian) temple towers. The temples at Belur and Halebid, without any tower, look squat. The

towers of Somnathpur Temple, with the diminishing sized tiers of South Indian temples, incline inside like the curvilinear tower of North Indian temples. The large temples with one or more shrines are enclosed in high walled compound with paved courts. The temples stand on high platforms with star-shaped sanctum bases and oblong *mandapas* and the plinths follow the shape of the sanctum and *mandapa*. Most Indian temples have square or rectangular plinths. The offsetting walls of the temple provide more space for decoration and the soft stone gave opportunity to the artists to express themselves with highly organized decorations. Some believe that to offset the creative movement of Khajuraho, the World Heritage site in central India, an orgy of profuse ornamentation and magnificence was started in the South. Indian temple sculpture presents the world of feminine beauty.

The ideal female remained radiantly beautiful till the tenth century, when her classical feminine stature started to change. The Hoysala made her short and thick, and buried her nude body in ornaments — although some carvings still show glimpses of feminine beauty. The Hoysala exhibited great religious fervor in their sculpture. Possibly they wanted to keep the temple for the gods, but to make it attractive they carved *apsaras* buried in ornaments — whether under the assumption that ornaments make females more beautiful, or to distract attention from that feminine appeal.



Fig 4.3. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Gateway. 1117-1142. Granite and brick.

Belur was the capital of Visnuvardhana and Ballala I. Visnuvardhana (1108-1142) was a Jain who converted to Vaishnavism. In Belur, he constructed Chennakesvara Temple to

commemorate his victory over the Cola at Talkad in 1117. Dedicated to Vishnu, it is carved with early Hoysala sculpture. The temple was not completed, even though construction intermittently continued for over a century. The superstructure of the temple is lost or was never built.

The temple is enclosed in a high compound wall with paved courtyard. The main entrance to the courtyard is on the north through a seven-storey-high gateway constructed in the fourteenth century (Fig 4.3). It is embellished with gods, erotic damsels and copulating pairs. There is a tall gateway on the east. The temple stands in the center of the courtyard with a long, slender emblem column and a freestanding statue of Man-Garuda, near the emblem column, facing the temple (Fig. 4.4).



Fig. 4.4. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. 1117-1142. Schist and granite.

A pillared colonnade and temple tank are located on one side of the temple. Three sub-shrines and an open pillared *mandapa* with a raised platform in the center are located on the sides and on the back of the main temple. The compact, squat temple is staggered to form a *mandapa* with entrances on the front, facing north. The molded basement of the cruciform-shaped *mandapa* ends on the back in a star-shaped sanctum at the short end of the cross. The molded basement of the *mandapa* plinth does not bear horizontal friezes. A pair of miniature *vimana* is attached to the plinth in front of the stairs. The entrances to the temple are flanked with a small side shrine and ornamented doorkeepers (Fig. 4.5). The lintel of the entrance door is carved with intricate detailed carvings of a *makara* arch, Vishnu, Garuda, musicians and dancers.



Fig. 4.5. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. 1117-1142. Schist and granite.

The base of the temple on the plinth follows the contour of the temple and is carved with bands of sculpture. The lowest horizontal band is carved with marching elephants followed by floral motifs, *apsaras*, deities and dancers (Fig. 4.6).



Fig. 4.6. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Carving on exterior walls. 1117-1142. Granite and Schist.

Originally the spaces between the periphery pillars of the *mandapa* were open. King Ballala II (1173-1220) installed pierced-stone screens bearing geometric designs in the open spaces, influenced by the Lad Khan temple at Aihole. The stone screens rest on a parapet wall 2m (6 ft.) high, decorated with sculpture. The exterior walls of the temple are not as extensively carved as the Halebid temple. The sculpted figures are not loaded with too many ornaments and some *apsaras* with few ornaments are carved in ideal feminine stature. By pulling her garment, a monkey has exposed the beautiful body of a damsel in a three-body-bend pose while she is trying to scare away the monkey with a branch held in her lifted hand (Fig. 4.7). A nude *apsara* is standing under a tree in another attractive three-body-bend pose. Another *apsara* is standing holding the branches of a tree with both hands and a folded leg resting on the trunk of the tree behind. Her well-proportioned full figure with a pronounced tilt of the hips is alluring (Fig. 4.8). Below her a seated dignitary is flanked by two *apsaras*.



Fig. 4.7. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Carving on exterior wall. *Apsara* scaring monkey disrobing her. 1117-1142. Schist.

Fig. 4.8. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Carvings on exterior wall. 1117-114. Schist.



In the space below the eaves of the roof, bracket figures are supported on peripheral pillars. The bracket figures were not part of the original plan and were added later. There were originally 40 bracket figures. Two are lost. Twenty-nine artists have signed their creations. The damsels standing on pedestals with full body and three-body bends show the influence of western Chalukya sculpture. Some are dancing (Fig. 4.9) and some are playing musical instruments (Fig. 4.10).



Fig. 4.9. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Bracket figure. Dancer. 1117-1142. Schist.

Fig. 4.10. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Bracket figure. *Apsara* playing drum. 1117-1142. Schist.





Fig. 4.11. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Bracket figure. Apsara beautifying herself.

1117-1142. Schist.

One female is preening, looking in a handheld mirror (Fig. 4.11) while in another carving a female is scaring off a monkey who is disrobing her. Other females stand by, simply showing their allure. Both Vishnu and Siva are carved on the exterior walls, which is rare in a Vishnu temple.

The most memorable feature is the highly decorated niches. In a sculpture band a highly decorated Vishnu is carved standing with his emblems in hands followed by Lakshmi standing with emblems of Vishnu in her hands and a *kali* dancing with a horrible face on the left. In one of the highly decorated niches Vishnu is sleeping under the canopy of the seven hoods of the diminutive serpent Ananta in the cosmic ocean. His dress and jewelry are carved in minute detail. One of his multiple hands is shown coming from the back. Brahma is sitting on a lotus flower growing from his navel. The goddess Devi, seen from the front, is sitting near his feet (Fig 4.12).



Fig. 4.12. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Vishnu resting on Ananta. 1117-1142. Schist.

As the boar, he is carrying his emblems and weapons in his hands and crushing the chest of the demon with his feet. Goddess earth is seated on the elbow of one of his folded arms (Fig. 4.13).



Fig. 4.13. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Vishnu as Bore. 1117-1142. Schist.

As six-armed Nrsimha, with fearsome lion face, holding emblems and weapons in his multiple arms, he is pulling out the entrails from the open stomach of the demon laid across

his lap (Fig. 4.14). At the bottom are praying devotees and a few fallen demon warriors. As Krishna, he is holding the tail of the serpent Kaliya in one hand and dancing on his head to punish him for poisoning the water of the river Yamuna. *Chamara* bearers flank the main characters. Most of the females in these carvings have breasts larger than their faces, possibly to emphasize their reproductive aspect.



Fig. 4.14. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Vishnu as Nrsimha. 1117-1142. Schist.

Siva is carved as Andhakasura dancing on the severed elephant head, holding a multitude of weapons in his hands (Fig. 4.15).



Fig. 4.15. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Siva as Andhakasura. 1117-1142. Schist

As the slayer of a demon, he stands nude, holding in his hands the severed head of his foe, a trident, a sword, and a small drum. His dancing and praying devotees are carved at the bottom corners (Fig. 4.16).

Fig. 4.16. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Siva holding demon head. 1117-1142. Schist.

Durga is carved with a multitude of weapons including the trident, standing with one leg on the back of a fallen buffalo demon (Fig. 4.17). A three-headed Brahma with beard is standing by with a water pot in his hand.



Fig. 4.17. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Durga killing Buffalo demon. 1117-1142. Schist.

One carving depicts Arjuna shooting an arrow at the eye of a fish while looking below the shadow of the fish in a pot full of water placed between his legs, to win the hand of Draupadi in an archery contest. Arjuna's limbs have been worn down by repeatedly being

struck with hard objects by visitors to listen to the musical notes the statuary supposedly produces (Fig. 4.18).

Fig. 4.18. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Arjuna shooting at fish eye. 1117-1142. Schist.



The interior of the *mandapa* is decorated with pillars with a square base, round above, with rings carved further up that appear to have been cut on a lathe. Each ornamentally decorated pillar ends in a square abacus that supports the ceiling beams. Four cylindrical pillars support the dome ceiling in the center of the *mandapa*. Bracket figures similar to the exterior brackets decorate the pillars of the central bay (Fig. 4.19).



Fig. 4.19. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Bracket figure in mandapa. 1117-1142. Schist.

A pillared antechamber on the long axis leads to the sanctum. The pillars of the chamber are carved with highly decorated Vishnu and beautiful *apsara*. Two doorkeepers guard the sanctum entrance and the lintel of the entrance bears carvings similar to the carving on main door entrance (Fig. 4.20). Vishnu is installed in the sanctum.



Fig. 4.20. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Carving on sanctum entrance. 1117-1142. Schist.

There is no circumambulatory passage in the sanctum. The outside platform serves this devotional need. The temple is

in daily use. A shrine standing beside the temple bears outer walls of screen similar to the main temple, without much sculpture.

There is another shrine behind, with sculpture on the exterior. Both shrines lack *mandapa*. There is an open *mandapa* on the back of the main shrine, built in Vijayanagara style but without a platform in the *mandapa*. Another subsidiary shrine to the left of the main temple has an open, pillared *mandapa*. The pillars are square at the base and round above, with round ridges, and end in square abacus. The shrine is topped by a tower with *sikara* and *kalasa* (Fig. 4.21). The exterior walls of the temple are carved with gods, goddess and *apsaras* in decorated niches. Most of the veneer has fallen off the sculpture panels, exposing the inner core of granite. Gods, goddesses and *apsaras* in various moods and poses are carved on the walls (Fig. 4.22).



Fig. 4.21. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Subsidiary shrine. 117-1142. Granite and Schist.



Fig. 4.22. Belur. Chennakesvara temple. Subsidiary shrine. Carvings on wall. 117-1142. Schist.

In the twelfth century the Hoysala moved their capital from Belur to Halebid. Ketamalla, an officer of Visnuvardhana's, initiated the construction of the most ornate Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid, around 1121. Construction continued during the reign of Nrsimha (1142-1173). The temple stands on a molded basement devoid of sculpture. The temple is a composite of two cruciform-shaped squat units identical to but smaller than the Belur temple. The inner arms of each

unit are joined to form a long *mandapa* through both units with entrances at the north and south ends. Old photos show squat towers on the temple, missing now. Both the *mandapas* and star-shaped sanctums share a common platform. Each unit has an additional entrance on the east facing the sanctum, although from the east these entrances are not visible as Nandi *mandapas* stand in front of each one (Fig. 4.23).

The temple is located in a compound with a gateway entrance on the north. The north entrance leading into the *mandapa* is used as the main entrance to the temple. The east entrances in front of each sanctum are mostly used as exits to the Nandi *mandapa* standing in front of the sanctums. The stairs leading to the north entrance are decorated with miniature shrines similar to the shrines at Belur (Fig. 4.24).



Fig. 4.23. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. 1121-1173. Granite and Schist.



Fig. 4.24. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. East entrance. 1121-1173. Granite and Schist.

Fig. 4.25. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Siva guarding the entrance door. 1121-1173. Schist.

The entrance above the lintel is not decorated as extensively as the Belur temple entrance. A highly decorated Siva (Fig. 4.25) and Vishnu, both holding their emblems, guard the entrance.

The space between the peripheral pillars on the façade of



the *mandapas* including the entrance porches is closed with stone screens (without sculpture). The base of the temple, 3m (9 ft.) high is carved above the platform with eight friezes of equal width over a length of 213m (650 ft.). The frieze depicts religious fervor, domestic pleasures and in particular music and dancing, victory parades, and mythological creatures. Some of the scenes are from Hindu epics and mythology. Above the decorated base on the back wall of the sanctums are 240 large images carved in a continuous band starting at the southern entrance and ending at the north entrance (Fig. 4.26).



Fig. 4.26 Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Division of temple wall. 1121-1173. Granite and Schist

An eave above separates the sculpture band from mostly decorative designs carved above. There is prominent eave above the second band. There are a few brackets under the eaves carved with large hipped *apsaras* standing idle or dancing with three body bends.

Every inch of the outer walls on the sanctum above the base is decorated with sculpture. The heavy females, loaded with ornaments, have flat, square faces. Most of the *apsaras*, carved in highly decorated niches, are also loaded with ornaments and have exaggeratedly large breasts (Fig. 4.27).

Fig. 4.27. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. *Apsaras*. 1121-1173. Schist.



Various deities are carved in niches, standing or seated, with their spouses in their laps. Eight-armed Siva is carved more intricately than at Belur. Nude, he stands with a sword and trident, his emblems, and a severed head in his hands (which an animal is trying to snatch). Musicians accompany him in the lower corner (Fig. 4.28).

In another carving he is dancing on a demon while holding trident and a staff carved with a human skull on top. A stallion with attendant is standing in the lower corner. In the depiction

of Ravana shaking Kailas, the mountain is carved like a crown on the heads of Ravana. The mountain is so crowded that it is hard to recognize most of the creatures. Siva and Parvati are seated on the mountain top, surrounded by attendants. Multi-headed and multi-armed Ravana in the cage below is holding a sword in one hand. The multitude of creatures crammed onto the mountain and the static Ravana detract from the dramatic effect of the carving (Fig. 4.29). His children Kattrikeya and Ganesha are carved riding the peacock and rat. Their jewelry is intricately carved. Vishnu as Nrsimha is pulling the entrails from the stomach of a demon.



Fig. 4.28. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Siva holding demon head. 1121-1173.

Fig. 4.29. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Siva keeping Ravana imprisoned. 1121-1173. Schist.



As Trivikrama, he is carved measuring the universe (Fig. 4.30). The lifted leg in the third step is resting in heaven and Brahma is diligently washing his foot. The wash falls as a torrential rain on a devotee seated below, on earth. At the other lower corner a *chamara* bearer is fanning Vishnu. As the boar, he is shown carrying the goddess Earth on his shoulder while trampling the fallen demon.



Fig. 4.30. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Trivikrama. 1121-1173. Schist

As Krishna he is holding mountain in his hand. He is surrounded on sides and top with cattle and men (Fig. 4.31).



Fig. 4.31. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Krishna lifting Mount Govardhana. 1121-1173. Schist.

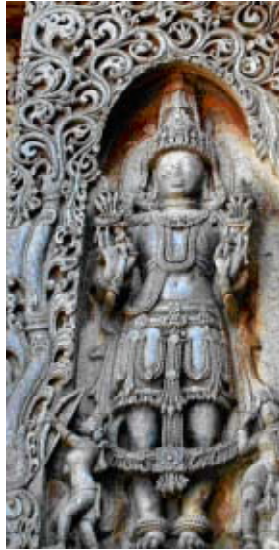


Fig. 4.32. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Surya.

1121-1173. Schist.

Other gods carved on the temple walls are Indra and his spouse riding an elephant, and three-headed Brahma. Surya is standing in regal pose while Usha and Pratyusha are driving away the darkness with bow and arrow (Fig. 4.32). A carving similar to one at Belur depicts Arjuna shooting an arrow at the fish eye.

Another carving depicts Garuda carrying away a *nagini* while a *naga* lies at his feet, wounded (Fig. 4.31).



Fig. 4.31. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Garuda carrying away Nagini. 1121-1173. Schist

The interior of the mandapas is supported on pillars decorated similarly to the pillars at Belur. The walls of the *mandapa* are decorated with miniature shrines. Four pillars in front of

each sanctum in the *mandapa* form central bays and support an ornate ceiling and a few bracket figures. The walls of the *mandapa* are carved with minor shrines. The entrance to each sanctum is not as ornate as the entrance of Belur temple. The temple is dedicated to Siva. There is no circumambulatory passage in the sanctum. The platform of the temple outside serves this devotional need.

There are two large Nandi pavilions facing the sanctums with small shrines in front and decorated pillars (Fig. 4.32). The pavilions share the temple platform and can be readily reached through the east exits of the temple. The Nandi pavilions are not identical. Possibly one was added or altered later. Large, finely polished bulls occupy the Nandi pavilion.



Fig. 4.32. Halebid. Hoysalesvara temple. Nandi Mandapa. 1121-1173. Schist.

King Nrsimha III (1254-1292) constructed the Kesava temple at Somnathpur in 1268. It is a comparatively small, well-preserved and fully built Hoysala temple. The squat temple is enclosed in a high walled compound (Fig. 4.33).



Fig. 4.33. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. 1268-1292. Granite and Schist

There is a tall emblem column in front of the temple. The entrance to the compound is through a gateway with a two-tiered flat roof supported on round pillars with square ab-



cus and two pilasters. There is a small statue of Vishnu on the flat rooftop. Pillars and high balcony seats flank the passage through the gateway. The rectangular paved courtyard of the temple is surrounded by a pillared cloister containing sixty-four sub-shrines, recalling the Caunsat Yogini temple at Khajuraho, with its sixty-four yogini shrines lined up in a rectangular courtyard. Here, most of the shrines have lost their deities.

The cross-shaped squat temple with oblong *mandapa* and star-shaped sanctums stands in the courtyard on a low plinth that follows the shape of the temple, with standing elephants and a few statues attached to offset points of the plinth (Fig. 4.34).



Fig. 4.34. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Temple seen through Gateway. 1268-1292. Granite and Schist.

The temple faces east. There are two small shrines, their towers gone, at the foot of the stair leading to the platform. The stairs that lead to the plain temple entrance are flanked by two statues of Vishnu. The platform base is plain, with horizontal divisions. The plinth is carved with six horizontal friezes carved with geese, *makaras*, marching armies, horses and elephants. These friezes on the south side of the temple are carved with episodes from the Ramayana. On the back of the temple stories of Krishna are carved and on the northern side the friezes are carved with scenes from the Mahabharata. The friezes on the right side of the temple entrance porch are carved with copulating couples on the top band. Like the temple at Halebid, the front of the *mandapa* is closed, with a pierced stone screen installed between the peripheral pillars. The walls of the sanctum above the basement are divided into three bands. The first band, with a highly decorated eave, is carved with 200 images of *apsaras*, gods and goddesses standing under intricate decorative sculpture (Fig. 4.35).

The second band under a shallow eave and the third band with a highly decorated eave are carved with decorative tow-

ers. Above the eave of the third band, the temple tower is constructed.

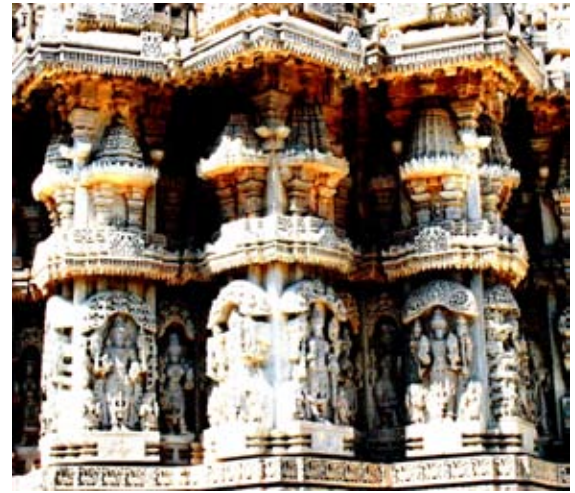


Fig. 4.35. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Carvings on wall. 1268-1292. Schist.

Fig. 4.36. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Lakshmi. 1268-292. Schist.



The band carved with deities is dominated by Lakshmi and Vishnu. All the deities stand in highly decorated and intricately carved niches, loaded with ornaments. Lakshmi is holding one arm in a protection gesture and carries

the emblems of Vishnu in her other hands (Fig. 4.36). She is carrying a cornucob in one hand. Most of the females on the temple wall are carved carrying cornucobs in their hands. She is also carved seated alone holding the emblems of Vishnu, and seated with Vishnu. A multi-armed deity with most of the arms broken off, possibly Lakshmi, is carved in a dancing pose accompanied by musicians (Fig. 4.37).

Some carvings of Vishnu show a single breast without other anatomical or decorative distinction between the right and left half (Fig. 4.38). In another carving Vishnu is standing, holding a large egg in his both hands (Fig. 4.39). In one carving he is perched regally on the coils of Sesha in royal ease under the hood of Sesha.



Fig. 4.37. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Lakshmi. 1268-1292. Schist.

Surya is carved holding his hands in a protection gesture while Usha and Pratyusha shoot arrows at the dark. Brahma is carved with three bearded faces. *Apsaras* are extensively carved, with bloated breasts, and deities hold corncocks in their hands. Vishnu, holding his emblems and accompanied by devotees, appears in many locations throughout the temple.



Fig. 4.38. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Vishnu. 1268-1292. Schist.

The interior of the small porch and rectangular *mandapa* has round pillars with ridges that look as though they were cut on a lathe. The squat pillars on the side of the *mandapa* stand on a low bench. The ornate *mandapa* ceiling, in sections, displays flower buds hanging from inverted little domes decorated extensively on the undersurface (Fig. 4. 40).



Fig. 4.39. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Vishnu holding egg. 1268-1292. Schist.



Fig. 4.40. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Carving on ceiling. 1268-1292. Schist.

Some sections are similarly carved with geometric designs.



Fig. 4.41. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Venugopala in sanctum. 1268-1292. Schist

Three star-shaped sanctuaries are located near the back wall of the temple, arranged in a triangle with antechambers in front. The façade of each shrine is carved with decorative sculpture above the lintel. Each shrine has a slightly smaller than human-size image

of a Vishnu incarnation standing on a pedestal carved with Garuda on the plinth. Venugopala playing a flute is standing under an arch carved with lovely maidens (Fig. 4.41).

Two other incarnations of Vishnu are Kesava and Janardana. The image of Kesava is missing from the central shrine. There is no circumambulatory passage in the shrines but the outside platform serves as an ambulatory passage.

The 16-pointed towers on each sanctum are 9m (28 ft.) high with stories decreasing in size. The stories incline inside like the *deul* of the northern temple tower. It is capped with a shallow bell-like structure with a finial resembling a water pot. The tower has a *sukanasa*-like extension over the antechamber below (Fig. 4.42).



Fig. 4.42. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Tower. 1268-1292. Granite and Schist.



Fig. 4.43. Somnathpur. Kesava temple. Goddess in a sub-shrine. 1268-1292. Schist.

The sub-shrines in the colonnade have undecorated façades. Three sub-shrines still have images of deities (Fig. 4.43). The deity appears to have been carved out of granite.



## 19. THE SUN TEMPLE AT KONARAK (1238–1264)

Konarak is a sleepy little village on the dry Chandrabhaga river delta close to the shores of the Bay of Bengal. It is 66 km (40 miles) from Bhubanesvara, the capital of Orissa, in East India. Konarak is connected to Bhubanesvara by road and rail, and through Bhubanesvara to all the major cities of India. Government-run lodging and boarding facilities are available at Konarak but decent private boarding and lodging facilities are nonexistent. UNESCO declared the sun temple at Konarak a World Heritage Monument in 1984.

The Ganga, a distinguished dynasty of ancient India, ruled Kalinga (modern Orissa) in the early part of second millennium. Various branches of this family controlled different parts of Orissa. In the early eleventh century Anantavarman Chodaganga (1078-1150) of the Ganga dynasty defeated Somavamsi and extended the influence of the Ganga over a large part of Orissa. A branch of this family became worshippers of Vishnu; they constructed the Jagannatha temple at Puri and the Ananta-Vasudeva temple at Bhubanesvara.

The Ganga had a long tradition of building temples to Vishnu. In the twelfth-thirteenth century they also dedicated some temples to Harihara, a combination of Siva and Vishnu. King Nrsimhadeva (1238-1264) of the Ganga dynasty built the magnificent temple dedicated to the sun god Surya at Konarak.

The Hindus began constructing stone temples in Orissa from the seventh century onward; this wave of temple building terminated in the thirteenth century with the construction of this, the grandest of all Hindu temples

in India. The tower of Konarak Temple was probably 68m (207 ft.) high, making it the tallest tower in India.

The occasion for the of this temple, the selection of the site at Konarak and the reason it was dedicated to Surya are not known for certain. It is possible that the site was selected because of the fame of the Surya Maya Devi temple situated nearby, which was constructed during the Somavamsi period (931-1110). The Surya Maya Devi temple was originally dedicated to Surya.

Surya, son of the sage Dyaus, was one of the gods of the first triad of Hindu gods worshiped in India. The other two gods were Saitri and Vivasvat. These two gods actually represented different aspects of the sun. Saitri personified the sun in its morning and evening glory. He commanded the night to come on. Vivasvat as the rising sun was a mighty deity. These gods provided both warmth for growth and destruction through their burning rays. Surya gradually absorbed the characteristics of the other two sun gods, Saitri and Vivasvat, and became a mighty god.

Gods of Iranian tradition, Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman, formed the next triad. Soon thereafter, gods of Indian tradition, children of Aditi and Kasyapa (collectively called the Aditias), became prominent. The parentage of Surya was changed and he came to be known as the son of Aditi and the sage Kasyapa. The next triad of gods included Surya with Agni and Vayu. Surya retained his position in the subsequent two triads, thus becoming the god who was worshiped longest in Vedic era. By the advent of the Brahmin age, Vishnu and Siva had gained much stature. To retain the triad, Brahma was included, replacing Surya.

The sun is perhaps the most visible and the most important natural force that affects the human physical world. Surya retained popularity for a very long time.

There are a few temples in India originally dedicated to Surya.

In the Brahmin age he is no longer a beautiful god with golden hair but has turned dark red, with three eyes and four arms. He rides a golden chariot driven by the legless charioteer Arun, brother of Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu. Some times Vivasvat, a god of the first triad, is said to drive his chariot. The eternally young dawn, Usha, clothed in crimson robes and veiled with gold, and Pratyusha ride with Surya in the chariot, with bows and arrows to drive away the darkness.

Surya is considered a benefactor of man and progenitor of the human race. Possibly for this reason temples dedicated to Surya are carved with abundant erotic sculpture. According to one myth he was the original source of *amrita*, which he passed to the Moon, and Soma, to distribute it amongst gods, men, animals and plants. He also nourishes the moon.

The majestic sun temple, unlike other Hindu temples, was conceived as a gigantic chariot drawn on twelve wheels by seven magnificent horses within the temple building canons of Orissa. The twelve wheels carved on each side of the temple plinth represent the twelve months and the seven horses carved in front of the *jagamohan* represent the seven days of the week.

The concept of the temple as a chariot was borrowed from South India where wooden chariots are used to pull the deity along in street processions.

The Cola Nirrttra Sabah temple in Chidambaram, constructed in 1178-1216, also has wheels carved on the plinth. One of the fathers-in-law of Nrsimhadeva I, a Pandya dynasty king of South India, sent artists to help in the construction of this temple, but their services were utilized only on minor jobs.

Construction was initiated by the eighteen-year-old prince Nrsimhadeva I, named above, upon his return from a successful campaign as commander of his father's army. Nrsimhadeva was born to a Cola princess from South India who was married into the Ganga dynasty. After six years of planning and twelve years of construction, from 1238, the temple was completed. The main deity was installed in the sanctum in 1258. Construction was reportedly financed using the wealth collected during the campaign, funds from the state treasury and other contributions amounting to a thousand times the weight of the king in gold.

The temple was constructed by laying huge stones blocks without mortar. Iron dowels were inserted between the blocks for stability. The joints were disguised by surface decoration. The principal statues and door frames of

the temple are made of chlorite; khondalite was used for the body of the temple, and laterite for the core of the platform, staircases and most of the compound wall. The khondalite, which was transported over a distance of 170 km (106 miles), contains crystals of garnet, quartz and marble that may have sparkled when freshly quarried, which would have made for a very dramatic temple body. However, the selection of khondalite for construction of the temple body was unfortunate as weathering has caused the surface to flake and crumble. As the semi-precious mineral inclusions separate from the disintegrating stone, they leave pits on the surface and facilitate further breakage.

Abul Fazl (1556-1605), the court chronicler of Emperor Akbar, visited here a couple of centuries after construction and described the grandeur of the temple standing in a group of twenty-eight shrines in the following glorious terms: "Even those whose judgment is critical and who are difficult to please stand astonished at its sight."

The huge tower eventually collapsed, possibly because its weight could not be supported on this sandy soil and cyclones and lightning are frequent visitors in the region. A small collapsed building in the compound has a tilted foundation on one side, possibly indicating a sinking of the soil. In 1806 the Marine Board recommended the British administration to repair the partially collapsed tower which served as a navigational landmark in the shallow coastal water. The recommendations were neglected. In 1825 the tower was reported at 41m (125 ft.) high. By 1848, only 3m (10 ft.) remained, and even that finally collapsed in a strong gale.

The temple was almost abandoned in the sixteenth century and the deity was transferred to Puri before the Muslims invaded the region. It is reported that, failing to destroy the temple, Muslim sultans carried away the copper *kalasa*, lotus finial, and gold and precious stones stored in the temple. Meanwhile, the advancing sands of the delta engulfed the compound wall, dance hall, temple platform and other structures in the compound. The local people, particularly the king of the Khurda, an adjoining kingdom, played a major role in dismantling the temple to take the stones. Some of the sculpture was removed and installed in Jagannatha temple, where it has remained.

The entire temple would have gone the way of the Amaravati Stupa but the British Government intervened at the last minute to stop the looting of stones in 1838. The king of the Khurda had dislodged the monolithic *Navagraha*, a chlorite slab installed above the eastern door entrance, and was making preparations to carry it away, but was prevented from doing so. It was carved with deities representing nine planets by some of the best artists of the time. A number of

attempts were made to transfer the 26-ton slab to the museum at Calcutta, but due to the weight it remained in the compound. Later the back of the slab was sliced off to make it lighter, and the carving was finally transferred to Calcutta Museum in 1984.

Two other *navagraha* were carved from large individual chlorite stones rather than from a single slab. A complete set was removed and placed at Puri Temple and another set is in the British Museum.



Fig. 4.45. Konarak. Sun Temple. Night illumination. 1238-1264. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite.

The extant units of the temple include a damaged dance hall, damaged *jagamohan* and sanctum (Fig. 4.45). An old palm leaf drawing of the temple shows a curvilinear tower proportional to the height of huge extant *jagamohan*. The height of the tower estimated from this drawing is 68m (207 ft), making it the tallest tower constructed in India. In the eighteenth century the chlorite emblem pillar of the temple was removed by the Maratha and installed in front of the Jagannatha temple at Puri.

The temple is located inside a compound wall 261.2m (810 ft) long and 164.6m (510 ft.) wide. An approach road to the temple was constructed by cutting through the accumulated sand outside compound wall (Fig. 4.46).



Fig. 4.46. Konarak. Sun Temple. Jagamohan seen from approach road. 1238-1264. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite.

The unimpressive small front entrance gate constructed of khondalite looks at first like a break in the compound wall,

as the sand accumulated outside the wall is not cleared; the temples oriented to the east appear to be sitting in the center of a large quadrangular pit caused by the removal of sand and debris from inside the compound. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the clearance of sand and debris from the front and sides of the *jagamohan* exposed two large monolithic statues of ferocious mythological lions on the back of an elephant; elephants, horses and lions littered the compound. The lions-on-elephant statues were placed on the top of the dance hall, which was still buried in the sand.

In 1901 a well-planned scheme for preservation of the temple was launched. In 1909 Maya Devi temple was discovered and exposed. Complete clearance of sand from within the compound brought to light the roofless dance hall. The two statues of the mythological lions sitting on the elephant were attached to the front of the entrance walls of the dance hall, facing the front entrance gate instead of in their original location in front of the *jagamohan*. In addition a brick Vishnu temple, kitchen block with attached wells, southern gateway and other subsidiary structures were excavated. The statues of the elephants and horses were installed on platforms constructed in front of the north and south entrance of the *jagamohan* and the mythological lions, possibly dislodged from the tower, were left in the courtyard.

The cleaning and maintenance work was taken over by Public Works Department and later by the Archaeological Survey of India. The approach road leading to east gateway was paved. An accumulation of sand still stands all around the outside up to the height of the compound wall. Trees and shrubs have been planted outside the compound to stop the sand drifts. The missing portions of the compound wall have been restored to their original height. The small, dilapidated shrines and other structures have been restored. The entrance gate on the west, constructed of khondalite, is also restored but is kept closed.



Fig. 4.47. Konarak. Sun Temple. Dance hall. Side view. 1238-1264. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite.

The dance hall, a comparatively small roofless structure some distance in front of the *jagamohan*, stands on a 3.6m (11 ft.) high platform (Fig. 4.47). The dance hall has a base 23.8m (74 ft.) square and a 15.8m (49 ft.) square hall on the top, fac-

ing east. The roof is gone and there is some controversy over what form it had. A large round stone lying in the adjacent yard depicts dancers in a circle around a teacher to pay homage; this is supposed to have been the capstone of the dance hall. But the height and positioning of the pillars in the hall indicate that the hall had a sloping roof.

The statues of ferocious mythological lions on the elephant's back stand facing the entrance gateway (Fig. 4.48). The platform plinth is carved in three bands with graceful dancers and musicians engaged in joyful dancing.



Fig. 4.48. Konarak. Sun Temple. Dance hall entrance. Lions on Elephants. 1238-1264. Khondalite.



Fig. 4.49. Konarak. Sun Temple. Dancers on plinth of Dance hall. 1238-1264. Khondalite

Teachers and deities in niches, females with children or carrying infants on their hips, are spectators (Fig. 4.49). The drum is the most commonly used musical instrument. All the dancing styles prevalent in India are depicted here.

The sculpture progressively becomes less attractive and more monotonous; perhaps the carvings on the back were executed by apprentices. Stairways about 4.2m (13 ft.) wide lead to the top of the platform from the front and sides. The top has a small square hall with a short base surrounded by a passage. Aligned with the stairs leading to the top, a short

flight of steps leads to the hall entrances framed by two pillars.

Walls with arch designs stand between the entrance pillars and the pillars in the corners of hall. Four massive 2.1m (6.5 ft) square pillars divide the hall into nine square compartments, possibly used for the temporary construction of stages for dance. The four massive pillars in the center are taller than the exterior pillars. The hall is a cross between a pillared hall and a walled structure standing on a plinth. The thick square pillars of the center resemble the piers of Bhogamandapa in Lingaraja Temple at Bhubanesvara and are carved with lovely maidens in various poses — standing idle, holding a flute, adjusting a scarf, holding a tree branch or wringing water from wet hair, with delightful decorative motifs surrounding them (Fig. 4.50).



Fig. 4.50. Konarak. Sun Temple. Dancers on plinth of Dance hall. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

The dance hall is not attached to the *jagamohan*. It has a fan-shaped stair facing the partially damaged *jagamohan* (Fig. 4.51).



Fig. 4.51. Konarak. Sun Temple. Dance hall. Rear view. 238-1264. Lat-erite, Khondalite, Chlorite.

The *jagamohan* and remains of the curvilinear tower stand on a 4m (12 ft.) high platform (Fig. 4.52). The stair on the east entrance to the *jagamohan* was attached to the chariot with seven graceful, galloping horses, three on one



side and four on the other, representing the seven days of the week (Fig. 4.53). Most of these horses are missing. A few badly damaged statues of standing horses remain; they exhibit vigor and energy, and are decorated with numerous ornaments on the neck and back.



Fig. 4.52. Konarak. Sun Temple. Jagamohan and collapsed rekha deul. 1238-1264. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite.

On both sides of the jagamohan and sanctum platform plinth and on the east entrance stairway ramp, 2.9m (9 ft.) high ornamented wheels are carved. There are twelve wheels on each side representing the twelve months of a year. Each highly ornamented wheel consists of hub, pin, eight broad spikes and eight thin ones radiating from the hub (Fig. 4.54). The thin spikes are carved with alternate bands of beads and discs. The centers of the broad spikes are shaped like diamonds. In the diamond a medallion contains carvings of deities, amorous maidens in various poses, copulating couples, animals, and men engaged in various activities. The rest of the broad spike is carved with scrollwork, floral motifs, beaded strings and chaitya windows. The surface around the wheel as well as the stone exposed between the spikes is carved with delicate and minute decorative carvings.



Fig. 4.53. Konarak. Sun Temple. Galloping horses pulling Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

The jagamohan standing on the plinth is 28.7m (89 ft.) square outside and 18.3m (56.7 ft.) square inside, with a large platform on the plinth. The height from ground level up to

the top of the *amalaka* (without *kalasa*) is 39m (121 ft.). Stairways on the east, north and south lead to the three entrances of the jagamohan.

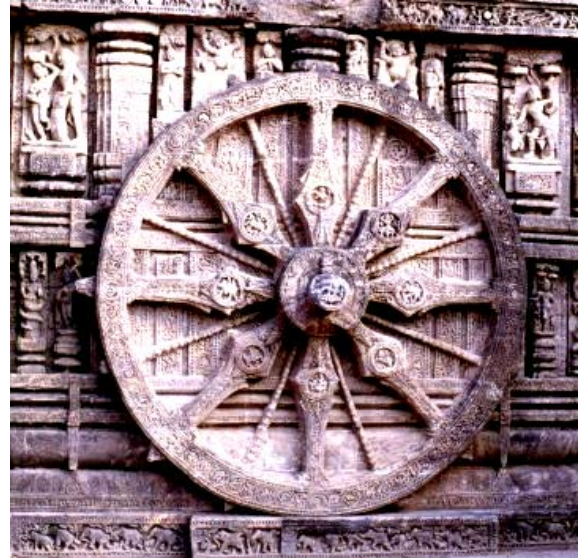


Fig. 4.54. Konarak. Sun Temple. Jagamohan plinth. Wheel. 238-1264. Khondalite.

The jagamohan is the largest and most impressive surviving structure of the temple, with walls half as high as their width. The lower ceiling of the 18.3m (56.7 ft.) square chamber collapsed in 1848. To save the jagamohan, all the entrances were walled up from inside, leaving the doorframes out; the interior was filled with sand and the roof was made watertight. There may not have been any sculpture on the interior walls of the jagamohan, as most Orissa temples do not have decorated jagamohan interiors.

The chlorite doorframes of the boarded-up east entrance door is delicately carved on the sides with vertical bands of beautiful designs, copulating couples, gods in chaitya windows and entwined *naga*. Charming damsels in various poses are carved at the end of the side bands. The lintel is carved with small figures in bands. The huge chlorite slab carved with nine planets would have been lifted into place above the door using pulleys operated by elephants. As mentioned, it was dislodged and is in the Calcutta museum now.

The lowest band of the platform plinth is carved with small elephants and a scene of an elephant being captured. The surface above is adorned with delicate and minute decorative carvings on which other figures are carved. In the two broad bands above, *nagaraja* and *nagins* with beautiful human upper bodies under hoods entwine the pilasters, with tails flanked by exquisite *apsaras* carved in various poses and moods (Fig. 4.55).



Fig. 4.55. Konarak. Sun Temple. Carvings on plinth of Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

An entwined *naga* with hands on the breast of a *nagini* is carved, with scales. Above the band of pilasters entwined with serpents, damsels with three body bends in various poses and attitudes display their endowments, interspersed with *mithuna* couples. An elderly couple is carved standing under a tree and below a dignitary is riding an elephant. Next, a male standing with erect phallus is being caressed by two lovely females (Fig. 4.56).



Fig. 4.56. Konarak. Sun Temple. Carvings on plinth of Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

The next carving depicts two females caressing a standing man while a third female crouching between the two females may be sucking his phallus. The man, aroused, has raised his hands.

Unique among the erotic depictions is a female having her *yoni* licked by a dog standing between her wide-open legs (Fig. 4.57).

A farewell scene depicts a female prostrated before an old couple while a child has grabbed leg of the old man. To the right of this carving a female is standing over a fire, her legs widespread, smoking her genitalia — possibly with

neem leaves (*Azadirachta indica*). Neem leaves were believed to have medicinal properties (Fig. 4.58).

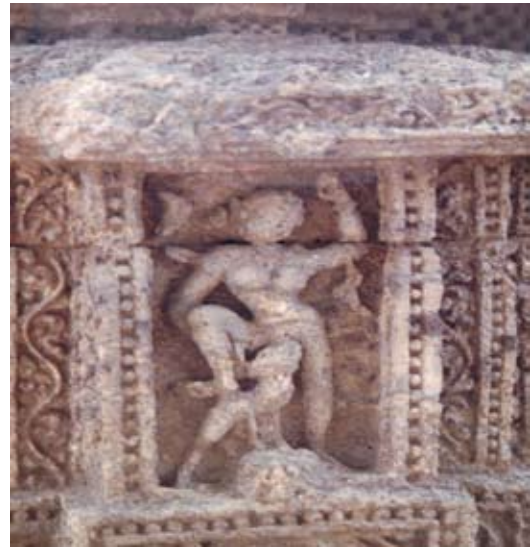


Fig. 4.57. Konarak. Sun Temple. Carvings on plinth of Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.



Fig.

4.58. Konarak Sun Temple. Carvings on plinth of Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

Another scene depicts an embracing couple with expressions of joy and contentment. There is a row of beautiful, dreamy-looking maidens. One female is standing holding the large phallus of a male (Fig. 4.59). Such depictions are not rare.

There are court scenes showing princes and nobles seated on thrones or on the floor in pillared pavilions, giving an audience to visitors. In one such carving, a seated female is caressing a child, possibly before setting out on a journey. Horses and elephants with attendants are waiting outside the pavilion (Fig. 4.60).



Fig. 4.59. Konarak Sun Temple. Carvings on Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.



Fig. 4.60. Konarak Sun Temple. Carvings on Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

There are a few larger than life carvings of erotic couples; their very size contributes to the impression of profuse, uninhibited eroticism on the temple walls (Fig. 4.61).



Fig. 4.61. Konarak Sun Temple. Carvings on Jagamohan. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

High on the *mandapa* pilaster one such larger than life three-dimensional couple is carved. The male is copulating with a female sitting on the open palms of his hands. The base of the penetrating phallus and the testicles of the male are visible from below. The

female, seen from behind, sitting on the palms of the man, is elegantly formed. A similar larger than life couple stands in an embrace while another female squats below them, between their legs, sucking the man's phallus. His face expresses joy, satisfaction, and contentment. It is said that in the search for truth, *Kama* (physical desire) can be transformed into *prema* (self-surrender) — but this cannot be achieved by denial, only through transformation and sublimation. The embracing couple is supposed to represent that union, transformation and sublimation. There are no carvings of group orgies as in Khajuraho.

Thomas Donaldson states that by the eleventh century the guru was worshipped as a deity. During the height of Tantrism it was believed that there was no god higher than the guru. This opened the door for elevating the king to the status of a god by association with the guru. The guru and king started changing the iconographic program of the temple. The king was presented as the new god of love and his sexual prowess and exploits were sketched, including the erotic exploits of queens, princesses and nobles. The pursuit of love became important in the daily life of the upper classes.

According to Shilpa Prakasha, it is said that in accordance with this new view, the artist was permitted to carve the pleasure-giving images of the king and others in a life-like manner. The women engaged in various sexual acts are said to represent skilled women presented to the king for the magical-medical purpose of providing novel stimulation, in the belief that the man absorbs virtue and youth from the woman, giving him a long life. Decorative motifs include *Vidalia*, roaring lions standing on elephants, or dwarfs and other mythological animals.

The roof of the *mandapa* is made of horizontal layers arranged in three groups separated by terraces with a vertical wall behind (Fig. 4.62).



Fig. 4.62. Konarak Sun Temple. Jagamohan roof. 1238-1264. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite.

The two lower groups have six horizontal layers diminishing in size. The outer vertical front face of each horizontal layer is carved with processions of animals and armies marching with decorated elephants. The third group has only five layers without any decorations. The decorated circular crowning element, the *amalaka* is made up of three ribbed units separated by squatting figures. The uppermost terrace has large statues of lions seated on their hind legs, looking outwards. The two terraces below have sixteen exquisite and graceful female musicians and dancers 2.5m (7.6 ft) high in each terrace.

These monumental, freestanding, celestial nymphs are the glories of Konarak. These nymphs have elegant and graceful faces with sweet smiles, narrow noses, large eyes, firm, well-fleshed bodies, round breasts, firm arms and thighs and plump hips. Their ornaments are carved in detail. These exquisite nymphs are playing drums (Fig. 4.63), while another nymph is playing a cymbal (Fig. 4.64).



Fig. 4.63.

Konarak. Sun Temple. Musician on Jagamohan roof. 1238-1264. Khondalite.



4.64. Konarak. Sun Temple. Musician on Jagamohan roof. 1238-1264. Khondalite.



Fig. 4.65. Konarak. Sun Temple. Musicians & Siva on Jagamohan roof. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

One beautiful statue of a celestial nymph has fallen from the roof; it is kept in the compound. The nymph is still dignified, despite her broken limbs; she appears to be alive and dreaming (Fig. 4.66).



Fig. 4.66. Konarak. Sun Temple. Statue of Musician fallen from Jagamohan roof. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

The 68m (207 ft.) high tower that collapsed completely in 1848 may have been similar to the towers on the other temples in Orissa (Fig. 4.67). The collapsed tower obliterated the three side shrines of the sanctum. There are a few carvings on the base of the sanctum, depicting damsels standing under trees.

The shrines on the cruciform-shaped remains of the sanctum on the north, south, and west are of recent origin. Each one has a figure of Surya carved in chlorite. Possibly they represent the secondary aspect of the two minor sun gods and Surya himself. The southern niche shrine has an image of Surya with a stiff smile, standing almost detached from the mother slab, surrounded by deities and praying couples

(Fig. 4.68). The jewelry and dress of Surya have been carved in delicate detail.



Fig. 4.67. Konarak. Sun Temple. Collapsed deul. 1238-1264. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite.



Fig. 4.68. Konarak. Sun Temple. Surya in exterior shrine. 1238-1264. Chlorite.

The northern niche shrine has another image of Surya with a stiff smile, this time riding a horse (Fig. 4.69).



Fig. 4.69. Konarak. Sun Temple. Surya in exterior shrine. 1238-1264. Chlorite.

The image of Surya in the western niche is damaged. His head is missing and his legs are broken. He appears to be holding a disc in a raised hand. In these carvings, warrior-like attendants stand beside Surya in place of the traditional Usha and Pratyusha holding their bows and arrows.

The 10m (31 ft.) square sanctum was damaged when the tower collapsed. From the front of the western Surya shrine, steps of recent origin lead through an opening in the north-west corner of the sanctum. The approach from inside the sanctum to the *jagamohan* is blocked. The floor of the sanctum is paved with chlorite slabs and the walls are not decorated.

A lavishly carved platform 3.3m (10 ft.) by 2.2m (6.8 ft.) stands in the sanctum, with elephants at the base and with scenes of a kneeling Nrsimha, a queen and rows of female attendants and the rest of the retinue of the king. There is no statue of any god on the platform.

There is a large broken statue of a ferocious lion lying in the compound. Two realistically carved 2.1m (6.5 ft.) high statues of decorated elephants were discovered under the debris and are now installed on a platform of recent origin in front of the north entrance of the *jagamohan* (Fig. 4.70).



Fig. 4.70. Konarak. Sun Temple. Elephants. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

One elephant has wrapped his trunk around a soldier carrying a shield and a small curved sword. The other elephant is standing over the body of a soldier with a beard and mustache.



Fig. 4.71. Konarak. Sun Temple. Stallions on platform. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

On a similar platform in front of the south entrance to the *jagamohan* the two profusely decorated war stallions discovered under the debris have been installed. The horses, equipped with bridle and reins, exhibit unbound strength and vitality. They are crushing with their hoofs the bodies of soldiers fallen on the ground holding shields and curved swords in their hands (Fig. 4.71). One warrior, now headless, is standing near a horse, his body tense and arched, his sword drawn and held stiffly in his arm stretched behind. The taut

body of the warrior appears ready to spring into action at the slightest provocation (Fig. 4.72).



Fig. 4.72. Konarak. Sun Temple. Warrior beside stallion. 1238-1264. Khondalite.

Surya Maya Devi Temple was possibly constructed during the reign of Somavamsi (931-1110). It was originally dedicated to Surya; Maya

Devi may not be the original name of the temple. Maya Devi is popularly believed to be the wife of Surya. When the sun temple was constructed the deity from this temple was transferred to the sanctum of the sun temple and the empty temple was consecrated to the Sakti of Surya. The temple was buried within a few centuries of construction by the drifting sands. It was rediscovered and restored in 1909. It had been enclosed in a compound wall which was dismantled when the sun temple was built, leaving only a part of the wall on the south. The roof of the temple is missing (Fig. 4.73).



Fig. 4.73. Konarak. Maya Devi Temple. Ca. 11-12<sup>th</sup>. Century. Laterite, Khondalite, Chlorite

The temple consists of rectangular platform, which was extended in front when Sun temple was constructed. The sides of the platform are decorated with niches bearing figures. The square jagamohan stands of a platform.

The temple entrance and exterior walls are decorated with pilasters containing Chaitya windows with human heads and gods. Full-bodied charming damsels with firm bulging breasts, hips, thighs and three-bend bodies decorate

the walls. The most characteristic feature of the sculpture on this temple is the sweet smile on the expressive, beautiful faces of the females. Most of them are carved standing under a tree engaged in activities like arranging garments on the lower part of their bodies, holding mirror in their hand and applying vermilion to their heads (Fig. 4.74).



Fig. 4.74. Konarak. Maya Devi Temple. Carvings on exterior wall. Ca. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Khondalite.

A lovely *apsara* holding an artifact in her hand stands in a decorated niche with a charming smile (Fig. 4.75).



Fig. 4.75. Konarak. Maya Devi Temple. Damsel on exterior wall. Ca. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Khondalite.

Statues of Surya exposed when the sand was cleared have been installed in few niches rebuilt on the walls. The statues are not much different in composition from those carved on the rebuilt niches on sanctum of the Surya temple. In one, a pot-bellied Agni carrying fire in one hand and accompanied by flying deities in the upper corners is riding a short and stocky goat (Fig. 4.75).

Fig. 4.75. Konarak. Maya Devi Temple. Agni on exterior wall. Ca. 11-12<sup>th</sup>. Century. Khondalite.



Amongst other gods a six-armed Nataraja with erect phallus is carved inside a chaitya window.

The interior of the *jagamohan*, unlike most *jagamohans* in Orissa, is decorated with full-bodied *apsaras*. One, with large eyes and a broad, sweet smile on her face, wearing large earrings and ornaments on her neck, is standing holding a musical instrument (Fig. 4.77).



Fig. 4.77. Konarak. Maya Devi Temple. Damsel on interior wall. Ca. 11-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Khondalite.

A broken figure of a bejewelled female with large eyes and a sweet smile has a very expressive face (Fig. 4.78).



Fig. 4.78. Konarak. Maya Devi Temple. Damsel on interior wall. Ca. 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century. Khondalite.

The sanctum has a plain khondalite moonstone in front. The door frame of the sanctum is made of chlorite and khondalite. The pedestal inside the sanctum is empty.

A Vaishnava temple buried in the sand behind Maya Devi Temple was restored in 1956. Built of large burnt bricks, it was plastered with a mixture of lime and sand. The plaster is lost. The roof of the temple is missing. The temple has a

square *jagamohan* and sanctum. The sanctum is undecorated except for Ganga and Jamuna on the base of the khondalite door frame. The sanctum has a long, empty brick pedestal near the back wall. Statues of Vishnu and Balarama found buried near the temple were possibly the deities of the temple.

To the south of the dance hall is the foundation of a kitchen with an oblong central courtyard surrounded by corridors lined with broken laterite and khondalite pillars (Fig. 4.79).



Fig. 4.79. Konarak. Foundation of collapsed building in Sun Temple compound. 1238-1264. Laterite.

The kitchen may have been used for preparing food for the priests. There are two wells and cisterns used for water storage. The ruins of a six-pillared *mandapa* are located near the kitchen. The statue of a musician fallen from the temple roof is stored on the platform of the *mandapa*. There are remains of many other ruined structures in the compound.





## 20. THE MONUMENTS AT VIJAYANAGARA (1336–1565)

The ruins of the Vijayanagara Kingdom are located near the village of Hampi about 13 km (8 miles) from Hospet in Karnataka, South India. Hospet can be reached by railway from Bangalore in nine hours and from Hubli by bus or train in four hours. Tolerable boarding and lodging facilities are available at Hospet. Local transportations facilities are available from Hospet to the Vijayanagara ruins. UNESCO declared the group of monuments at Hampi World Heritage Monuments in 1986.

The first capital and the seat of Harihara I (1336–1356), one of the brothers who founded the Vijayanagara kingdom, was Anegondi, on the north bank of the Tungabhadra River. When conflicts broke out with the Muslim kingdoms to the north, during the reign of Harihara I's successor, Bukka I (1356–1377), the capital was shifted to Hampi on the south bank of the river. It was renamed Vijayanagara, "City of Victory," and grew into a fortified town.

But even before the Vijayanagara kingdom was founded, under various other dynasties, the village of Hampi and the Virupaksha temple attracted religious pilgrims. Pampa, the local seventh-century deity, daughter of Brahma, performed penance for a long time on the banks of the Tungabhadra near Hampi to win the favor of Virupaksha, a form of Siva. Siva eventually bestowed his grace and married her, in the presence of the other gods, and she was absorbed into Brahmanism. Every year at Hampi the devotees of Siva celebrate the betrothal and marriage of Siva and Pampa at Virupaksha Temple. Many gods and heroes of the Ramayana epic are associated with the place. The mythical monkey chiefs Vali and Sugriva

of the Ramayana epic lived close by, at Anegondi, on the northern bank of the Tungabhadra. When Vali drove out Sugriva, he took refuge on the steep Matanga Hill nearby, along with Hanuman. Anjanagri Hill, north of the river, is considered the birthplace of Hanuman. Rama, after killing Vali and restoring the kingdom to Sugriva, stayed on nearby Malyavanta Hill with Lakshmana, waiting for Hanuman to bring news of Sita. There could hardly have been any more important site in the region; Hindus would have sacrificed their lives to protect it.

The capital was eminently suitable for defense. Vijayanagara is a city of granite and they made it a granite fortress. The Tungabhadra River on the north is a formidable natural barrier. There are numerous hillocks of massive fractured boulders stacked one above the other forming natural barriers and rocky granite outcrops alternating with flat lands in between (Fig. 4.85).



Fig. 4.85. Environs of Vijayanagara.

Many concentric massive stone walls, from three to as many as seven of them, according to different sources, some more than 7m (22 ft.) high and as wide as a two-lane highway, were constructed with elaborate fortifications and numerous gateways in Hindu and Islamic designs to defend the city (Fig. 4.86). Most of the gateways were constructed to permit passage of elephants, who were valued most for their military capabilities. Some stone

walls were joined with natural outcrops and some were designed to run over them. The outer line of its fortifications and the urban area extended from Anegondi in the north to Hospet in the south.



Fig. 4.86. Vijayanagara. Gateway on peripheral defense stone wall. Ca. 1356-1377. Granite.

Malik Kafur, the army Commander of Alauddin Khalji, Sultan of Delhi, led the Muslim incursion into South India in 1278. His onslaught subjugated the Kingdoms of Yadva of Devagiri, Kakatiya of Warangal, Hoysala of Halebid and Pandya of Madurai in Kanada, the Tamil- and Telugu-speaking regions of South India.

In 1323, he established himself as head of the Malabar province of the Delhi Empire, with Madurai as his capital. In 1327 he invaded the fortified citadel of Kampila, a feudal ruler under Yadva, in the sparsely populated Tamil- and Telugu-speaking region, 21 km (12 miles) from Hampi, for having harbored his rival Bahauddin Gharshap. Kampila died in the battle. Two of the five Sangama brothers, Harihara and Bukka Raya, officers of Kampila's, were taken to Delhi in 1329 as prisoners. They were converted to Islam. In 1321 the Tughluqs replaced the Khalji dynasty in Delhi. In 1334, Mohamed Tughluq recalled the army that had been stationed in South India to assist in the wars in the North. Kakatiya of Warangal rebelled in 1329 and Pandya of Madurai rebelled in 1334; Tughluq sent the two Sangama brothers to put down the rebellion.

They put down the rebellions, indeed, but they also gave up Islam, asserted their independence and founded the Vijayanagara kingdom in 1336. For the time being, their status remained as chiefs. The two brothers gradually expanded the Sangama Kingdom with the guidance of a spiritual mentor in the person of the sage Vidyanaya. The kingdom became a bulwark against Muslim domination and the destruction of temples in South India. It held back the Muslim forces for two hundred years, revived Hinduism, and rejuvenated Hindu art and culture.

The brothers ruled Kanada, the Tamil- and Telugu-speaking areas of South India, from 1334 to 1377. Within a

few decades the kingdom extended from sea to sea across the Deccan peninsula. King Devaraya II (1423-1446) attained the apex in military strength and virtual supremacy in South India. His successor Mallikarjuna (1447-1465) allowed his subordinate to assume power, under unavoidable circumstances. Nrsimha Saluva, commander of the army, took over the imperial forces in 1485 but Mallikarjuna remained as head of state. Nrsimha Saluva replaced Virupaksha II (1464-1486), son of Mallikarjuna (who was ruler in name) and founded the Saluva dynasty, which ruled for only 21 years. Nrsimha Saluva recovered most of the Vijayanagara lands that had been lost to the Sultans of the Deccan. He and his son Nrsimha II (1493-1507) were constantly at war with the Muslims. They lost their grip on power when Nrasa Nayaka, commander of the army, seized the throne in 1501 and founded the Tuluva dynasty. The Tuluvas remained in control for 64 years. Nrasa Nayaka assumed the name Vira Nrsimha (1503-1509) and became a truly powerful king. His successor Krishnadeva Raya (1510-1529), like his father, was involved in many campaigns and the Vijayanagara Kingdom reached the zenith of power during his regime.

He is credited with the renovation of the temples and construction of new ones as well. He made far-reaching expeditions in the Telugu-speaking zone and appointed Telugu-speaking chiefs in the Tamil-speaking provinces of Gingee, Tanjur and Madurai. These chiefs came to be known as the Nayakas. After the death of Krishnadeva Raya, Achytadevaraya (1530-1542) succeeded to the throne, after some internal strife. Sadasiva (1543-1569), a child, assumed power after Achytadevaraya under the protection of Rama, son-in-law of Krishnadeva Raya, who became the virtual ruler.

After more than two hundred years of rule, the end was swift. In 1565, during the regime of Sadasiva, the combined forces of the Muslim sultans of Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golconda and Bidar decisively defeated the Vijayanagara army at Talikota. Rama, the de facto ruler, was killed in the battle. The defeated army commander Tirumala retreated to Vijayanagara, captured the king, Sadasiva, collected the state treasury, and fled to Penukonda, leaving the city defenseless. It was occupied and systematically ransacked for six months by Muslim armies. Vijayanagara had been besieged a few times before, but not entered or occupied.

The ruins of Vijayanagara city are spread over 26 kilometers (16 miles), from Hampi in the north to Kamalapuram, a suburb of Vijayanagara, to the south. The gateways were smashed; the royal center was set on fire and razed to the ground. The city was not completely destroyed in 1565 but vandals, treasure seekers and natural forces caused more destruction after the capital was moved to Penukonda.

Tirumala, the defeated commander of the Vijayanagara army, founded the fourth Aravidu dynasty. He murdered Sadasiva in 1569 and crowned himself as Tirumala Deva Raya. In 1579 he visited the city for a brief period. The uneventful rule of the Aravidu dynasty lasted for more than one century, but attacks by Deccan sultans weakened the kingdom. The Nayaka viceroys of Gingee, Tanjavur and Madurai consolidated their armies and fortunes. The Wodeyars of Mysore and Gowdas of Yelahanka in the Kanada zone claimed their share. The kingdom was fragmented. The last king, Shriranghe a Deva Raya III (1642-1664), was attacked by the combined forces of the Golconda and Bijapur sultans. He took refuge with the Nayakas and the dynasty came to an end. After the effective end of the kingdom, the banner of the struggle against the Muslims was passed to the Marathas.

The capital city was divided into a sacred zone, royal zone and outskirts or suburbs. The sacred zone on the flat land between the rocky outcrops was on the southern banks of the Tungabhadra River. This is where the large temple complexes stand, and several minor temples, in small valleys. Further south, separated by an irrigated agricultural zone, was the urban core with the largest concentration of population, large and small shrines, extending over hills, ridges and valleys and surrounded by 4 kilometers of fortification wall with well-defended gateways. In the southwest end of the urban core was the royal zone with royal residences and administrative offices, inside an enclosure wall. Residential suburbs followed the royal zone. The city slowly expanded southward and the boundaries overlapped the present day Hospet, 13 km (8 miles) to the south, during Krishnadeva Raya reign.

In the early fifteenth century the Italian Nicolo Conti and in the sixteenth century three Portuguese, Duarte Barbosa, Domingo Paes and Fernao Nunzi, visited Vijayanagara. They have left glorious accounts of the city. The rulers of Vijayanagara had developed a sophisticated irrigation system by cutting channels in the rocks and constructing aqueducts above ground. Devaraya I (1405-1422) is credited with turning Vijayanagara green. Large numbers of tanks were constructed. Each temple was provided with a tank.

Barely a decade passed when Muslims did not besiege the kingdom. In addition to holding various linguistic population groups together, the kingdom had to face the local intrigues and murderous ambitions of the minor kings and attacks by neighboring Hindu kings. During the Sangama dynasty, about eleven wars were fought with the Muslims. The Saluva dynasty fought three wars with the Muslims in nineteen years. Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1530) of the Tuluva dynasty fought several wars with the Muslims. The empire

was sustained by the revenues and riches accumulated as the empire expanded to control its trade routes, and by the religious fervor of the people. Their reaction to the Muslim onslaught resulted in a renaissance of Hindu art and culture.

Intense temple building activity set in during the sixteenth century. Small temples were built in the early years and were widely distributed. Large new temples were built later. Temple builders of South India improved and popularized the Dravidian *vimana*; marriage halls and grandiose gateways were introduced.

About 350 shrines and temples have survived in the city. The majority are small shrines. Fourteenth-century monuments are in the local traditional style. Fifteenth-century monuments reflect Tamil traditions. Large temples are enclosed in one or two courtyards. Along with the main shrine a separate small shrine for the spouse of the god was invariably constructed, slightly to the rear of the main shrine. Often the spouse shrine in a Vishnu temple has an additional sanctuary. The Tuluva kings introduced open pillared halls, called hundred-pillared *mandapa*, with a raised dais at one end for the performance of religious dance, music, drama, recital of sacred texts or delivering sermons. Marriage halls with elaborately decorated columns and a small raised dais in the center or at one end were introduced to display richly dressed gods and goddesses on the occasion of their betrothal and marriage, celebrated every year. A third type, a "swing" *mandapa*, has two cylinder columns. Metal hooks attached to the beam above held a swing in which a sacred image was placed when it was removed temporarily from the sanctum. These halls are the most ornate structures in the temple complex. The Tuluva also introduced a Ceremonial Avenue starting from the main temple gate and moving out into the landscape to take the gods in a chariot procession, to the exhibit pomp and glory and their devotion to the god, to keep the public loyal and under control. Both sides of these streets had rest houses for pilgrims, lodgings for the elite, and shops.

Other structures in the temple courtyard are colonnades lining the enclosure wall, kitchen, store rooms, subsidiary shrines for deities or saints, towering gateways and the temple tank outside the temple enclosure. Muslim architects and stucco workers helped build the imperial palaces and secular buildings. Secular monuments are constructed as a mixture of Dravidian and Islamic architecture with domes arches and stucco decorations.

The Sangama dynasty concentrated on renovating and expanding the Virupaksha temple and they constructed the Hazar Rama temple at Vijayanagara. During the of Saluva dynasty, the foundation of the Vitthala temple was laid. No

temple at Vijayanagara has been identified as being constructed by the Saluva dynasty.

Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529) of the Tuluva dynasty commissioned construction of the Krishna temple and added three great suburbs. Achyutaraya (1530-1542) added two suburbs. His brother-in-law built the Lord Tiruvengalanatha Temple in 1534. Sadasiva (1540-1576) may have constructed most of the secular buildings and completed Vitthala temple in the sixteenth century. However, this cultural renaissance unfortunately introduced a rigidity, leading to cultural stagnation.

The temples at Vijayanagara are constructed of fine-grained granite blocks, which is difficult to carve. The vast quantity of sculpture in Vijayanagara is not of high quality. Except for Hazar Rama temple, the exterior walls of all the temples are plain. Most of the temples at Vijayanagara have dimly-lit circumambulatory passages below ground level around the sanctum. The sanctum is crowned with a stepped pyramidal brick tower with hemispherical dome. Bricks were used to reduce the load and increase the height of the towers.

The gateways constructed during this period were the tallest structure of South Indian temples. The gateways and tower over the *vimana* were decorated by plastered stucco. The plasterwork has mostly eroded due to weathering and the figures are broken. The pillars, brackets and ceiling in the temple are decorated with carvings.

Vijayanagara is associated with Siva and Vishnu. Saivite deities like Ganesha and Virabhadra became popular. From the fifteenth century onwards, Vaisnavism was encouraged. Public rituals became important and new festivals were instituted. The focus of festivals was on the reigning monarch and revitalization of his realm. Jainism and Buddhism were prevalent. There are six Jain temples in the city. There are two mosques, and a number of Muslim tombs and graveyards. Devaraya II welcomed Muslims into the army.

There are two Ganesha sanctuaries on Hemakuta "Hill" beside Virupaksha Temple. A monolithic 2.3m (7 ft.) high seated Ganesha ("mustard seed" Ganesha) carved out of a granite boulder is installed in an open hall with plain square pillars. A part of his left hand and his trunk are broken. Nearby is another comparatively large sanctuary with a cell and open pillared *mandapa*. The pillars of the hall are carved with lovely maidens in *bas relief*. A 4.5m (13.8 ft.) high seated Bengal gram Ganesha chiseled out of a large granite boulder is installed in the cell (Fig. 4.87). He is holding sweets in one hand and selecting them with his trunk to eat. His tusks are slightly damaged.

The other side of Hemakuta Hill is dotted with more than 30 small and fairly large Siva temples pre-dating the Vijayanagara period (Fig. 4.88).



Fig. 4.87. Vijayanagara. Ganesha. Ca. 1334-1567. Granite.



Fig. 4.88. Vijayanagara. Pre-Vijayanagara temples on Hemakuta hill. Ca. 1356-1377. Granite.

The earliest two temples, in Rashtrakuta style, were built in the ninth-tenth century. Some temples are in late-Chalukya and Hoysala styles. Most of the pre-Vijayanagara temples were constructed of granite with a stepped pyramidal superstructure, overhanging eaves, and plain outer walls occasionally decorated with horizontal bands of geometric or scroll designs in the middle. Temples constructed under the local Kadamba influence have triple *vimanas* facing east, west and north, opening to a columned hall which projects to form a porch with overhanging eave. Columns in the hall have undecorated double capitals and angled brackets. The interiors are plain. Decoration on the exterior is limited to sharply cut basements and pilasters on the walls. The pyramidal stepped towers have semi-circular projections on the façades and end in square-to-dome roofs crowned with pot finials. Kimpila Deva installed three Lingams in one of the temples in the early fourteenth century.

Virupaksha Temple, constructed in the fifteenth century, is situated on the southern banks of the river and is dedicated to Siva. It has four gateways with towers, three on the

east-west axis and one on the right of the principal shrine on the boundary wall of the temple.



Fig. 4.89. Vijayanagara. Virupaksha temple. Main gateway. Ca. 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The lofty pyramidal gateway on the east is the tallest extant gateway in India, rising to the height of 52m (159 ft). It was renovated in the nineteenth century (Fig. 4.89).

The two-storey granite basement of the gateway has a nine-storey pyramidal brick tower. The brick stories are decorated in plaster with females on the lower two stories and with decorative sculpture above, ending in a barrel-vaulted roof. On the left side of the tower a female is standing with wide open legs, with a male and female flanking her (Fig. 4.90). With fingers of both her hands she has pulled open her *yoni*, exposing her erect clitoris, resembling a phallus, with an opening on the front end. The male standing beside her, with pendulous phallus, and a hand on her thigh, has an expression of awe and wonder on his face.



Fig. 4.90. Vijayanagara. Virupaksha temple. Main gateway. Decoration on tower. Ca. 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 4.91. Vijayanagara. Virupaksha temple. Main gateway. Decoration on tower. Ca. 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

In another carving to the side, the female has her *yoni* pulled open with one hand to expose her erect clitoris. Two men are standing beside her, their phalluses pendant (Fig. 4.91). The person standing in regal attire in the center appears to be half-male and half-female, with a breast on one side. The carvings of the erect clitoris may possibly indicate that the Lingam resides even inside the *yoni*.

The temple was renovated many times in the Sangama period. The precinct of the temple was extended by construction of an outer enclosure. Krishnadeva Raya (1510-1519) of the Tuluva dynasty constructed a three-storied gateway in 1509-1510, dividing the large court into outer and inner courtyards. The southwest corner of the outer court has a hundred-pillar *mandapa*. A door from this *mandapa* leads to a kitchen and a colonnade with a water channel cut into the rocky floor, bringing water from the river to the temple kitchen and later returning it to the river. There is a marriage hall in the northwest corner. The principal shrine of the god Virupaksha, built in the fifteenth-sixteenth century, stands on a high plinth in the center of the inner court. It consists of a long open front hall, built by Krishnadeva Raya, with sixteen pillars carved with *yalis* facing the front gateway. The corner pillars are carved with double *yalis* carrying diminutive riders. There are late eighteenth-century paintings on the roof of the *mandapa* depicting mythological scenes. The inner *mandapa* has two side porches. Two antechambers precede the sanctum. The small square sanctum contains a Lingam carved in the tenth century surrounded by an enclosed circumambulatory passage. A small tower stands on the right of the principal shrine on the boundary wall of the temple leading to a tank and small, old shrines around the tank outside the temple.

The walls of the inner courtyard are lined with a colonnade housing various sub-shrines constructed at different

times including an older shrine, built in the twelfth century, dedicated to the goddess Pampa and another shrine dedicated to Bhuvaneshvari, the consorts of Virupaksha. The inner courtyard on the rear wall has a small gateway built in the fifteenth century. The superstructure of bricks and plaster was added in the eighteenth century.

During the Tuluva reign a 750m (2325 ft.) long ceremonial avenue in front of the main gateway was added. It is called Hampi Bazaar. The street is lined with dilapidated buildings and some shops of more recent origin. A dilapidated two-storied *mandapa* constructed of used columns stands at the end of the avenue (Fig. 4.92). A Nandi is installed in the *mandapa*.



Fig. 4.92. Vijayanagara. Virupaksha temple. End of Ceremonial avenue. Ca. 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

Further south, overlooking the river, is the Krishna temple constructed by Krishnadeva Raya in 1513 to commemorate his victory over the Gajapatis, a kingdom bordering their empire, and to install an image of the infant Krishna brought from Udayagiri (Orissa) as a war trophy. The temple is situated inside two enclosures. The outer enclosure is irregular in shape. The main temple facing east, sub-shrines and pillared halls are enclosed in a second rectangular compound wall with a 3-tiered dilapidated pyramidal tower on the entrance gateway (Fig. 4.93).



Fig. 4.93. Vijayanagara. Krishna temple. Main gateway. Ca. 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.



Fig. 4.94. Vijayanagara. Krishna temple. Side view of temple. Ca. 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The molded plinth of the gateway is decorated with pilasters. The façade shows empty niches flanked by pilasters of various types. The temple stands on a molded base (Fig. 4.94). In front of the temple is a small square raised platform with beautifully decorated moldings. It bears an inverted lotus flower on the top, which possibly held a pillar. Behind is a small square projection of the front *mandapa* supported on four pillars with overhanging eaves. It bears a small, highly decorated tower with vaulted wagon-shaped roof. The temple consists of outer and inner *mandapa*, antechamber and sanctum. Entrance to the *mandapas* is given by steps on the sides, flanked with elephants and other animals. The long outer *mandapa* has six rows of pillars — composite pillars at the front corners, and the peripheral pillars decorated with *yalis*. The inner *mandapa* consists of four thick, highly-decorated pillars similar to the pillars in the Krishna temple. There is no deity in the sanctum. The sanctum has an ambulatory passage at a slightly lower level. The sanctum outer walls are decorated with a few simple carvings. There is a minor shrine at each corner of the temple, with hemispherical domes (Fig. 4.95). The shrine at the left corner is missing.



Fig. 4.95. Vijayanagara. Krishna temple. Minor shrines at four corners. Ca. 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

The pyramidal tower of the *vimana* is constructed of brick and plaster and is capped with hemispherical dome. There is a subsidiary shrine with open *mandapa* near the side

wall of the main sanctum. The ceremonial avenue in front of the temple has been converted into irrigated fields.

Another temple complex situated in two rectangular compounds is Tiruvengalanatha, built by Hiriya Tirumala, brother-in-law and chief minister of Achyutaraya (1529-1524). An image of Vishnu was installed in the temple in 1534. The outer enclosure has a large gateway on the north, two smaller gateways on the west and a small opening on the south. The inner enclosure has three gateways on the north, east and west walls. The main shrine situated in the center of the inner enclosure consists of outer and inner *mandapa*, two antechambers and a sanctum in a circumambulatory passage. There is a subsidiary shrine beside the main shrine. To the northeast is a hundred-pillared *mandapa*. Outside the temple are a long chariot street and a temple tank.

Further south is a mutilated statue of Nrsimha seated in yogi posture on the coils of the cosmic serpent under an ornate *makara* arch (Fig. 4.96).



Fig. 4.96. Vijayanagara. Statue of Nrsimha. Ca. 1528. Granite.

His crossed legs are broken, and they have been bound with a band to hold them together. A small figure of Lakshmi carved on Nrsimha's lap is lost. Krishnadeva Raya built the statue in 1528. The monolithic 6.7m (20.5 ft.) high incarnation of Vishnu with a human body and lion's face has bulging eyes and a wide mouth with sharp teeth. It is enshrined in an enclosure wall without roof. The large seven hoods of Sesha all carved from the same rock emerge from the back of the statue to cover Siva's head. Next to the Nrsimha statue, across the street on the other side, is a single cell chamber with 3m (9.3 ft.) high Lingam partly submerged in the waters of an ancient underground channel. Possibly Krishnadeva Raya constructed it.

King Devaraya I (1406-1422) constructed the Ramachandra temple, locally called Hazar Rama temple because of the plentiful carvings of Rama. It is dedicated to Ramachandra, an avatar of Vishnu (Fig. 4.97). It stands between the sacred

zone and the royal center. The temple is enclosed in a rectangular compound of high walls.



Fig. 4.97. Vijayanagara. Ramachandra temple.

Main gateway. 1406-1422. Granite.

This is the only temple with sculpture on the exterior walls. The exterior surface of the compound walls is carved with five friezes depicting court scenes. There are groups of elephants uprooting palm trees, playful leaping horses, marching soldiers with various weapons, dancers and musicians. The inner surface of the compound wall is carved with all the episodes of the Ramayana, in two places. The entry to the temple courtyard is through the east and north gate and a small door on the south. The flat-roofed main gateway on the east with overhanging eave is supported on four front pillars and pilasters on a raised platform. The pillars, carved with sculpture, have double capitals and a square abacus above. The raised platform lining the passage through the gateway bears decorated pillars with shallow carvings on the plinth. The temple standing in the center of the courtyard is surrounded with structures used for court and ceremonial purposes. The temple may have served as a private chapel of Devaraya.

Fig. 4.98. Vijayanagara. Ramachandra temple. Outer *mandapa*. 1406-1422. Granite.



The temple consists of an open porch with eight slim pillars in two horizontal rows decorated with shallow carvings in the front part of the porch. A raised platform attached to the rear wall of the porch supports a small extended flat roof into the porch on decorated pillars (Fig. 4.98).

Shallow carvings decorate the pillars on the platform and the porch rear wall behind the platform, between pilasters. In front of the entrance, the open porch is a small square raised platform with beautifully decorated moldings. It bears an inverted lotus flower on the top, which possibly held a pillar. The parapet wall above the porch is decorated with deities standing in a row and some are seated in decorated niches. The square *mandapa* behind the front porch has small entry porches on both sides. The four thick cubical polished black stones in the center of the *mandapa* are carved with twenty-four forms of Vishnu (Fig. 4.99), with various attributes, such as Anantashayana Vishnu, the creator of the universe, reclining on the serpent Ananta, and Caturmurti Vishnu with a human face on the front, lion and boar faces at the sides, and on the rear a demon face — the lion and boar faces do not refer to the Nrsimha and boar incarnation of Vishnu. Carvings accompanied by the monkey heroes of the Ramayana epic possibly refer to the Vishnu of Dravidian origin.



Fig. 4.99. Vijayanagara. Ramachandra temple. Pillars of inner *mandapa*. 1406-1422. Granite.

Two antechambers precede the small square sanctum. The exterior basement molding of the shrine is decorated with lotus petals, jeweled ribs and miniature animals in shallow relief between moldings. The walls are carved with pilasters capped with different designs and framed niches between pillars. Some of the niches are empty. Various cult gods and incarnations of Vishnu are depicted in other niches (Fig. 4.100).

On the back wall of the sanctum, the incarnation of Vishnu as Buddha, seated in meditation posture, is carved. Beside Buddha another carving depicts Krishna dancing on the serpent Kaliya, who had poisoned the Yamuna River (Fig.

4.101). As a boy, Krishna was wandering in the woods when he reached a pool in the Yamuna where the water was not flowing. The banks of the pool were full of serpent-infested holes. All the water creatures had abandoned the pool and the water was unfit to drink by men and beasts. Krishna understood that it is the abode of the fierce snake Kaliya, who had left his ocean home, fearing the king of snake-eating birds. To liberate the pool, Krishna jumped into the water. Kaliya, his wives and children, all living in the holes, came out hissing and spitting flames. They caught Krishna's legs in their coils, holding him immobile, and bit him with their sharp, poisonous fangs. Balarama and the cowherds came running to the rescue and called out to Krishna. On hearing their voices, Krishna shook himself free of the snake coils, jumped on the head of the monster and started dancing to crush him. The bleeding monster finally recognized Krishna and begged for mercy. Krishna released him and ordered all his kinsmen to go back to the ocean and never to return.



Fig. 4.100. Vijayanagara. Ramachandra temple. Carvings on side wall. 1406-1422. Granite.



Fig. 4.101. Vijayanagara. Ramachandra temple. Krishna killing Kaliya. 1406-1422. Granite.



The three-storey high tower constructed of brick and plaster has three tiers and a two-tiered wagon-shaped roof extension at the base called a *sukanasa* (Fig. 4.102). In the spacious courtyard is a small ornate shrine for the goddess with two sanctums beside the main sanctum. Near the rear wall of the temple compound is a hundred-pillared *mandapa* built in 1521.



Fig. 4.102. Vijayanagara. Ramachandra temple. Temple tower seen from Royal center. 1406-1422. Granite.

The royal complex near the Krishna temple includes the Royal, Danaik (commander-in-chief) and Zanana enclosures. The invading army of the sultans directed their most devastating attacks against the Royal complex during the final days of the war, leaving the Royal and Danaik enclosures as heaps of rubble. The Zanana enclosure sustained partial damage. The Royal enclosure had held two types of buildings. One was constructed of granite blocks for the foundation and the steps laid without mortar. Plaster was used for the floor, rubble and brick for the walls, timber for the supporting columns and tiles for the roofs. These buildings, with large halls, had one- or two-celled residential chambers on the top level, decorated with an inlay of semiprecious stones in marble panels. The other buildings were constructed of crudely-cut stone blocks set in thick mortar and coated with plaster.



Fig. 4.103. Vijayanagara. Ruins of Royal center and Mahanavami platform. Ca. 1335-1565. Granite.

The Royal Complex now consists of the ruins of a hundred-column hall, various buildings, an underground chamber, a number of tanks, a mint, and a great platform popularly called the “Mahanavami Platform,” for the nine-day spring festival (Fig. 4.103).

The earliest structure in the Royal enclosure was the hundred-column hall south of the Rama temple. Devaraya possibly constructed it in the early fifteenth century for use as an audience hall. The extant foundation of the hall is 40m (132 ft.) square. The Mahanavami Platform, built on a base of four ascending levels, was constructed from the fourteenth to sixteenth century on a rocky outcrop. The extant base standing in the right corner of the enclosure is 12m (36.6 ft) high. The tier at the ground level is 40m (132 ft.) square and the top tier is 22m (72 ft.) square. Constructed of granite blocks, it is veneered with schist slabs on one side. The plinth, between tiers, is covered with carvings depicting the hunting of deer with bows and arrows, and spearing of lions and tigers, performance of music and dance, wrestling matches, and processions of elephants, horses, camels and mounted warriors. Steps climb to the top on the west; they were probably used by the king. The platform was used to celebrate holidays and for public worship. During the Mahanavami festival, a shrine was constructed on the top for the king to worship in, and animals were sacrificed in front of the platform. Krishnadeva Raya sat in the vicinity to receive homage, and to review processions of elephants, horses and servants. He also enjoyed performances of music and dance, mock battles, wrestling bouts, acrobatics and displays of fireworks.

The various rites of Mahanavami reveal that the king and deity were homologues. The patronage of religion by the kings highlighted the partnership between god and king, and established the authority of the kings. In the vicinity of the platform are several large pools, one measuring 67m (208 ft.) long and 22m (69 ft.) wide. A tank, Pushkarini, is faced with precisely-cut green schist steps arranged in groups like small pyramids. Water was supplied to these ponds by a complex system of aqueducts and water channels, all ruined and dry now. A huge 3.3m x 0.9m (10 x 2.7 ft.) monolithic granite door imitating all the details of a wooden door lies near the entrance to the royal enclosure. It is not known if it was ever used.

The Danaik enclosure west of Hazar Rama Temple contains the basements of a number of palaces, a two-storied octagonal pavilion possibly used as a pleasure pavilion, a pavilion with nine domes divided into vaulted bays — possibly used as a reception hall — and multi-domed watchtowers.

Only two towers are still standing, in tolerable condition. The towers show a mixture of Islamic and Hindu architectural designs and possibly also served as pleasure centers for the royal ladies.

Northeast of the Danaik enclosure is Zanana, the residential area for ladies of the royal court, in a high-walled enclosure. Foundations of two palaces, including the Queen's palace (Fig. 4.104), and another, vaulted rectangular structure, possibly used as treasury or storehouse or gymnasium, is situated in the enclosure.



Fig. 4.104. Vijayanagara. Zanana enclosure. Foundation of Queen's palace. Ca. 1334-1565. Granite.

Another building constructed according to Islamic designs, possibly used as a meeting place, is located on one side of the Queen's palace foundation (Fig. 4.105).



Fig. 4.105. Vijayanagara. Zanana enclosure. Building in Islamic design. Ca. 1334-1565. Granite.

Near the basement of the palace is the Lotus Mahal. It is a two-storied building built of crudely cut stone blocks and brick set in thick mortar and covered with thick plaster decorations (Fig. 4.106). Standing on a molded basement, it is laid out symmetrically with projections on all sides from the middle. The floor is laid as a series of projecting squares with thirteen bays. An additional bay at one corner appears to be a square structure. The projection at another corner of the *mahal*, enclosed on all sides, has a stairway leading to the upper level. Openings of the first floor are framed with cusped arches overhung by curved eaves and vaults on both sides of the piers. The arches are decorated with friezes of birds, and flower stalks and petals. The upper storey, with balconies, is enclosed in multi-lobed arched windows. A small, symmet-

rically arranged three-tiered pyramidal tower and a ribbed finial form the roof of the bays. The tall central tower adds to the vertical effect. The ribbed crown of the tower looks like a cross between a temple *sikara* and an Islamic dome. The cusped arches, vaults of various designs, and the decoration in geometric and foliated designs on the walls and ceiling are Islamic while the towers and other decorations are Dravidian in character. Possibly the royals used this as a pleasure palace. It was not damaged in the war and the Muslim armies occupying the city did not damage it.



Fig. 4.106. Vijayanagara. Zanana enclosure. Lotus Mahal. Ca. 1334-1565. Granite.

An exit from Zanana enclosure leads to the elephant stable (Fig. 4.107), a massive, elongated structure, 85m (260 ft.) long, with eleven vaulted chambers in a row. It is constructed of solid masonry on the model of Muslim tomb chambers. Each chamber has an arched entrance, a rather flat dome decorated with lotus petals or twelve-sided vaults with ribbed finials. One or two elephants were accommodated in each chamber.



Fig. 4.107. Vijayanagara. Elephant stable. Ca. 1334-1565. Granite.

The central chamber of the stable has a large watchtower above with a flight of steps from inside the chamber. Drummers and musicians may have used the tower on festival occasions. The open space in front of the stable was a parade ground. A lofty rectangular building on the right of the elephant stable, with a raised, arcaded verandah, may have

been used for viewing the activities in the parade ground. The interior court of the building may have been used for martial exercise. To the east of the elephant stable are a group of Hindu temples and two Jain temples. Devaraya II constructed one of the Jain temples in 1426 CE. It is dedicated to Tirthankara Parshvanath.

The Queen's Bath, with a plain exterior, has protruding balconies with large arched openings beside the simple entrance. It has a square pool 1.8m (5.5 ft.) deep, surrounded by a square corridor with an arched opening facing the pool (Fig. 4.108).



Fig. 4.108. Vijayanagara. Queen's Bath. Pool. Ca. 1334-1565. Granite.

A large arched opening in the center of each side of the pool has steps giving entrance to the pool. It is flanked by small balconies projecting above the pool, decorated with fanciful arched openings. The interior of the corridor is elaborately decorated. The ceiling, with arches of various designs, has retained most of the original stucco decoration (Fig. 4.109).



4.109. Vijayanagara. Queen's Bath. Decorations on ceiling. Ca. 1334-1565. Granite.

All the stucco ornaments are Islamic in character. The plain exterior reportedly had eaves on corbelled brackets and fanciful towers. The building is surrounded by a channel to supply water to the pool. The royalty used the building as a cool resting place.

Near the Royal Center is an underground temple with a large two-tier entrance gate without tower. This pre-Vijayanagara temple, discovered completely buried, is dedicated to Virupaksha — the same deity worshipped at the Hampi Virupaksha temple. Various additions were made later. The porch of the temple is supported on heavy pillars with sculpture. The main sanctum is partially submerged in water. A little distance away from this temple is the ruined foundation of a mint.

Vitthala temple, the ornate gem of Vijayanagara monuments, is dedicated to Vishnu. The temple stands in a large, 164m x 94.5m (500 ft. x 288 ft.), rectangular stone-paved courtyard surrounded by high walls (Fig. 4.110). The temple faces east, overlooking the 40m (124 ft) wide and 1 km (0.6 miles) long chariot street. Streets surrounding the temple on all sides have small shrines dedicated to Vishnu and other deities.



Fig. 4.110. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.

Nrsimha of the Saluva dynasty (1482-1483) possibly laid the foundation of the temple. The actual construction started in 1513. The temple is incomplete. Three gateways stand on east, north and south.

The gateways are built on a granite base with a brick superstructure in stepped stories. The brick superstructure is falling apart and most of the plaster human figures are broken, but some surviving statues of beautiful females with long legs are in fair condition. In front of the east gateway are pieces of the 12.2m (37 ft.) high emblem column of the temple. The pillars inside the passageways are carved with highly decorated females in three body bends with beautiful upper bodies — and the shortest legs seen so far. Most of the colonnades lining the enclosure wall inside have collapsed. A hundred-pillared *mandapa* has been built in the south side colonnade. The main temple, standing in the center of the stone-paved courtyard, is surrounded with a shrine for the spouse of the god, a subsidiary shrine, a marriage hall, two pillared halls in the northeast and southwest ends and a stone chariot in front of the main temple entrance. The *mandapa*, two antechambers, sanctum and circumambulatory passage were built prior to the sixteenth century. From

1513 to 1554 substantial additions were made. In 1513, two queens of Krishnadeva Raya donated gateways. Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1530) commissioned a hundred-pillared *mandapa* in 1516. The outer open porch with elaborately decorated columns was appended to the *mandapa* in 1554 during the reign of Sadasiva. Achyutaraya (1530-1542) is also credited with a few additions to the temple.

The main temple consists of a highly decorated open porch, *mandapa*, and *vimana* with dilapidated tower (Fig. 4.111). The open porch stands on a 1.5m (4.5 ft.) high ornate base decorated with a frieze of horses with attendants, and miniature shrines with images of Vishnu incarnations. Balustrades carved with *yalis* or elephants flank the steps on three sides leading to the porch floor.

The façade of the temple with the open porch facing the main entrance of the temple is damaged (Fig. 4.112). The outer piers support double curved eaves carved with medallions and feather-like upturned extensions at the ends. Stone chains at the corners were used to hang lamps. The porch has 65 composite pillars, the hallmark of Vijayanagara sculpture. Each pillar is 3.6m (11 ft.) high and 1.5m (4.6 ft.) across.



Fig. 4.111. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Side view. Porch, *mandapa* and Sanctum. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.



Fig. 4.112. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Porch. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.

The huge piers on the outer edges are composed of a number of slender pillars clustered around a central shaft carved out of a single granite block (Fig. 4.113). Pilgrims

would strike the slender pillars with hard objects to produce a ringing, musical sound; this activity has worn down most of the slender pillars. The pillars on the margin of the porch entrances are carved with *yalis*. Portions of the decorated brick parapet wall above the roof top have survived. The pillars in the center of the porch are arranged to form an open space. Some pillars are carved with human figures and some with *yalis*.



Fig. 4.113. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Porch. Composite piers. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.

The roof of the central hall has gigantic granite beams, some more than 10m (31 ft.) long, used to construct deep cupped recesses with lotus flowers hanging from the center. Some flowers are carved with birds sitting on the stylus, pecking it (Fig. 4.114).



Fig. 4.114. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Birds pecking hanging lotus flower. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.

A part of the roof of the rectangular court has collapsed and some of the pillars are damaged. The open porch leads to the *mandapa* with widely spaced and sparsely decorated square pillars and two side entrances. The entrance to the antechamber in front was flanked by two giant statues of Vishnu. The surviving statue is holding emblems and one hand is in a protection gesture. On the rear wall of the an-

techamber the multiple jambs of the entrance door are decorated with decorative designs and Ganga and Yamuna with body bends at the base of the door jambs. On the side walls of the antechamber flanking the entrance of the sanctum are entrances leading to a narrow, dark passage with steps to descend into the circumambulatory at the courtyard level. The exterior walls of the inner *mandapa* and sanctum are carved with shallow engravings. The brick tower on the sanctum is in poor condition.

The detached marriage hall, placed to the side of the main temple, stands on a highly ornate plinth (Fig. 4.115). The roof is highly ornate and is deeply recessed, with eaves bearing feather-like carvings at the corners and with rings from which to hang lamps. The entrances to the *mandapa* on all sides is provided by steps flanked by elephants. The piers flanking the entrance and at the corners of the platform are carved with men riding *yalis* and monolithic composite columns. The hall is square and has a raised platform in the center to display the richly decorated gods when they are removed from the sanctum to celebrate their marriage. The interior pillars are carved with a variety of animals and human figures. The ceiling above the platform bears an elaborately carved hanging lotus flower similar to the lotus flowers in the open porch. Another ornate pillared hall similar to the marriage hall, with a raised dais at the end, lies on the south-east of the courtyard.



Fig. 4.115. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Marriage hall. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.

The front entrance to the hall has piers decorated with men riding *yalis* and composite piers. On the northeast is a hundred-pillared *mandapa* built into the colonnade by Krishnadeva Raya in 1516. There are ninety-eight pillars in the *mandapa*, carved with large number of deities in shallow relief. A small, ornate subsidiary shrine for the spouse of the god stands at the rear, facing the temple sanctum.

In the courtyard in front of the temple entrance is a small monolithic stone shrine carved in the shape of a *ratha*, a

wooden temple chariot mounted on stone wheel and pulled by elephants (Fig. 4.116). It was constructed for Garuda, the mount of Vishnu. All the details of the wooden chariot are simulated. The wheels of the chariot, cut from separate blocks of stone and mounted on stone axles, can rotate; and they are highly ornate. The base molding, pilasters and walls are carved with friezes similar to those on the main temple. A hemispherical brick superstructure shown in a nineteenth century photograph is missing.



Fig. 4.116. Vijayanagara. Vitthala Temple. Courtyard. Ratha. Ca. 1482-1544. Granite.

A small Amma shrine with decorated pillared *mandapa* is located at the northwest corner of the courtyard to the rear of the main shrine. Near the northeast corner of the temple is another open *mandapa* with decorated pillars. At the rear end of the complex is a one-hundred-pillared *mandapa*.



Fig. 4.117. Vijayanagara. King's Balance near Vitthala temple. Ca. 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Granite.

On the banks of the Tungabhadra River a number of small, dilapidated shrines are located. Further down the river behind a two-storey gateway is a swing *mandapa*. It consists

of two slender decorated columns in an open space. The cross beam on top of the pillars has holes to permit the installation of a swing (Fig. 4.117).

The swing was used to keep the images of gods when brought out of the temples. It is known as the King's Balance. The king is reported to have used the swing to weigh himself and then to distribute alms equal to his weight to the public.

## 21. THE MONUMENTS AT DELHI (1192–1842)

Delhi is called the capital of the heroes of Mahabharata. Archeological evidence suggests Delhi has been the capital of India since the third century BCE. After the collapse of the Gupta Empire in the sixth century, many Rajput clans governed North India. After defeating Chauhan Rajputs near Bhatinda, Qutabuddin-Aibek captured Delhi in 1192 and made it the capital of the Muslim sultans. Numerous mosques, forts and tombs were built by the Muslim sultans and Mughals in Delhi, but no old temples remain. The early Muslim sultans demolished almost all the temples around Delhi and re-used the stones in constructing their monuments. UNESCO declared Humayun's Tomb and the Qutab Minar complex in Delhi World Heritage Monuments in 1993.

Humayun's tomb was constructed by a devoted wife to honor the memory of her husband, seven decades before the Taj Mahal was built by a loving husband to enshrine his own love. The tomb inaugurated the style that, refined and perfected, culminated in the crowning achievement of Mughal architecture at Agra.

The Muslim empire in India came to an end when the British captured the last Mughal emperor, who had taken refuge during the mutiny in Humayun's Tomb in 1857. The other World Heritage monuments at Qutab-minar were constructed to celebrate the beginning of Muslim rule in India.

Nine years after the death of Humayun, his senior widow Haji Begum by her unrelenting efforts saw the construction of the tomb initiated in 1555 by Emperor Akbar. Haji Begum reportedly played a greater part in the selection of Sayyid Ghiyas, the Persian architect, to con-

struct the tomb. Ghiyas also constructed the tomb of Akbar at Sikandria. After sixteen years of construction, the tomb was complete in 1571. Haji Begum is also buried in the tomb but she does not share the Humayun chamber.

The tomb is located in a large enclosure amidst a spacious Mughal-style garden entered through lofty double storied gateways with an arched opening on the west (Fig. 5.1) and south.



Fig. 5.1. Delhi. Humayun's Tomb. East gateway. 1555-1571. Sandstone.

The south gateway remains closed. In the center of the enclosure wall on the east is a *baradari* or a pavilion with twelve doors, and a bath chamber in the north enclosure wall. The garden is divided into four large squares by small canals. The tomb stands in the center of the garden on a raised terrace. Each square of the garden is sub-divided into small symmetrical squares.

The tomb is a two-storey square building with flat corners constructed of red sandstone with marble inlay decorations (Fig. 5.2), particularly on the façade. The har-

monious marble lines break the monotony of the red sandstone. Such a technique was first introduced for the interior decoration of the tomb of Iltamush, the second sultan of Delhi. Each side of the tomb on the ground floor has sixteen arched openings in front of a corridor. There is a cell behind each arched opening with a door that opens into the tomb (Fig. 5.3). The arches and the cornice on the roof above are inlaid with pleasant geometrical designs in thin marble strips. A parapet wall of a delicate red stone screen decorates the roof.



Fig. 5.2. Delhi. Humayun's Tomb. Side view. 1555-1571. Sandstone.

Inside the tomb, Humayun is buried in an octagonal chamber surrounded by octagonal chambers on all sides. Arched openings between the chambers are decorated with perforated screens to allow light to filter in. Several royal family members including Haji Begum are buried in these chambers.



Fig. 5.3. Delhi. Humayun's Tomb. Front view. 1555-1571. Sandstone.

The square upper storey in the center has a large, tall alcove recessed in the tomb. The façade of the alcove is deco-

rated with broad bands of marble inlay on the sides and six-pointed stars in a spindle at the top corners. The deeply recessed center of the large alcove is decorated with two rows of three large arched blind windows, one above the other. The blind windows are decorated with marble inlay on the margins and a broad band of marble separates the rows. Two smaller half-hexagon-shaped structures with the side walls, recessing to the back, are set slightly forward of the central alcove, flanking it. The central wall of the half hexagon bears an alcove smaller than the main alcove on the center of the façade and the side walls have alcoves another size smaller. All the alcoves on the half-hexagon structure have two windows in the recessed area and are decorated similarly to the large alcove in the center of the façade. The recessed wall of the half hexagon on one side joins with the central alcove and on other side joins with the side wall of the tomb, giving the appearance of flat corners on the upper storey. Possibly because of the recess hiding most of the red sandstone the marble inlay appears very extensive on the upper storey. The roof of the tomb is decorated with large *chattris* on the flanking alcoves, small *chattris* on the central alcove, small decorated marble parapet walls and small minarets at the corners. The interior layout of the upper storey is similar to that of the ground floor. The central octagonal chamber of the upper store holds the cenotaph of Humayun.

Persian and Indian features were synthesized to construct the tomb. The marble double dome above the cenotaph sits on a high cylindrical neck, 42.5m (129.6 ft.) tall, which is decorated with six-pointed marble stars. The design of the arched openings, corridors, glazed tiles, six-pointed stars and circular double dome were borrowed from Persia. The pillared *chattris*, beams and lintel in the corridors are of Indian tradition.

The similarities between Humayun's tomb and the Taj Mahal are the square floor plan, flattened corners, arches and octagonal internal chambers. Humayun's tomb is located in the center of the garden whereas the Taj Mahal is located at the rear of the garden. The tall minarets and calligraphy on the arches are absent from Humayun's tomb. It is beautiful and unique without being overpowering like the Taj Mahal. One can experience solitude and peace in the pleasing beauty of the tomb and the open garden.

Within the enclosure of the tomb is another impressive square tomb with a dome, called Barber's tomb. It has the graves of two unknown persons, engraved with verses from the Quran. Outside the compound of Humayun's tomb is Nila-Gumbad, a tomb with a high-neck dome covered with brilliant blue tiles. Around the drum of the dome are traces of tiles of various colors. The tomb is octagonal out-



side but square inside with a profusely decorated ceiling of incised plaster and paint. It is not known who is buried in the tomb. It may pre-date Humayun's tomb. The tomb of Isa Khan, Army Commander of Sultan Shersha Sur, is located on the periphery of the complex. It has octagon dome and verandah.

The Qutab Minar Complex is located in Lal Kote, a neighborhood of Delhi founded by Qutabuddin Aibek as his capital in 1192. It is the first of the seven cities of Delhi founded by Muslim rulers. There are mosques, towers, tombs and associated buildings in the area. Quwatul-Islam mosque is the first mosque constructed in Delhi, and was built by Qutabuddin in 1129. The stones to construct the mosque were obtained by demolishing twenty-seven Hindu and Jain temples. The mosque is situated in a paved 44.5 x 63.5m (138 x 197 ft) rectangular court. The court is enclosed in a cloister that was constructed of columns and other architectural elements taken from demolished temples. The columns of the cloister feature various dissimilar Hindu motifs. Where the columns were short another column was installed above to obtain the required height (Fig. 5.4). A fourth-century pillar made of pure malleable iron, transported perhaps as a curiosity from a Vishnu shrine in the vicinity, was erected in front of the prayer hall. The iron pillar is 7.2m (22 ft.) tall and shows very little sign of rust (Fig. 5.6).



Fig. 5.4. Delhi. Qutab Minar complex. Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque. Open courtyard and colonnade. 1129-1198. Sandstone.

The western portion of the colonnade incorporates a part of the original *mandapa* of a demolished temple (Fig. 5.5).



Fig. 5.5. Delhi. Qutab Minar complex. Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque. Mandapa incorporated into colonnade. 1129-1198. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.6. Delhi. Qutab Minar complex. Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque. Iron pillar in court. 1129-1198. Sandstone.

Construction, additions and repairs to the mosque continued for more than a century. A massive 16m (49 ft.) high and 6.7m (20 ft) wide stone screen with five pointed and slightly ogee corbelled arches was added in 1199 between the prayer hall and the courtyard. The central arch is similar to the other arches but is much larger. The stone arch is carved with inscriptions and geometrical and arabesque designs of Hindu inspiration. The entrances to the mosque are Hindu in feeling (Fig. 5.7).



Fig. 5.7. Delhi. Qutab Minar complex. Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque. Entrance Gate. 1129-1198. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.8. Delhi. Qutab Minar complex. Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque. Carvings on second screen wall. 1129-1198. Sandstone.

The second sultan, Shamsudin Iltamash, doubled the size of the mosque in 1230 by extending the colonnades and prayer hall enclosing the Qutab Minar. He added another stone screen in front with corbelled arches decorated predominantly with Saracenic ornamentation, distinct from the first arch (Fig. 5.8)

Sultan Alauddin Khalji further extended the enclosure, almost doubling the area of the mosque. He added two gateways on the longer eastern side and one each on the north and south walls. The southern gate is called Ala-I-Darwaza. It is a square pavilion constructed of red sandstone in 1311-1316 as a self-contained southern gateway to Qutab-Minar, with exquisite proportions and varied decoration on its façade. The gateway is 17.2m (52.5 ft.) square with openings on all sides. The interior is profusely carved with geometric and decorative designs on red sandstone and calligraphy bands in marble. The wide, shallow, bulging dome has an octagonal base. It is stated that this monument, “one of the most treasured gems of Islamic architecture was constructed by employing wholly the Islamic principal of accurate construction and geometric ornamentation”.

A distinct West Asian influence is seen in the decoration of the exterior perforated window with lotus buds on the undersurface of the arches. True arches, a broad dome, perforated windows, and the use of marble to contrast with the red sandstone are some of the characteristics of Khalji architecture.



Fig. 5.9. Delhi. Qutab Minar.

1129-1388. Sandstone.

A l a u d d i n Khalji also commenced construction of a tower intended to be taller than Qutab-minar but only managed

to get part of the ground floor built. Qutab-minar, commissioned by Qutabuddin Aibek, is the tallest tower in India. It is 73.5m (224 ft.) high. The diameter at the base is 14.32m (43.7 ft.) and 2.75m (8.5 ft) at the top. It is a perfect specimen, without any flaws in construction, thanks to centuries of inherited experience on the part of the Hindu masons who built the tower (Fig. 5.9).



Fig. 5.10. Delhi. Qutab Minar. Carvings on Minar. 1129-1388. Sandstone.

Qutab-minar was constructed as a victory tower to spread the shadow of the god to the east and west, according to an inscription on the minar. Qutabuddin may have completed only the first storey. His successor Iltamush added three stories. Lightning damaged the tower in 1326. Muhamed Taughlak (1325-1351) repaired the damage. Lightning again damaged the top storey in 1368. Firuz Shah (1351-1388) repaired the tower by using stones that had not been damaged by lightning and by adding marble for the remaining part of the fourth storey. He added a fifth storey, also in marble. The first storey has alternate angular and circular flutings, the second has round flutings and the third storey has angular flutings. All the flutings are aligned. The top two stories have a plain, smooth outer surface. The exterior of the tower is decorated with bands of calligraphy and decorative designs. Each storey has projecting balconies supported on stalactite pendant-type brackets. A passage with 397 steps inside the tower leads to the top (Fig. 5.10).



Fig. 5.11. Ajmir. Adhay-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque. Carvings on screen wall. 1153. Sandstone.

A cupola surmounting the tower fell down in an earthquake. In the nineteenth century a Mughal-style cupola was added. It appeared so ungainly that it was brought down in 1848 and was left on the southeast lawn.

In 1200-1206, Qutabuddin did not demolish but modified a Sanskrit college at Ajmir into a mosque, named Adhay-din-ka-Jhonpra for a two-and-a-half day fair held at Ajmir. The mosque stands on a 270m (840 ft.) square platform. From the spoils of the Hindu temples a magnificent stone screen with seven arches was erected in front of the pillared hall of the college. The façade of the screen is decorated with beautiful, delicate designs in vertical bands (Fig. 5.11).



Fig. 5.12. Ajmir. Adhay-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque. Double depth calligraphy on screen wall. 1153. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.13. Ajmir. Adhay-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque. Carvings on pillars. 1153. Sandstone.

One section of the outer wall has double-depth calligraphy, the only such carving in the world (Fig. 5.12). The height of the mosque behind the screen was raised to 7.5m (23 ft.) by installing three temple pillars one over the other. Some pillars still retain images of Hindu deities (Fig. 5.13). Even parts of the temple roof have been retained.

The tomb of the second sultan of Delhi, Iltamush (1211-1236), was built in 1235 using a minimum of materi-

als from demolished Hindu temples. The central chamber with cenotaph is 9m (27.5 ft.) square. It has no dome but the quincies on the tomb — that appeared for the first time — suggest the existence of a dome. Other walls have profusely carved arched entrances. The interior west wall of the tomb has niches decorated with marble. The interior is decorated with bell-and-chain, tassel, lotus and diamond emblems of Hindu origin. For this reason, Ferguson called it one of the richest examples of Hindu art applied to Mohammedan purposes.

The Khalji Tomb and College lie to the southwest of Quwatul Islam mosque. It is an L-shaped building and contains various rooms and halls in poor condition. The central room of the southern wing possibly holds the grave of Khalji. The halls and other rooms were used as a religious college. This is the first example of a college combined with a tomb constructed in India.

In the vicinity of Qutab Complex is the Jogamaya temple, built in the waning days of the Mughal Empire by Akbar II (1806-1837) on the site of a Hindu temple demolished by the early sultans of Delhi. Perhaps Akbar II was repenting the past. It is dedicated to a goddess.

Other Islamic monuments in Delhi are the Red Fort, Jami mosque, Lodi Gardens and remnants of old cities founded by the sultans and Mughal emperors governing Delhi.

Shahjahan transferred his capital from Agra to Delhi in 1638 and commissioned the architect Ustad Ahmed Lahori to construct the Red Fort in 1639. The Mughals used their forts for defense, as administrative centers, treasuries and residences. Construction was completed in 1648. Most of the walls, gates and buildings are constructed of red sandstone. Marble palaces were constructed on the riverside.

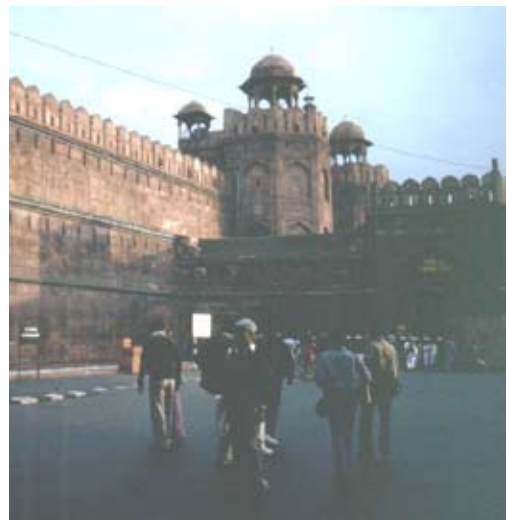


Fig. 5.14. Delhi. Red Fort. Lahori Gate. 1639-1649. Sandstone.

The fort is an irregular octagon with 2.4 km (1 ½ miles) long rampart walls. The walls are 33.5m (104 ft.) high on the city side and 18m (56 ft.) along the river. Originally it had fourteen gateways. It is surrounded with a moat (connected with the river) on three sides and river itself on one side. The two main entrances of the fort now in use are the imposing three-storied Lahori Gate (Fig. 5.14) and Delhi Gate.

Emperor Aurangzeb added outer defensive rings to both the gates. Delhi Gate leads to the Jami Mosque (Friday Mosque) outside the fort. The Lahori Gate opens outward onto Chandni Chowk, the principal commercial street of Mughal Delhi. Inward, the Gate gives access to a roofed passage 70m (230 ft.) long, flanked by arcade apartments now used as antique stores, leading to an open square. On the east side of the square is a large, rectangular, three-storey building called Naubat Khana. Entrance to the palace area is through Naubat Khana. Visitors (except princesses) dismounted here from their horses or elephants, and here drums were beaten to announce events.

The carved designs on the red sandstone of Naubat Khana were originally painted with gold. A museum of antique war materiel is located on the flat-roofed upper storey. All the Mughal monuments have flat roofs.

Diwan-e-Am, a large flat-roofed hall with nine large arched openings under extended eaves, is located some distance from Naubat Khana (Fig. 5.15). It was used for public audiences. The hall has three bays supported on cusped arches resting on twelve-sided pillars. The pillars are paired outside and quadrupled at the corners of the hall to support an impressive façade of arched openings. The cusped arch is characteristic of Mughal architecture.



Fig. 5.15. Delhi. Red Fort. *Diwan-e-am. Façade.* 1639-1649. Sandstone.

On the center of the back wall is a large enclave consisting of a three-arched opening with two pillars and two pilasters and an arch carved on the façade (Fig. 5.16). Each arched opening in turn holds three smaller cusped arches. The emperor used the back door of the enclave to enter and conduct public audience. The front pillars, arches and back wall of the enclave are decorated with semi-precious stone inlay in the shape of flowers and vines. The prime minister used the

marble dais inlaid with semiprecious stones standing below the enclave.



Fig. 5.16. Delhi. Red Fort. *Diwan-e-am.*

*Enclave on back wall. 1639-1649. Sandstone.*

Behind the Diwan-e-Am are a series of garden courts and five white marble pavilions in a row along the riverfront (Fig. 5.17). The pavilions have flat roofs, arched opening and eaves on the façade. A stream called the Stream of Paradise (*Naher-e-Bahisti*), fed by river water, flowed through all the marble pavilions.



Fig. 5.17. Delhi. Red Fort. *Palaces, courts and pool behind Diwan-e-am.* 1639-1649.

On the southern end of this row stands Mumtaz-Mahal palace, partly constructed with marble, with six compartments separated by arched piers. It is said that remains of Mumtaz Mahal Banu, brought from the south, were temporarily kept here before interment in Taj Mahal. The Delhi Museum of Archaeology is located in the building.

Rang Mahal, the Palace of Colors, originally painted in many hues, is a large hall standing on a basement. Some of the apartments have gilded roofs (Fig. 5.18). The walls and ceilings of some halls are embedded with mirror chips that reflected the light of burning candles, creating a sparkling effect. These halls, called Shish Mahal (Mirror Palace) have decorations similar to those of the halls in the Amber Fort near Jaipur in Rajasthan. A large lotus-shaped marble fountain is set in the Stream of Paradise in the center of the hall.



Fig. 5.18. Delhi. Red Fort. Rang Mahal. Gilded ceiling. 1639-1649. Marble.

The private palace, Khas Mahal, standing next in line, is similar to Rang Mahal. It was used as a private chamber by the emperor for praying and sleeping. Muthamman Bruj, a semi-octagonal tower with domed *chatri* on the east wall of the sleeping chamber protrudes beyond the rampart. The ceiling of the tower is exquisitely painted. Every morning the emperor appeared in the tower to show himself to the public. From the balcony constructed on the center of the tower, Great Britain's King George V and Queen Mary appeared before public in 1911. A long hall at the south with painted walls, ceiling and perforated screen was used as a sitting room. On the north end of these rooms is a delicate, exquisite marble screen over the Stream of Paradise (Fig. 5.19).



Fig. 5.19. Delhi. Red Fort. Khas Mahal. Marble screen above the stream. 1639-1649. Marble.

Diwan-e-Khas, the hall for private audiences, is the most splendid of all the pavilions. It was constructed by Shahjahan (Fig. 5.20) as a rectangular chamber with a painted ceiling resting on cusped arches supported on piers at the outer margins. *Chatris* decorate the four corners of the roof. The thick square columns are exquisitely inlaid with semi-precious stone in marble depicting flowering plants, at the bot-

tom, and are painted above (Fig. 5.21). The present ceiling, once entirely gilded, was painted in 1911. The famous peacock throne once stood in the center of the hall on a marble pedestal. It was removed by Nadir Shah to Iran in 1739. Below the cornice on the corner arches of the north and south walls an inscribed verse reads, "If there is a paradise on the earth, it is this, it is this, it is this."



Fig. 5.20. Delhi. Red Fort. Dewan-e-Khas. 1639-1649. Marble.



Fig. 5.21. Delhi. Red Fort. Interior of Dewan-e-Khas. 1639-1649. Marble.

A small marble mosque, called the Pearl Mosque, built by Aurangzeb for his personal use in 1659, stands on the south of the Diwan-e-khas (Fig. 5.22).

It was the principal place of worship inside the fort. On the façade of the prayer hall is a triple arched screen. The prayer hall is inlaid with marble. It has three bulbous domes, each with a constricted neck resting on an open lotus. The east wooden door is decorated with copper-plated leaves.

On the north of the Diwan-e-khas is the Hamam (bathing rooms) with three compartments separated by corridors. The floor and dados of the apartments are made of marble

with floral designs inlaid with multicolored stones. The eastern compartment, used as a dressing room, has three basins — one of which was said to hold rose water. There is a large basin in the middle of the central room. The west compartment was used for hot baths or steam baths. The heating elements were fixed on the west wall.



Fig. 5.22. Delhi. Red Fort. Moti Masjid. 1639-1649. Sandstone.

To the west of the Hamam is the Hyath Baksh Garden, with causeways and channels dividing the garden into large squares. A tower called Shahi Bruj stands at the riverfront corner of the garden (Fig. 5.23). One of its towers was blown away by a British field gun during a mutiny.



Fig. 5.23. Delhi. Red Fort. Hyath Baksh Garden. Shahi Bruj. 1639-1649. Marble.

The water that fed the Stream of Paradise was lifted from the river and led to a cascade over a sloping marble slab fixed in the wall (decorated with an inlay of flowers and vines in marble) and stored in a basin (Fig. 5.24). From the storage basin water passed through the bathroom, garden, and all the palaces.



Fig. 5. 25. Delhi. Red Fort. Hyath Baksh Garden. Shahi Bruj. Water Drop. 1663-1649. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.25. Delhi. Red Fort. Hyath Baksh Garden. Sawan Mahal. 1639-1649. Marble

The pavilion standing on a high basement has three large arched openings on the façade. In front of the central arched opening is a sharp slope from the top ending in a water channel below. The slopes are carved with niches to hold lighted candles. Water from a tank on the basement cascading past the lighted candles produced a mesmerizing effect in the evenings.

Along the riverfront is a small, open marble pavilion known as Hira-Mahalm built by Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal Emperor to conduct public poetry recitations. Moti-Mahal, another similar pavilion, was destroyed after the mutiny. Zafar-Mahal, a pavilion of red sandstone built by Bahadur Shah in about 1842, stands in the middle of a tank in the garden. The causeways connecting the pavilion to the garden are broken.

Shahjahan constructed the largest mosque in India in 1650-1656, outside the Red Fort (Fig. 5.26). Apparently five thousand masons worked daily for six years to complete the construction. Jami Mosque is virtually an open tent in stone.

The Mughals were nomads by tradition and Persian by cultural adaptation. To the hereditary tent they added domes and minarets of Persian design. The mosque was built of red sandstone on a rock outcrop approached by a steep flight of steps. Two-storey gateways on the east, north and south lead to the courtyard. The main entrance is on the east. The courtyard is 100m (305 ft.) square enclosed by pillared corridors with domed pavilions at the corners. The mosque can accommodate 25,000 worshippers. Shahjahan frequently used this mosque for praying with the public. The rectangular prayer hall is 61m (186 ft.) long and 27.5m (84 ft.) wide with two bays and has ten magnificent arches. The central arch is larger and higher than the others. The arches are decorated with marble frames. Above the frames are ten large white marble panels with black marble calligraphy. The inscriptions, in Persian, are political. There are a few inscriptions from the Quran in the interior. The mosque floor is laid with white marble delineated with black marble to simulate a prayer carpet. Three large bulbous domes with vertical strips alternating black and white marble surmount the prayer hall. There are 40m (122 ft.) high tapering minarets with four stories at the eastern end of the mosque.



Fig. 5.26. Delhi. Jami Masjid. Façade. 1650-1656. Sandstone.

The last Afghan sultans and nobles of Delhi concentrated on building tombs. Their dynastic burial ground is situated in a large garden called the Lodi Garden some distance from the Red Fort. The sultans built octagonal tombs and nobles built square tombs. The Lodi added many Hindu motifs to their tombs. The tombs looked two-storied, with imposing Persian domes. It is not known who is buried in most of them. Some are decorated on the interior with plaster stucco and painting. The entrance to the tomb of Sikander Lodi, the last sultan of Delhi, is through an imposing gateway. This is the first tomb constructed in India in a garden enclosed in high walls. The tomb is octagonal with three arched openings on each side with sloping eaves and an imposing dome on a

sixteen-sided drum with a turret on each corner. The central octagonal chamber surrounded by a verandah contains cenotaphs. The enclosure wall on the south has a mosque.

Tughlakabad, the third city of Delhi, stands within a massive parameter of gray granite walls enclosing the rubble of tombs, towers and residences. The fourth city, called Jahanpanah, has several dilapidated palaces and buildings constructed with sloping walls, flattish domes and arched vaults. The fifth city, Firuzabad, has a pyramidal structure of three stories, diminishing in size, with arched entrances on each storey. On the top storey is a 13m (40 ft.) high stone column transported from Ambala district. It is inscribed with Ashoka edicts dating from the third century BC. The sixth city, called Purana Qila, encloses impressive gateways and a few monuments constructed by the Mughals. The imperial capital of Shahjahan (called Shajahanabad) holds all the other Mughal monuments.





## 22. THE MONUMENTS AT AGRA (1556–1657)

The Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort were declared World Heritage Monuments in 1983.

In the Mahabharata, the Agra region has been referred to as Agrabana. The present day Agra was founded in 1475 by King Badal Singh of the Tomar Rajput dynasty. It is situated on the banks of the River Jamuna about 160 km (100 miles) downstream from Delhi. Sikander Lodi, the last sultan of Delhi, moved his capital from Delhi to Agra, and Babar in 1526 also made Agra his capital after he defeated Sikander Lodi. Babar introduced the Mughal style garden in Agra. Akbar moved his capital to Fatahpursikiri but moved back to Agra after fifteen years. It remained the capital of five Mughal emperors till 1658. Emperor Shahjahan moved the capital to Delhi in 1658. Three Mughal emperors, Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan, built monuments in Agra.



Fig. 5.30. Agra. Approach to Taj Mahal. 1631-1643. Marble.

The fifth Mughal emperor, Shahjahan (1628-1657), built the Taj Mahal in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. It is described lyrically as a tear drop on the cheek of time, poetry in marble, a dream in marble, and an image of paradise; and in such superlatives as the greatest achievement of all Indo-Islamic architecture, the most beautiful of all monuments made by the hands of man. In the end, the grandeur of the Taj Mahal defies all verbal description.



Fig. 5.31. Agra. Taj Mahal. Approach to Gateway. 1631-1643. Sandstone and Marble.

The chief architect and calligrapher of the monument were probably Ustad Ahmed Lahori and Amanat Khan. Ustad Ahmed Lahori was also commissioned by Shahjahan to build the Red Fort at Delhi. The construction of the monument began in 1631 on the banks of Jamuna at the site of the Raja Jai Singh mansion purchased by Shahjahan. The terrace and mausoleum took shape in about six years and the rest of the complex including gateway, garden, colonnade and other structures were completed in six more years, by 1643. The total construction cost for the Taj Mahal is variously estimated at three to five million rupees. According to historians, the economy of

the time was sound enough to withstand such huge expenditures. The Taj Mahal appears to be rising from the horizon as one approaches the monument from the city of Agra (Fig. 5.30). The majestic entrance gateway, constructed of red sandstone, is a monument in itself (Fig. 5.31).

In front of the gateway are the ruins of bazaars, guest-houses and a Mughal-style garden. The two-storey high façade of the entrance is decorated with a lofty recessed arch set in a rectangular frame flanked by similar but smaller recessed arches (Fig. 5.32).



Fig. 5.32. Agra. Taj Mahal. Gateway to Taj Mahal. 1631-1643. Sandstone and Marble.

The façade of the arches is decorated with inlay of marble depicting flowers assembled pieced together from semi-precious stones set in marble. White marble and semi-precious stones are profusely inlaid in the red sandstone. Octagonal domed pavilions surmounted by chatris are attached to the flanking arches. The verses from the Quran inscribed around the central arch of the façade in black marble inlaid on white gives the gateway an unusual elegance. A few verses comprise an invitation to enter paradise. The first look at the Taj Mahal from the gateway is breathtaking. It looms larger and larger as the gateway is approached and at the end of the gateway it bursts open in full grandeur in the setting of the beautiful garden. The Taj Mahal looks most beautiful in the morning when its image is reflected in the pool (Fig. 5.33).

The monument is located in a vast Mughal style garden surrounded by high walls lined with colonnade. The reflecting pool enclosed in paths on both sides runs through the center of 305m (1000 ft.) square garden. The layout of the reflecting pool in front of the Taj Mahal is replicated in front of the Lincoln memorial in Washington DC. The raised marble tank at the mid-point of the path is visualized as a celestial tank of abundance, as in paradise.

The play of light against the monument changes with the weather and the time of day, giving the Taj Mahal still

more mystical and numinous majesty. The most noticeable changes are under a cloudy sky after rain (Fig. 5.34) and at sunset (5.35). Sunlight filtering through the marble screen inside the tomb also produces a delightful effect.



Fig. 5.33. Agra. Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal in the morning. 1631-1643. Marble.



Fig. 5.34. Agra. Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal after rain. 1631-1643 Marble.

The Taj Mahal is as wide as high, 55m (180 ft.) and the height of the dome is the same as the height of the arched entrance on the façade. The layout of the façade is simpler than the façade of Humayun's Tomb at Delhi. The simple proportions and layout of the façade adds symmetry, harmony and beauty. Chaste white marble, fine grained and pure of texture, was brought from Rajasthan and the precious and semi-precious stones for inlay work were obtained from all over the world.



Fig. 5.35. Agra. Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal at sunset. 1631-1643. Marble.

As Jamuna flows along the northern border of the Taj Mahal, the architects incorporated several cylindrical wells filled with rubble masonry in the foundation of the terrace to protect the monument from the force of the flooding river. The terrace, constructed of red sandstone, is veneered with marble on a 95.5m (313 ft.) square area to form the platform of the mausoleum. Water for irrigating the garden was collected by an elaborate system of subterranean storage tanks and brought to the surface by underground pipes that are still in use. The tomb is located at the far end of the large garden enclosed in high walls. In the Muslim paradise, the throne of God is supposedly located at the far end of paradise. At the end of the reflecting pool, a marble extension of the platform decorated similarly to the platform itself hides the stairway that leads to the top of the platform. Wooden doors guard the entrances to the stair.



Fig. 5.36. Agra. Taj Mahal. Central arch.  
1631-1643. Marble.

The façade of the Taj Mahal is decorated with a 27.5m (90 ft.) high marble recessed arch (Fig. 5.36) inlaid with flowers and calligraphy in black marble. The recess of the arch in the center of the back wall has two windows with marble screens. The lower arch window has an opening at the floor level to enter the tomb (Fig. 5.37).



Fig. 5.37. Agra. Taj Mahal. Entrance to the monument. 1631-1643. Marble.

Slightly smaller semi-hexagonal structures with alcoves on each face flank the central alcove (Fig. 5.38). These structures are not placed forward of the central arch as in Humayun's Tomb. The first section of the semi-hexagon is in line with the central arch, the middle section forms the flat corners of the monument and the third continues with the side walls. Each face of the semi-hexagon is divided horizontally into two. Both the divisions have large, deeply recessed arches. The alcove arches and the inside recess are decorated similarly to the big central recessed arch but there are no entrances to the tomb from the alcove arches. Every verse from the Quran relating to Judgment Day is inscribed on the arches, but no other verses. The Taj Mahal was possibly visualized as the throne of God. In Islamic tradition the most blessed burial place is beneath the throne of God and that is where Shahjahan wanted his beloved wife to rest.

The flowers inlaid in marble on the arches are those that supposedly grow in paradise. The cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal is located in the center of the monument and the cenotaph of Shahjahan, constructed by Aurangzeb, is located to the side (Fig. 5.39). This is the only asymmetrical arrangement in Taj Mahal. The actual bodies rest below in a crypt in the basement.

The sarcophagus of Mumtaz Mahal is located in the central octagonal chamber above the basement surrounded by a delicate marble screen (Fig. 5.40). The top of the marble screen is carved with vases inlaid with flowers fashioned from thin sections of precisely cut semiprecious stone and

gems (Fig. 5.41), including jasper, agate, lapis lazuli, carnelian, bloodstone, onyx and chrysolite. One flower measuring only one inch may contain 60 different inlays. Thirty-six different varieties of carnelian can be counted in single carnation petal. The flowering plants and the calligraphy on the sarcophagus are a marvel of the inlay technique called *Petra Dura*.



Fig. 5.38. Agra. Taj Mahal. Side view of the façade. 1631-1643. Marble.

The interior chambers of Taj Mahal are also carved with flowering plants and calligraphy on marble walls. The slightly bulbous double dome is placed on a drum on the center of the mausoleum. The dome is 24.4m (80 ft.) in diameter and rises 27.5m (90 ft.) above the roof of the monument. Around the corners of the roof are four pleasing cupolas of Indian design, hemispherical in shape, 9.1m (30 ft.) in diameter.

The 27.5m (130 ft.) tall white marble minarets have four stories with balconies supported on pendulant brackets. The minarets crowned with shapely domes and standing majestically at four corners of the terrace appear like a canopy over a throne.

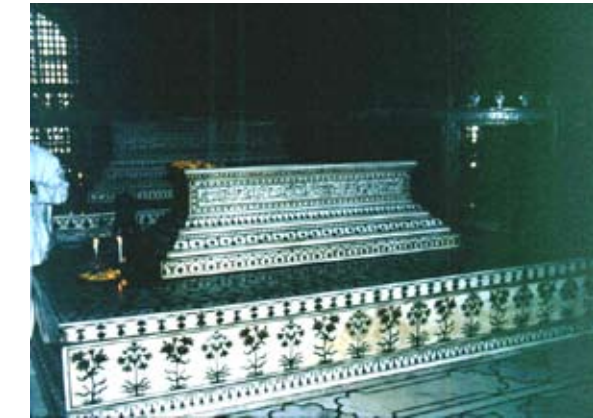


Fig. 5.39. Agra. Taj Mahal. Sarcophagus of Mumtaz Mahal. 1631-1643. Marble.

The dream-like quality of Taj derives from the delicate grains white marble, the surface decorations, the delicate and

elegant marble carvings, marble screens, the beautiful execution of inscriptions in black marble and the simplicity of the layout and proportions.



Fig. 5.40. Agra. Taj Mahal. Marble screen around sarcophagus. 1631-1643. Marble.

Two identical monuments of red sandstone with marble inlay flank Taj Mahal. The monument on the left is used as a mosque (Fig. 5.42). The one on the right perhaps has no more important function than to provide symmetry.

Fig. 5.41. Agra. Taj Mahal. Vase on marble screen top. 1631-1643. Marble.



Fig. 5.42. Agra. Taj Mahal. Mosque beside Taj Mahal. 1631-1643. Marble.

A recent joint investigation by the Archaeological Survey of India and the Smithsonian Institute has discovered the layout of a garden similar to the garden in front of the Taj Mahal on the opposite bank of the Jamuna. It included a large octagonal pool to reflect the Taj Mahal. It appears that the Taj Mahal was planned with two similar large gardens, one on each side. Work on the garden on the opposite bank stopped after the death of Shahjahan. The Archaeological Survey of India has started to reconstruct the garden layout that was buried by silt deposits from the Jamuna. They are planting the same species of fruits and flowering plants that were originally planted there, after analyzing pollen deposits and the remains of plant tissue in the soil.

It is said that one of the architects of the Taj Mahal visited the tomb of Hoshang Shah at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh in 1659. The Hoshang tomb stands in the middle of a courtyard on a square marble-covered platform. The ornamentation on the exterior walls is simple. The walls, veneered with irregular marble slabs, are 9.9 (29.6 ft.) high. The interior 14.9m (49 ft.) square base of the tomb is transformed into an octagon by the use of arches, then to sixteen sides by the use of quenchers that bear the load of the dome above. The dome is flat and heavy with a crescent on top. It is a far cry from the beauty of Taj Mahal.

Akbar in 1555 commissioned the construction of Agra Fort on the remains of Badalgarh Fort, built by Tomar Rajputs. He extended the fort in 1565 and 1573. It was the preferred residence of Akbar in his early years. Forts were inseparable from royal residences of the Mughal. The fort is crescent-shaped with a 2.4 km (1.5 miles) circumference and 22m (67 ft.) high rampart walls of red sandstone. A moat 9m (27.5 ft.) deep and 10m (30.5 ft.) wide surrounds the crescent circumference of the fort. River Jamuna flows at the back. The moat was connected to the river.



Fig. 5.43. Agra. Agra Fort. Amarsingh Gate.  
1555-1573. Sandstone.

The main entrance to the fort on the south is Amarsingh Gate, with its protective barbican (Fig. 5.43). On the ramparts is another, the Akbari Gate, with polygonal towers capped by small domes and decorated with brilliant-colored tiles. A sharply inclined defensive ramp leads through the gate to Jahangir Palace, on the left, the only monument built by Akbar that has survived in the fort. The entrance to the fort on the west is through the Delhi Gate, which has a rectangular barbican entered through a side gateway. A paved ramp from the gate climbs gradually to the *hathipol*, flanked by part-octagonal towers ornamented with carved animals, birds, and domed *chattris*. Most of the monuments in Agra and Delhi Fort are similar to the monuments in the Red Fort in Delhi, as Shahjahan built them all.



Fig. 5.44. Agra. Agra Fort. Jahangir palace.  
1560-1570. Sandstone

Jahangir palace was built in 1560-1570 (Fig. 5.44). It faces west to an open area with a large marble cistern carved in 1611. Jahangir supposedly used it as a bathtub. The façade of the red sandstone palace is without windows; instead, it has blind arches decorated with marble borders carved with hanging lotus buds (Fig. 5.45). It bears a false upper storey. The eaves are supported on brackets with pendant lotus buds, a typical Mughal decorative design. The prominent arched gateway in the middle is decorated with six-pointed marble stars and geometric designs and is flanked by small domed *chattris*. Squat octagonal towers with domed *chattris* decorate the corners. The palace interior has square courtyards with a number of residential suites and reception halls. Substantial additions were made by Jahangir and Shahjahan to the palace in the first half of the seventeenth century. Royal ladies supposedly used it as a residence.

Anguri Bagh, the grape garden, is situated to the east of Jahangir Mahal. The plant beds are laid in geometric shapes with marble borders. A pool in the center is reached by raised walkways. There are underground chambers beneath, possibly used as a retreat in hot weather.

Fig. 5.45. Agra. Agra Fort. Jahangir palace. Decoration on exterior walls. 1560-1570. Sandstone.



To the east of Anguri Bagh stands Khas Mahal in the center of a high marble terrace with a formal garden in front and the river at the back (Fig. 5.46). The pavilion was constructed in 1663 for Shahjahan's private use. The façade bears five cusped arches on thick, undecorated pillars. The arched openings are sheltered under sloping *chajja*. Diminutive *chattris* stand on the roof corners. The large verandah in front has a diminutive marble screen parapet wall at the terrace rim. The interior of the pavilion is a single hall decorated with niches on the side walls and marble screens on the back wall facing the river. The tent-like single hall is reminiscent of the Mughals' nomadic way of life. A small decorated pool in front of Khas Mahal holds a fountain. Small pavilions with three vaulted chambers and the curved thatched roof of Bengal huts flank Khas Mahal. The central open chamber with pillars has three decorated cusped-arched openings on the front and back and a decorated *chajja*. Delicate marble parapet screens serve as a wall on the river side. The Bengal roofs of the pavilions are enhanced with copper plates.



Fig. 5.46. Agra. Agra Fort. Khas Mahal. 1628-1657. Marble.

Masumma Bruj on the northeast of Anguri Bagh is an octagonal tower with a gilded copper dome standing on a rectangular chamber (Fig. 5.47). The chamber is surrounded with the marble cells of a prison, in geometric shapes; it has a verandah projecting towards the river (Fig. 5.48). Taj Mahal across the river is visible from the Bruj. Shahjahan, confined in this tower for eight years by his son Aurangzeb, died gazing at Taj Mahal in 1666. The rectangular chamber is exquisitely decorated with inlays of semi-precious stones

(Fig. 5.49). There is a delicately ornamented fountain with petal-like motifs in the center of the chamber floor.



Fig. 5.47. Agra. Agra Fort. Masumma Bruj. 1628-1657. Marble.



Fig. 5.48. Agra. Agra Fort. Masumma Bruj. Taj Mahal seen from balcony. 1628-1657. Marble.

Fig. 5.49. Agra. Agra Fort. Masumma Bruj.

Interior decoration. 1628-1657. Marble.

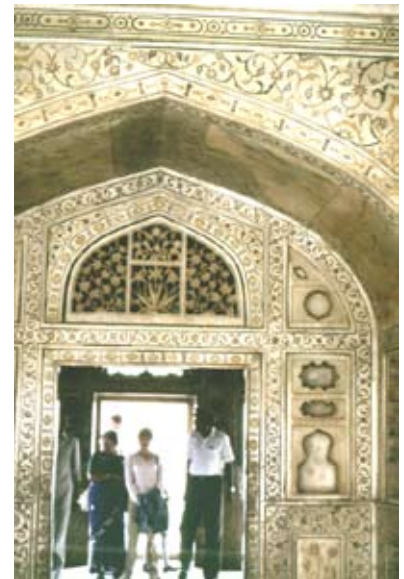




Fig. 5.50. Agra. Agra Fort. *Diwan-e-khas*. 1628-1657. Marble.

Diwan-e-khas, the pavilion for private audiences, is a tent-like open hall constructed in 1673 to the west of the Masumma Tower (Fig. 5.50). The pavilion stands on a marble basement carved with plants and flowers. The marble columns and brackets supporting the flat roof of the hall are inlaid with flowerings plants. The white marble bases of the pillars are decorated with flowering plants enclosed with pleasing borders of black marble. The carvings of flowering plants on marble walls, are decorated with border of semi-precious stones (Fig. 5.51).



Fig. 5.51. Agra. Agra Fort. *Diwan-e-khas*.

*Interior decoration*. 1628-1657. Marble.

The Peacock Throne once stood in the center of the Diwan-e-khas. It was a small bejeweled pavilion with a pair of peacocks on the roof studded with the finest rubies, diamonds, emeralds and pearls. The roof is decorated with gold painted plants inside geometric designs; the flowering plants are Indian but the geometric tracery is Persian in inspiration. On the broad terrace to the south of the pavilion are two broad black and white marble seats on opposite sides. Beneath the terrace to the west is a large rectangular court with arcaded pavilions at two levels, called the Machi Bha-

van (Fish Pavilion). Royal ladies conducted their Meena Bazaar (market) in the upper level of the pavilion once a year to sell merchandise to the royalty and to select their future life partners (Fig. 5.52). It is also suggested that the name indicates that a fish tank was located in the center of court on the floor level.



Fig. 5.52. Agra. Agra Fort. *Machli-Bhavan*. 1628-1657. Marble.

Shahjahan constructed Nagina Mosque for his own use with a separate hall to the right for royal ladies (Fig. 5.53). It is a magnificent little mosque built of white marble exuding simplicity, dignity, beauty and a kind of feminine charm. A unique feature of the mosque is the lack of inlay decoration. An inscription in small Persian characters under the overhanging cornice across the entire façade indicates that Shahjahan construction the monument at a cost of three hundred thousand rupees.



Fig. 5.53. Agra. Agra Fort. *Nagina Mosque*. 1653. Marble.

The mosque was completed in seven years, by 1653. The façade, with pillars, boasts three cusped arches with curved *chajja* on the middle arched opening. The interior small hall has two bays. On the roof are three bulbous domes with decorated tops. There is a small tank for ablutions in the front courtyard.

Diwan-e-am was constructed by Shahjahan for public audiences and to conduct formal receptions called *Durbars*. Before the permanent structure was built, these functions

were conducted under a canvas awning stretched on poles. Later a temporary wooden pavilion was constructed with gilded and decorated columns. The pavilion is open on three sides and has tall multifaceted marble columns paired at the periphery and quadrupled at the corners supporting a flat roof on broad cusped arches and eaves above (Fig. 5.54). Possibly this was the last building constructed in the fort.



Fig. 5.54. Agra Fort. Dewan-e-am. 1657. Marble.

The hall is entered from the north and south by a flight of sandstone steps. The triple arched alcove projecting from the back wall, decorated with inlay of semiprecious stones, was used by the emperor to conduct *darbars*. There is a large rectangular courtyard in front, paved with sandstones, and a well in the center.

Visible from the Diwan-e-am are the marble domes and octagonal towers of the Moti Mosque (Pearl Mosque) constructed by Jahangir in 1655. It has a white marble hall with three aisles and seven bays surrounded by a colonnade on three sides. There is a square pool in the center of the courtyard. An octagonal pillar in the courtyard was used as a sundial. On the roof, small *chattris* surround three ornamented domes and octagonal towers capped with small *chattris*.

Other Mughal monuments in Agra are the Itamaud-daulah tomb, Akbar Mausoleum and Rambagh.



Fig. 5.55. Agra. Itmad-ud-daulah Mausoleum. Gateway. 1622-1628. Sandstone.

Itamaud-daulah tomb was constructed by Noorjahan, queen of Jahangir, in 1622-1628, on the banks of the River Jamuna, to inter her father. The tomb is located in the center of a Mughal-style garden in a high walled compound with four gateways. The front, constructed of red sandstone, is similar in layout to the façade of Humayun's tomb in Delhi (Fig. 5.55).

The gateway on the back, opening to the Jamuna, is similarly decorated. The marble tomb is a small but exquisitely beautiful monument (Fig. 5.56).



Fig. 5.56. Agra. Itmad-ud-daulah Mausoleum. Seen from Gateway. 1622-1628. Marble.



Fig. 5.57. Agra. Itmad-ud-daulah Mausoleum. Decorations on façade. 1622-1628. Marble.

The tomb stands on a decorated raised platform. A large recessed arched opening in the center is the entrance. Two small arched openings covered by marble screens flank the central entrance. Two deeply recessed arched openings closed with marble screens decorate the monument near the corners. The openings on the façade, with their superb marble latticework, admit light and air to the interior. Every inch of the exterior walls of the squat tomb is covered with superb inlay work



in various designs and colored stones using the Petra Dura technique, which was introduced from Italy (Fig. 5.57).

Fig. 5.58. Agra. Itmad-ud-daulah Mausoleum. Decorations on interior walls. 1622-1628. Marble.

The walls of the inner chambers are lavishly decorated with inlays of pine trees (Fig. 5.58), a swan, a vase with flowers, and flowering plants (Fig. 5.59).



Fig. 5.59. Agra. Itmad-ud-daulah Mausoleum. Decorations on interior walls. 1622-1628. Marble.



Fig. 5.60. Agra. Itmad-ud-daulah Mausoleum. Decorations on façade. 1622-1628. Marble.

The marble ceiling of the central pavilion displays a decorative motif. The cenotaph of Noor-jahan's father is located in the central room. Several other family members are also buried in the tomb, in other rooms. The unique feature of the tomb is

the dome which appears like a pavilion with a barrel-shaped roof (Fig. 5.60).

It has three arches on the façade of each side, with eaves above. Each arch is half-filled with marble screens of various designs and the remaining space is carved with blind decorated arches. A barrel-shaped dome with finials decorated with inlay work crowns the pavilion. A low parapet screen wall surrounds the pavilion. Four thick squat minarets with exquisite inlay work stand on the roof corners.

Akbar's mausoleum is located in Sikandria, 10 km (6 miles) from Agra. It is a mixture of Muslim, Hindu and Jain architecture. Akbar started the construction but Jahangir, who completed the mausoleum in about 1560-1572, after the death of Akbar, gets most of the credit for the architectural achievement.

The entrance to the mausoleum is through an imposing gateway with four slender minarets and *chattris*. The design of the gateway façade is similar to the façade of Humayun's tomb (Fig. 5.61).



Fig. 5.61. Agra. Sikandria. Akbar Mausoleum. Gateway. 1622-1628. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.62. Agra. Sikandria. Akbar Mausoleum. 1622-1628. Sandstone.

Constructed of red sandstones it is decorated with marble and multi-colored stone inlay in elaborate geometric and large floral designs. The mausoleum is situated in the center of large Mughal style garden. The five-storied red sandstone mausoleum appears more like a palace bearing elaborately

decorated chatris (Fig. 5.62). The façade of the mausoleum bears a large arch in the center reaching to the height of fourth floor. The central arch flanked with three small arches is profusely inlaid with marble decorations. The recessed façade of each arch is covered with marble screen with an opening in the center for entrance (Fig. 5.63).



Fig. 5.63. Agra. Sikandria. Akbar Mausoleum. Central arch. 1622-1628. Sandstone.

The central room of the first floor, housing the sarcophagus, is three stories high. The top storey is constructed of marble. Akbar's marble cenotaph, inlaid with gems, is located on the top storey, surrounded with marble screens and open to the sky. Contrary to Muslim precepts it is said that Akbar is buried facing east, rather than west.

The rooms along the corridor on the ground floor around the mausoleum enclose graves. The decorated corridor around the mausoleum appears like a tunnel with arches opening on the side (Fig. 5.64).



Fig. 5.64. Agra. Sikandria. Akbar Mausoleum. Verandah. 1622-1628. Sandstone.

Broad pathways paved with stone start from the center on three sides of the monuments and after passing through the garden, with its pool, each path ends in a blind gateway (Fig. 5.65).



Fig. 5.65. Agra. Sikandria. Akbar Mausoleum. Blind Gate. 1622-1628. Sandstone.

In the center of the pathway, a broad water canal carries water to the pool. One blind gateway of a path is missing.

Rambagh is the earliest Mughal-style garden. It was laid out in 1528 by Babar on the banks of Jamuna. Only the skeleton of the garden with a few canals and pools remain now. Water for irrigation was lifted from the river. Babar was temporarily buried in this garden before his permanent interment at Kabul.

## 23. THE MONUMENTS AT FATAHPURSIKRI (1571-1586)

The Fatahpursikri complex is located on a rocky plateau in the Vindhyan mountains. It is a sprawling complex containing a large mosque and related buildings, a ceremonial capital rather than a real city. Shaik Salim Chisti tomb is the most renowned Muslim site of pilgrimage in India. Fatahpursikri is located 37 km (22 miles) from Agra, where boarding and lodging facilities are available; it is usually visited as a day trip by road or rail. UNESCO declared Fatahpursikri a World Heritage Monument in 1986. The Buland Darwaza (the main entrance to the mosque) in particular is one of the most remarkable examples of Mughal architecture.

Fatahpursikri has a history of occupation by Rajputs, Turks and Lodi sultans of Delhi from the twelfth century to 1527 when the Mughals occupied it. Agra was Akbar's (1542-1605) preferred capital. He had no male heir for a long time. During a visit to Fatahpursikiri, the local Sufi saint, Shaik Salim Chisti, prophesized that Akbar would have three sons. Shortly after the prophecy, Jahangir was born in 1569. In 1571 Akbar ordered the construction of buildings at Fatahpursikri so he could be near the saint, to show his gratitude. Construction of the essential building was completed in the first year. The saint died in 1572, but work on the other buildings went on for 15 years.

There are no streets but simply terraces with individual buildings and courts. Most of the buildings are attractive but have a kind of unreal appearance. Fatahpursikri is the product of a mind that sought to synthesize two cultures and to create a unique building complex that would attract the human mind. The buildings bear Persian-derived elements synthesized with indigenous

features. They are neither Hindu nor Muslim in character — but are certainly Indian. There are more than two dozens buildings in Fatahpursikri. Each building acts like a module in a meandering design. None is placed in a position of outstanding importance. There is no impression of a single focus for aesthetic emphasis. Such a layout is said to be essentially Islamic in character.

All the buildings in the complex are constructed of red sandstone obtained from the local quarries. In 1585 Akbar left Fatahpursikri on a military campaign. In 1598 he returned, and visited Fatahpursikri only once in 1601 for few days. Fatahpursikri suffered from neglect from the time Akbar left on that military campaign. Jat Marathas caused some destruction during Aurangzeb's regime. More than a century later a Mughal king, Muhammad Shah Rangila (1719-1748), ruled from Fatahpursikri for about 12 years. It was totally abandoned by the Mughals after 1748. At least there was no plundering, as most of the buildings are constructed of sandstone without inlay of marble or semi-precious stones; but most of the buildings in the complex have suffered damage due to neglect and time.

Fatahpursikri was planned as a cultural, commercial and administrative center of the empire, as well as a residential space. The complex, 10 km (6 miles) in circumference, was minimally protected with 6 km (3.75 miles) long embattled walls and an artificially created lake on one side. Agra Fort, 37 km (22 miles) away, was the primary defense center.

There are nine nearly identical gates leading into Fatahpursikri. All the gates are in ruins except Agra Gate, which was the principal imperial entrance. The road from Agra Gate passes through an enclosure, called Naubat Khana, where drums were beat to announce the arrival of the emperor in Diwan-e-am and to denote the hours of the day.

The buildings at Fatahpursikiri are in four groups. The great mosque and the associated buildings are located on the highest point of the ridge. The palace area to the west of the mosque, comprising buildings used by Akbar for his personal and administrative use, is called Daulath Khana. The remaining buildings of the palace complex, used by imperial ladies, are called Haremsara. The principal units of Haremsara were connected to the Daulath Khana by screened corridors but were shut off from the treasury and other offices. Service buildings formed the last group. These buildings were constructed and decorated in Indian style by West Indian temple builders.

The present residential village is below the ridge on land sloping away from the highest point. The common people were not accommodated in the complex except as essential servants. There is much misinformation, guesswork and fairy tale associated with the use of most of the buildings. Every person has his own version. There are many old ruined buildings around Fatahpursikiri.



Fig. 5.70. Fatahpursikiri. Jami Masjid. Main entrance. 1572-1575. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.71. Fatahpursikiri. Jami Masjid. Decoration at the base of arch. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The main entrance to the great mosque, called Buland Darwaza (Tall Gate), standing on top of the ridge, is 59m high and 59m (177 ft.) wide (Fig. 5.70). With its width equal

to its height, the entrance the gate would have looked rather flat. To avoid that, the gate was constructed as a half hexagon with a wide, projecting central façade and slightly folded back walls. The two side walls are broken into three tiers. The first tier shows a cusped arch with decorations similar to the front arch. The second tier has three openings with lintels supported on pillars with brackets surrounded with a delicate inlay of marble. The top tier has a cusped arch similar to the arch on first tier. The roof with crowning parapet is decorated with a row of small *chattris* and three large domes. The front façade with deeply recessed arch is divided into five vertical and three horizontal sections. Each horizontal section is decorated similar to the decoration on the side walls. The central vertical section below the set of three openings has a huge wooden door nailed with horseshoes, as far as the human hand can reach, by people seeking good luck. The wooden door leads to the arched colonnade of the mosque enclosing a large courtyard. The arches of the colonnade are decorated with lotus buds hanging on the lower margins. The roof of the colonnade is crowned with *chattris*. The exit to the courtyard from the colonnade is through an arched opening decorated with scrollwork.

The paved courtyard of the mosque is 134m (407 ft.) long and 110m (335 ft.) wide. The dimensions of the mosque including arched colonnade are 165m (504 ft.) long and 133.6m (437.5 ft.) wide. It is one of the largest open mosques in India.

After five years of work the construction of the mosque was completed in 1572. On the west the colonnade has a majestic arch in the center leading to three recesses (*mihirabs*) on the back wall of colonnade marking the direction to Mecca. The central recess is framed in arch with lotus buds hanging on margin and decorated with beautiful decorative designs and calligraphy on red sandstone inlaid with marble. To the right of the *mihrab* is a marble pulpit with three steps. An arched opening from the central hall on the north and south lead to the colonnade bays. Each bay, bearing a dome, is divided into three halls and each hall is provided with three *mihirabs*. The inside of the dome above the central colonnade hall is superbly painted in Persian style. The flat roof of the halls is supported on pillars of Hindu style with square base, octagonal center and hexagonal end. The mosque lacks minarets.

The courtyard of the mosque is paved with red sandstone. In the center of the courtyard is a small 8.7m (26.5 ft.) square masonry tank, 1.2m (3.7 ft.) deep, to hold water for ablutions. The tank is shaded by a large tree. Subterranean channels running under the pavement supply water to

the tank. Today, a galvanized iron pipe supplies additional water.



Fig. 5.72. Fatahpursikiri. Salim Chisti tomb in courtyard. 1572-1581. Marble.



Fig. 5.73. Fatahpursikiri. Salim Chisti tomb. Serpentine brackets. 1572-1581. Marble.

Shaik Salim Chisti's tomb, partly constructed of the finest marble, is the most famous Muslim pilgrimage center in India (Fig. 5.72). Temple builders carved the marble serpentine brackets of the exterior pillars (Fig. 5.73) and the delicate marble screens round the tomb (Fig. 5.74). Each of the exquisitely carved screens has different designs and they have no equal in India. The tomb was completed in 1581 before Akbar left Fatahpursikri on his military campaigns. Originally the red sandstone dome was partly faced with marble both inside and out. In 1866 the dome was completely veneered with marble. In about 1606, outer marble screens were added and the enclosed verandah of red sandstone was paved with marble. The marble eaves and serpentine brackets may have been part of the original structure or perhaps

they were added later; this is not certain. The walls are lined with marble up to 1.14m (3.5 ft.) and the red sandstone walls above are plastered with creamy lime to match the marble. The entrance to the chamber in the center of the tomb with the cenotaph of the saint is made through a richly carved arch painted in colors.

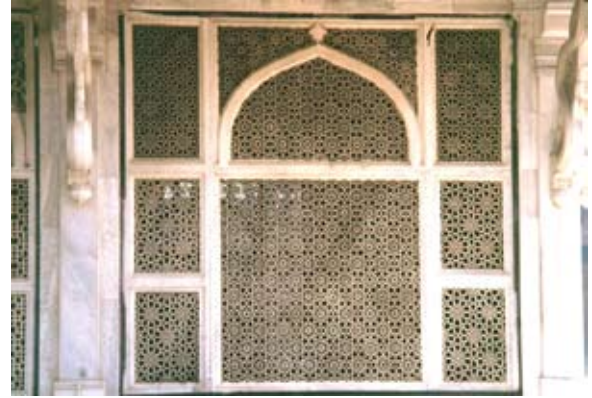


Fig. 5.74. Fatahpursikiri. Salim Chisti tomb. Marble screens surrounding the tomb. 1572-1581. Marble

The marble floor of the tomb chamber is inlaid with semiprecious stones. The wooden frame of the cenotaph above is covered with tiny shimmering scales of mother of pearl cut in various shapes. The body of the saint is buried beneath the pavement. The crypt, once accessible by a flight of steps, is walled up.

Akbar used to enter the mosque from the palace through Badshahi Darwaza (gate) located in the colonnade on the east. The gate projects from the colonnade like a half-hexagonal porch 13.m (40 ft.) wide and 19m (57 ft.) high. The actual entrance within is reduced to human proportion. The side walls of the half hexagon have arched openings one above another.

There are some graves of disciples of the saint's, and infants and ladies of the imperial household, in the colonnade adjacent to the saint's tomb. Other buildings outside the mosque area are Rang Mahal, the first palace built in Fatahpursikiri to house Akbar's pregnant wife, and the Stonecutters Mosque, build by the saint with the help of local stonecutters with serpentine arches. Both are in poor condition.

Haremsara, the group of principal residential and entertainment centers of the imperial ladies, includes Jodh Bai Palace, Maryam House, Birbal House and Panch Mahal. These residences are isolated from the other buildings in the complex but are connected to Akbar's sleeping quarters by covered passageways.

Jodh Bai Palace, the largest and most important residence of the imperial ladies, was not specifically built for the

Rajput queen Jodh Bai. The plain and massive looking exterior of red stone walls has a random scattering of yellow and speckled sandstone blocks to break the monotony of the red color (Fig. 5.75).



Fig. 5.75. Fatahpursikiri. Jodh Bi Palace. Façade. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The façade of the two-storey palace has a recessed alcove decorated with an arch adorned with hanging lotus buds and six-pointed stars in the spandrel above. The

central arch is flanked by slightly smaller deeply recessed blind arches. Decorated *jharoka*, the protruding windows of Rajput origin, are placed above the small recessed arches of the lower storey. The façade of the upper storey is carved all over with small arches and geometric designs. Two large *chattris* decorate the roof. The only passage to the interior of the palace is through the central entrance, which was guarded by eunuchs. The passage through the entrance turns sharply to the right to prevent anyone looking into the spacious quadrangle inside.



Fig. 5.76. Fatahpursikiri. Jodh Bai Palace. Courtyard. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The courtyard encloses a series of residential quarters facing the court in the fashion of Gujarat palaces. The pillars on the ground floor and upper storey bear brackets decorated with large pendant lotus buds. The relief carvings on the walls of courtyard resemble the renowned woodwork of Gujarat.

The second storey has an enclosed verandah supported on brackets with large opening to the courtyard. The roof is

decorated with *chattris* (Fig. 5.77). The capitals of the pillars in some rooms are carved with essentially Hindu motifs like the bell and chain, lotus petals, rosettes and small lozenges. The columns are square at the base, becoming octagonal and finally circular. The upper rooms of the northern and southern wings have a ribbed roof covered with azure blue glazed tiles imported from Multan. Their rich pure hue stands out vividly in the dull surroundings. The Rajput wives of Akbar were provided with niches on the walls to keep facsimiles of their gods and to perform religious rites (Fig. 5.78).



Fig. 5.77. Fatahpursikiri. Jodh Bi Palace. Second floor balcony. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

Contrary to religious practice Akbar allowed paintings on the walls, which have mostly faded (Fig. 5.79). A two-storey palace taking advantage of the breeze, Hawa Mahal stands in the north wing of Jodh Bai Palace. The first storey is open, supported on rows of double square columns. The second storey is enclosed with beautiful stone screens. It was the resting place of the emperor with a few chosen ladies.

Fig. 5.78. Fatahpursikiri. Jodh Bai Palace.

Cell facade. 1572-1575. Sandstone.



From the Hawa Mahal a screened viaduct leads to Hatipol, past the *zanana* garden. Maryam House, also called

Golden House, was the residence of Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begum —also known as Maryam Makani. It stands on a plain plinth and is rather severe looking. Stone eaves on heavy brackets run around the pavilion. Some of the brackets bear carvings of Hindu inspiration. The interior of the residence was splendidly decorated with paintings glowing with gold.



Fig. 5.79. Fatahpursikiri. Jodh Bi Palace.

Painting on wall. 1572-1575. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.80. Fatahpursikiri. Panch Mahal. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

Panch Mahal consists of four stories progressively diminishing in size supported on columns and without walls (Fig. 5.80). Possibly it was a "wind catcher" mansion. The ground floor has eighty-four columns, each different from the others. The first storey has sixty-four, the second storey has twenty and the third storey has twelve columns. The fourth storey terminates in a single domed pavilion with four columns at the corners. Originally all the stories were surrounded with stone screens; possibly Akbar used this location to relax with the imperial ladies, enjoying the breeze.

Salima Sultana and Ruqya Begum, two senior queens of Akbar, possibly used Birbal Palace as their residence (Fig. 5.81).



Fig. 5.81. Fatahpursikiri. Birbal Palace. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The monument has fine carving both inside and out. The two-storey building stands on a high plinth. The lower storey with oblong dome-like roof appears to be standing beside a two-storey building. On the exterior walls of the lower storey several pilasters support *chajja* on brackets that bearing pendant lotus buds. Spaces between the pilasters show blind arches with niches (Fig. 5.82). The lower storey has four small square rooms and on the northeast and southwest corners, flights of stairs leads to the upper storey. The exterior walls of the upper storey are decorated similarly to the decorations on the lower storey. Inside it has two rooms with large domes above. The remaining space of the storey is the verandah in front of the rooms. The building is a perfect place for two friendly ladies who want to maintain separate residences.



Fig. 5.82. Fatahpursikiri. Birbal Palace. First floor entrance. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

On the back of the Jodh Bai palace is a U-shaped colonnade with courtyard. There are plain stalls attached to the walls

of colonnade facing the courtyard. Some believe this was a horse stable. Stone rings in front of the bays and stone slots in the back wall could have been used for tethering animals. However, there is no drainage provided. It is very close to the Birbal and Jodh Bai palaces, the royal residences. Stables amidst royal residences, with the associated noise, traffic and smell, seems improbable. More likely this could have served as sleeping quarters for the ladies' maids who would have been in constant attendance to the royal ladies. On the east end of the block is a bath and a latrine.

Zanana Garden near Birbal House has been laid out like Mughal gardens, with several paths — interestingly, they are at right angles. In the middle of the garden is a small fish pond. At one end of the garden is a dilapidated bath. For five to eight days each year, the wives and daughters of the nobles and officers would set up stalls to sell groceries, gold and jewelry in the garden for fun and to have some social interaction. The emperor and his retinue used to purchase merchandise from the ladies, after much haggling and disputes.



Fig. 5.83. Fatehpur Sikri. Ladies' guesthouse. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The Ladies' Guesthouse is a triple-doored pavilion with sloping stone roof adjacent to the western wall of Birbal Palace (Fig. 5.83). Perhaps it was a guesthouse for high born ladies whom Akbar used to admit as guests to his harem for a short stay.

Nagina Mosque near Zanana Garden is in ruined state. It was a plain mosque used by imperial ladies. It was connected to Hawa Mahal and Hiran Minar by an arched passage supported on columns.

Other structures in this group are Hatipol, the grand entrance gate to the ladies' residential area, the colonnade quarters of the female guards (called Elephant House) and the Singing Bruj (Naqqar Khana), where cymbals and drums were beat to mark the passing of the hours and to announce the arrival and departure of the Emperor.

The palace area buildings include Diwan-e-Khas, Diwan-e-Am, Ankh Mucholi (treasury), Khwabgha (sleeping quar-

ters), Anup Talao (pool), Mardana, an open courtyard with Parcheesi board, Turkish Sultana's palace and Daftar Khana (Record chamber) used by Akbar for his personal and administrative purposes.



Fig. 5.84. Fatehpur Sikri. Dewan-e-khas and Mardana. 1572-1575. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.85. Fatehpur Sikri. Dewan-e-khas. Central pillar. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

Diwan-e-Khas is impressive and is the most photographed building in the complex. The red sandstone building appears to have two stories. It stands on a low plinth. There is an entrance door on each side of ground floor flanked by windows covered with stone screens and small arched blind windows (Fig. 5.84). The false second storey has a balcony both inside and out. The outer edges of the balcony have a low red sandstone screen parapet wall on brackets bearing large lotus buds supported on the walls of the lower storey. Sloping eaves supported on rows of elaborately carved brackets decorate the second storey. On the second storey three openings flanked with blind arched windows on each side open to the



inside balcony surrounding the inner chamber. Low parapet wall and four tall chatris on four corners decorate the roof. In the center of the chamber a thick freestanding column stands in level with the inner balcony. There is a circular stone dais on the top of the column surrounded by a low decorated parapet wall. The dais bears thirty-six closely set brackets around the bottom attached to the pillar in three tiers.

Each bracket has three bell-shaped pendants (Fig. 5.85). The dais is connected to the center of each side of the inner balcony by a diagonally radiating bridge. A flight of steps in the thick walls of the ground floor located beside the entrance leads to the inner balcony of the second storey and the dais is reached by radiating bridges. The interior walls of the tall chamber are decorated with niches, rosettes and geometrical designs. The corners hold brackets similar to the brackets of the central pillar. The monument is variously described as a chamber used by Emperor Akbar to hear petitions from the public, seated on a dais high above; for giving private audiences; as a meditation chamber; and for examining gems. Possibly it was built just a novelty.



Fig. 5.86. Fatahpursikiri. Residential hall. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

Mardana, in front of Diwan-e-khas, is large spacious courtyard paved with stones, demarking Haremsara from Daulath khana (Fig. 5.84). Open courtyards were essential parts of Iranian palaces. In the center of the courtyard is a small raised platform surrounded with a checkerboard for playing the game Parcheesi. It is said that the Emperor, sitting on the platform, would play Parcheesi with slave girls dressed in different colors as the game pieces. On one side of the Mardana are few single- and two-storey residences, which may have been used to lodge visiting dignitaries.

Diwan-e-Amm is a plain square pavilion standing on a high plinth. Columns on the plinth (with side brackets and lintels) form five similar arched openings on the façade. The central arched opening with steps in front serves as entrance

to the verandah. The entrance to the pavilion is through the central door flanked by decorated windows covered with stone screens. The rectangular flat roof bears a parapet wall above and sloping sides with rib-like surface decoration on the slabs. The pavilion inside is divided into three chambers separated by stone screens carved with geometric patterns dominated by six-pointed stars. The emperor used the central section to hear disputes and to dispense justice. The vast courtyard behind the pavilion was laid out in lawns and gardens surrounded by a colonnade of 111 bays.

The Diwan-khana-e-Khas was the sleeping quarters of Akbar. It is two-storied building raised high on a colonnaded terrace (Fig. 5.87). A flight of steps from the terrace leads to the first floor, surrounded by pillars. It contains a verandah and two chambers. The small room in front was richly painted, but the paintings have faded. The hollow walls with sliding stone slabs near the floor were used to store books. It was also used as a dining room. The larger room behind has an extension with window openings projecting from the wall supported on square shafts. The Emperor, sitting on this platform, used to give audience to the nobles and to appear before the public daily. There is a small bathroom provided with water through conduit pipes fitted to a canal.



Fig. 5.87. Fatahpursikiri. Dewan Khana-e-khas. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The emperor's bed chamber was on the upper floor surrounded by a pillared verandah with a sloping roof on stone pillars. He often retired for short afternoon naps or relaxation. Occasionally he conducted informal meetings with philosophers, Sufis and other favorite personnel here.

Anup Talao, a 29m (88.5 ft.) square pool with wide square platform in the center, is located in front of Akbar's sleeping quarters (Fig. 5.88).

The central platform is connected with each side of the pool by a narrow bridge. The platform, surrounded by a low stone screen, has a wide square bench in the center. The platform and bridges are richly decorated with carvings. Water was supplied to the pool from the northern water works and

any excess was drained in the Hauz-e-shirin, a tank on the northern slope. The present depth of the pool is 1.4m (4.2 ft.). It was once filled to raise the floor. A recent excavation by the Archaeological Survey of India has revealed a pillared pavilion below the central platform of the pool reached by a flight of six steps. Possibly it was the “Cool Palace in water” referred to in some contemporary documents, a place where the Emperor could retreat in hot weather to cool off without getting wet.



Fig. 5.88. Fatehpursikiri. Anup Talao. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The Turkish Sultana’s Palace is a small chamber measuring 4m by 1.4m (12 x 4.2 ft.) at one end of Anup Talao. It is surrounded by a verandah and lean-to stone roof on pillars.



Fig. 5.89. Fatehpursikiri. Turkish Sultana Palace. 1572-1575. Sandstone side (Fig. 5.89).

The lean-to-roof is carved with ribs resembling half round tiles of village cottages and with six-pointed stars at the ends. The pillars of the place are profusely carved with vines and lotus buds.

Every inch of the external wall surface is exquisitely carved with grape vines and geometric designs. The carvings resemble the woodwork of Kashmir. The flat roof of the palace is surrounded by a low, decorated parapet wall with spouts to

discharge rainwater. Inside the chamber near the base of the walls are exquisite framed carvings of nature scenes with vines and flowering trees (Fig. 5.91).



Fig. 5.90. Fatehpursikiri. Turkish Sultana Palace. Carving on outer wall. 1572-1575. Sandstone.



Fig. 5.91. Fatehpursikiri. Turkish Sultana Palace. Carving on interior wall. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

A similar carving in the chamber, depicting birds and deer, was mutilated by chopping off the heads of the animals.

The Girls’ School is a two-storey building raised on crude stone piers to the north of Anup Talao, with flat roof bearing sloping eaves. The interior of the building is divided into rooms by stone slabs with arched screens. Located in the Emperor’s court, perhaps it was not a girl’s school after all. More likely, it was used to store Akbar’s drinking water and fruits as well as for tasting the Emperor’s forty-course meals. Akbar used to take only one meal a day.

Ankh Mucholi is located on the northwest end of Daulath Khana quadrangle. On the exterior walls the struts rest on corbels projecting from the walls. The lower parts of the struts are shaped like the heads of monster with raised serpentine scrolls emerging from open mouths. Such beasts were traditional guards of treasuries in India. The doors were made of stone. On the east side are two staircases lead-

ing to the roof. The inside is very much like a maze. It is said that Akbar played hide and seek with ladies of his harem in this building. In all probabilities its main function was as the treasury.

The Astrologer's Seat is a 3m (9 ft.) square kiosk standing on a small extension of Ankh Mucholi platform (Fig. 5.92). It has exquisitely carved stone brackets on four sides resembling Jain architecture. Possibly it was the seat of Akbar's astrologer. Akbar believed in astrology and his favorite color was yellow. Akbar or other court officials also could have used it as a seat for certain occasions.



Fig. 5.92. Fatahpursikiri. Astrologer's seat. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

The Record Room, built in 1574 at the south end of the complex, is aligned with the Sleeping Quarters of Diwan-e-Khas. Standing on a platform, it is 14m (43 ft.) wide and 19m (58 ft.) long. The north façade has six pairs of tall double columns with arches. Four columns with bracketed capitals at either end support eaves above. The columns are chiseled with a highly formalized design of a peacock's tail.



Fig. 5.94. Fatahpursikiri. Hiran Minar. 1572-1575. Sandstone.

Hiran Minar is a 23m (7t ft.) tall tower on a raised platform located on the outskirts of the town on a dry lakebed (Fig. 5. 95). There are tusk-like projections on the exterior walls. Fifty-three steps inside the tower lead to a balcony at the top decorated with *chatri*. It was possibly a look-out tower or a beacon tower to guide travelers.

In front of Maryam House is a building constructed of red sandstone, referred as Jodh Bai Kitchen. The façade of the building is carved with tassels simulating a valance. None of the tassels are exactly alike. The walls are faced with long thick bricks like stone pieces enclosed in the framework of larger pieces. The building has a very attractive appearance.

Among the service buildings a chamber with ventilation holes and water outlets was used as kitchen although cooking was mostly done in open courtyards under awning or temporary shelters some distance away from royal palaces. There are more than twelve bathrooms inside the complex. Bathrooms below Divan-e-am next to rainwater tank were for the emperor and most important of his courtiers. The baths opening directly to the Jodh Bai palace were for royal ladies. The baths located on the edge of the great reservoir near the orchards and gardens were for visitors. In addition to dilapidated Karkhana (factory) and Pigeon house in the complex there are ruins of many more buildings around Fatahpursikiri



## 24. CHURCHES AND CONVENTS AT GOA (16–18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

Old Goa (Velha), where most of the churches and convents built by the Portuguese are located, is 10 km (6 miles) from Panaji, the present capital of Goa. Panaji is connected by rail to Bangalore and Mumbai and by road to Hubli, a commercial center of the south. Travel by train is more comfortable and convenient. Decent boarding and lodging facilities are available at Panaji. UNESCO in 1986 declared the churches and convents at Old Goa to be World Heritage Monuments.

Goa is a coastal strip 150 km (93 miles) long beside the hilly western Sahyadri region of South India. The Arabian Sea Coast on the west harbors the ancient natural seaport of Goa with its navigable river. The land area of Goa is 3700 sq. kilometer (1400 square miles). Maharashtra state on the north and Karnataka State on the east and south form the other boundaries. Goa, with its tropical climate, was part of the Maurya Empire in the third century BCE. The South Indian kingdoms of Satavahana, Chalukya of Badami and Kalyana, Shilhara and Kadamba successively ruled Goa. The sultans of the Deccan conquered Goa in 1312, followed by the Vijayanagara kingdom in 1370. The Muslim sultans of Gulbarga and Bijapur ruled Goa again from 1469.

Portugal and Spain, front-runners in the European campaign of imperial expansion, signed the Treaty of Tordesilhas in 1494 and the Treaty of Saragossa in 1529, dividing the globe between themselves like a bag of gold. This area, with its lucrative trade routes, fell to the Portuguese. After doing all they could in South America and Africa, the tide of Portugal's missionary and military zeal

reached India in the sixteenth century. First they set out to control the sea trade routes. The commander Alfonso de Albuquerque, sent by King Manuel of Portugal, conquered Goa in 1510, which was at that time governed by Adil Shah Sultan of Bijapur. He established a permanent base at what became a Portuguese colony, with Old Goa (Vilah) as the capital. The capital was later moved downstream to Panaji. Goa attained its present size in the eighteenth century. The Portuguese ruled Goa for 430 years. In 1961, the Indian national government drove the Portuguese out and incorporated Goa into the Indian Union, and statehood was granted in 1987.



Fig. 5.100. Ponda. Ramnath Temple. 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Laterite and Mortar.

In the eleventh century the Kadamba, a South Indian dynasty, had established their capital at Old Goa (Velha). This developed into a great commercial center. Jainism and Buddhism flourished along with Hinduism. It was the second capital of the Bijapur Sultan before the Portuguese conquest; but there are no surviving temples in Old Goa. The Archeological Museum located in the Convent of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi houses the sculpture from destroyed Hindu monuments carved prior to the fourteenth century. The exhibits, along with Hero and

Sati stones, include beautiful carvings of Gajalakshmi from the ninth century and Uma Maheshvara carved in the thirteenth century, a carving of Hanuman dating to the twelfth century, and a fourteenth-century carving depicting various types of temple towers developed in India.

Temples of more recent origin, constructed at Ponda, appear more like Christian churches, with domes similar to the church or mosque dome (Fig. 5.100). The basic units of temple porch, *mandapa* and sanctum, are retained. The *mandapa* of Ramnath Temple is decorated with paintings and above the sanctum door lintel Vishnu is carved, reclining on Sesha, with Lakshmi seated near his feet. In front of the temple entrance a characteristic lamp tower developed in Goa is constructed. Electric bulbs are burnt in the niches at night.

Muslims built twenty-seven mosques in Goa but all were allowed to deteriorate. The recently renovated Safa Mosque in Ponda, constructed by the Sultan of Bijapur, stands on a high platform. There is a large tank beside it (Fig. 5.101).



Fig. 5.101. Ponda. Safa Mosque. 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Laterite and Mortar.



Fig. 5.102. Old Goa. Entrance to the palace of Adil Shah palace. 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Basalt.

The college of St. Paul was built on the ruins of a mosque and the holy tank of a Hindu temple is reportedly below the raised platform in the center of the Church of St. Catherine.

The palace of Adil Shah was the most conspicuous building of its time. The palace was later dismantled piece by piece to construct the buildings at Panaji. The only remains are the entrance porch, with two broken but beautifully carved front pillars with lintel (Fig. 5.102). It looks like a framed blank space standing on a platform with six purposeless steps in front.

A short distance away from the entrance to the palace of Adil Shah is a massive arch on a road built by one of the viceroys of Goa. A cubical extension of the tower with a sloping top above the arch has a carving of a courtier holding a staff and the bust of an elder to the side.

In the seventeenth century Old Goa became a magnificent city under the Portuguese, with imposing Christian churches, convents and chapels. Some of the grandeur can still be seen in the extant churches and convents. Control of trade routes provided the resources to build these monuments.

The Portuguese paved the way for other colonial powers with strong navies to reach India, but the arrival of the Dutch in 1598 and their expansion caused havoc. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese lost their maritime supremacy. During the late seventeenth century the church-building activity slowed and it almost ceased in the eighteenth century.

Colonial powers built churches reflecting Western design. Churches in Kerala and Pandachery show the influence of Dutch and French architecture. The British demolished Santa Cruz Basilica, constructed by the Portuguese in Kerala, but they constructed the Saint Michael Church with stained glass windows at Simla, Himachal Pradesh. However the churches of Goa built by the Portuguese according to classic Roman designs remain outstanding.

After their conquest of Goa, the first Portuguese missionaries to arrive were Franciscans in 1517 followed by Theatines, Carmelites, Augustinians, Dominicans, Jesuits and others. They constructed four churches, one basilica, one cathedral, four convents, and four chapels in Old Goa. Except for the Church of St. John of God, constructed in the early eighteenth century, all the churches were built in the sixteenth and seventeenth century — during the first one hundred years of Portuguese rule. Construction peaked in the early seventeenth century. The Portuguese ruled Goa longer than any other colonial power in other parts of India but they did not develop a composite design incorporating Indian features. European designs were improvised. The British, the second-longest ruling colonial power, was the least interest-

ed in the construction of churches in India. Some later-built churches in Tamilnadu show the influence of Indo-Islamic architecture.

All the churches and convents in Goa are built of laterite stone blocks quarried locally. Laterite is formed by the decay of volcanic rocks in tropical heat and heavy rainfall. It is highly porous due to a leaching of mineral contents. It is easy to quarry, due to its high water content, but when exposed to the sun it becomes hard as the water is lost. It disintegrates comparatively quickly if not protected and kept in good repair. Most of the churches built with massive laterite blocks were frequently repaired or have been rebuilt. Presently, most of them are lime plastered on the exterior, except for the Basilica of Bom Joseph. Due to political considerations some of the churches were neglected and allowed to crumble. Because of its rough surface and porous texture, laterite is not suitable for carvings. Wood and lime plaster were used for decorative carvings and statues. Basalt, imported from neighboring states, was used for a few columns and statues, and marble was used to carve pedestals for a few statues.

The Romans adopted Greek decorations used on pillars, pilasters and building façades; these decorations are classified as Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Tuscan. By combining and modifying the Ionic and Corinthian orders, the Romans created a new type called Composite. The composite order is mostly used to decorate the altars of Goa. The Renaissance movement appeared in Italy in the fifth century to revive the art of ancient world by adopting the classical Roman orders. The order refers to the characteristic decoration of the columns or pilasters facades of on the front porch and altars of the church. None of the churches in Goa have front entrance porches. The pilasters on the church façades are square or round. Some of the churches are built on raised platforms with a few steps to climb.

Of all the orders Corinthian is the most decorative. The pilasters are slender and most often square, but are cylindrical in some churches (Fig. 5.103). The shaft is fluted and the capital is decorated, mostly by leaves (A). In the Doric order the pilasters are mostly massive and the shaft usually has 20 flutes or shallow concave grooves running vertically, ending in a plain capital (B). The Ionic order is rarely used. The Ionic shaft is fluted and the capital spreads like a scroll at either side with egg-and-dart ornaments (C). Composite pilasters with highly decorated top and twisted body are a mixture of Ionic and Corinthian orders (D). This style is mostly used in the decoration of altars. Pilasters of the Tuscan order have plain shafts and simple capitals (E). Three orders of pilasters, the Corinthian, Doric, Ionic (A, B, C) can be seen on the façade and Composite pilasters (D) on the main altar of Ba-

silica of Bom Joseph. Pilasters of the Tuscan order can be seen on the Church of St. Francis of Assisi.



A



B



C



D



E

Fig. 5.103. Old Goa. Churches. Pilaster orders. (A) Corinthian, (B) Doric, (C) Ionic (D) Composite - Basilica of Bom Joseph. (E) Tuscan - Church of St. Francis of Assisi



A



D



B



C

The architrave, frieze and cornice above the pilaster are called the Entablature (Fig. 5.104). The design of the architrave differs on each church but in Goa most of the churches have entablatures similar to that of Bom Joseph Basilica (A). The first element of the entablature is flat. The friezes above the architraves are empty on all churches. The cornice above is simple but some churches bear projecting blocks on the lower surface. The height of the entablature in all the churches of Goa is less than one-fourth of the height of the column. Some churches bear additional decorations above the cornice of the entablature. The pilasters and cornice of Cathedral of St. Catherine are extended above the cornice and the pilasters end in a bulb with a narrow neck. The cornice is triangular and carved with a cartouche flanked with fan-shaped decorations (B). The cornice above the entrance of St. Cajetan is a triangle with a window in the center (C) and the Chapel of St. Catherine shows a triangle open at the apex with a frieze in the center above the cornice (D).

In the sixteenth century Portugal developed a new design for church façades called Manueline (named for King Manuel I, 1495–1521). Churches with this design appear like a fortress with windows near the roof and round pilasters that looked like fort towers on the sides; this was not suitable for the humid climate of Goa and the style did not gain favor.

The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, possibly the earliest church in Goa, is Manueline in style (E). The entablature of the Church of Assisi is unique (F). The arch on the entrance is made up of three small joined arches standing on Tuscan pillars with fan-shaped decorations above the door lintel. Above the central arch is a vase-shaped structure with a lid on it and hand-like extensions on both sides holding lanterns. A cross decorates the vase above. The ribbed vaults, a feature of gothic architecture, were retained in most churches.

Fig. 5.104. Old Goa. Entablatures on churches entrances.

(A) Basilica of Bom Joseph.

(B) Cathedral of Saint Catherine.

(C) St. Cajetan Church. (D) Chapel of St. Catherine.

(D) Our Lady of Rosary Church. (E) Church of Francis of Assisi



In the seventeenth century the decoration on altars started changing in Italy and in France as the Romanesque and Gothic styles gave way to the new Baroque style. It spread all over Europe, gradually absorbing Renaissance influences. The interior of most churches and altars in Goa are decorated in Baroque style. In its earlier stages the Baroque style placed the emphasis on symmetry and harmony. But it developed into intricate, detailed, exaggerated ornamentation with twisted shafts, flying angels in the corners and gilded work aimed at overwhelming visitors. The churches of Goa have a characteristic high lofty retable carved of wood behind the altar table. The woodcarving is superb and intricate. In most cases the woodwork is gilded with gold leaf. The Portuguese were fascinated with Indian gold craft, and an Indian goldsmith visited Lisbon in the sixteenth century to exhibit his work. The intricate carving of the wooden screen in the Cathedral of Saint Catherine probably has no match in India. The shape of the high retable of the Cathedral of Saint Catherine has been compared to the curvilinear tower of North Indian temples and another to the towers of the South Indian Dravidian temples.

All the churches in Goa are oblong except for the Basilica of Bom Jesus, which is cruciform. Buttress walls along the interior side walls of the nave, with chapels in between, give the illusion of a cruciform shape to the interior. The plans of all the churches are similar, with only slight differences in the size and placement of components like the belfry, altars, choir and sacristy.

The architects of the churches were foreigners but local artisans built and decorated the interiors. They gave a local flavor through the decorations on the interior walls. The ceilings of most of the churches have been painted with floral decorations but in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi the ornamentation is overwhelming. The paintings, done by local artists on wooden boards, under the supervision of the Italians, are a poor imitation of the canvas paintings of the West. These paintings are fixed between panels painted with floral designs on the periphery of altars, interior walls and arches, giving a charming appearance, particularly to the altars. A few canvas paintings were done in the West. Most of the wooden statues of saints, Mary, and Jesus that adorned the altars are beautiful imitations of Western art executed by local artists. In the church of Our Lady of the Rosary an intricately carved cenotaph on the side of the main altar resembles the tombstones of Gujarat. The interior decorated by local artists is the most beautiful part of these churches.

The Jesuits constructed the Professed House, the Bishop's residence, and the Basilica of Bom Jesus. A part of the building was burnt in 1663 and was rebuilt in 1783. Construction

of the church was initiated in 1594 but the church was consecrated only in 1605. It was elevated to the status of Minor Basilica in 1946 (Fig. 5. 105).



Fig. 5. 105. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. 1594-1605. Laterite and mortar.

It is not the largest church in Goa, but it has a beautiful exterior and very attractive interior. The dominant features of the church are the façade and retable.

The external buttress walls on the north of the basilica are of recent origin. Most of the original tiled roof of the basilica was replaced with asbestos sheets. The exterior except for the façade was plastered with lime but that was subsequently removed. The three-storey high façade facing west is divided into three progressively shorter stories separated by a cornice (Fig. 5.106). Each storey is vertically divided into three sections by the pilasters flanking three doors on the ground storey, large windows on first, and large round windows on the second storey. The façade of the church is the most decorated and attractive of all the churches. The ground storey has a wide arched opening in the center of the façade flanked by a pair of Corinthian columns with pediments at the base (Fig. 5.106). The smaller doors, without arches, are similarly decorated.



Fig. 5. 106. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Lower divisions of façade. 1594-1605. Laterite and mortar.

Above the small door are decorations with large circles and squares. The corners of the storey are framed with single flanking columns. The first storey, similarly decorated, has three comparatively short doors without arches, and Doric pilasters. The second storey has three circular windows decorated similar to other stories, with Ionic pilasters. The projection above the top storey bears a large highly-decorated cartouche with HIS, the name of Jesus written in Greek. The cartouche is flanked by Ionic and Corinthian pilaster and fan-shaped decorations. It is topped with a triangle with dented inner margin. Circular bulb-like projections decorate the top as well as the top of the basilica walls.

The main entrance and side entrances open into an undivided nave (Fig. 5.107). A gallery is constructed above the church entrance openings. It continues on both sides of the church. Visiting dignitaries used the side gallery. The gallery above the entrance openings, supported on two arched columns, houses the choir. The columns supporting choir are inscribed with the dates of construction and consecration of the basilica.



Fig. 5.107. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Interior. 1594-1605. Lat-erite and mortar.

Beneath the entrance, on the ceiling to the left is a well-carved wooden statue of St. Francis Xavier (Fig. 5.108). He is standing looking at a cross, held high in his right hand. On his right is the chapel of St. Francis Xavier. A painting above the altar depicts him standing with his hands near his chest.

There is a profusely carved wooden pulpit below the gallery on the side wall (Fig. 5.109). It bears an intricately carved canopy with a beautiful painting of Jesus above the entrance

on the back wall. Busts of the infant Joseph are carved around the margin on the upper part of the pulpit. The body is carved with the four evangelists and four doctors of the church. At the bottom seven figures are portrayed carrying the pulpit. There are two transepts in the arms of the cross. In one transept is a chapel with an intricately carved altar dedicated to St. Michael. He is standing between twisted columns, holding Baby Joseph.



Fig. 5.108. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Statue of St. Francis Xavier. 1594-1605. Wood.



Fig. 5.109. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Wooden pulpit on sidewall. 1594-1605. Wood.

In the other transept is a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Hope. The altar flanked by twisted shafts has a statue of Jesus on a cross on the top. The altar above is decorated with ivory medallions surrounded with infant Joseph, and standing angels.

The main sanctuary is located in the east transept facing the main entrance of the basilica (Fig. 5.110). Near the top of the chapel a medallion is engraved with the name of Jesus, IHS, surrounded with fresco paintings and flying angels.



Fig. 5. 110. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Main Altar. 1594-1605. Wood and Gold.

The sides of the chapel are decorated with carvings of standing angels, and saints, between twisted Corinthian pilasters. The wooden retable inside the arched barrel-vaulted nave is decorated in Baroque style with twisted Corinthian pilasters with gold leaf ornaments. Standing in the center St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, dominates the altar. He is gazing at the large medallion above flanked by angels and the engraving of IHS. Above the large medallion is another small medallion flanked by, possibly, Jesus and the saint. Below Saint Ignatius, Baby Jesus (Bom Jesus) is portrayed standing on a decorated pedestal. A wooden tabernacle is in front of the retable. The belfry is at the back.

An arched entrance on one side of the main shrine leads into a barrel-vaulted nave decorated with flowers painted on the ceiling. The chapel of the Blessed Sacrament is located in the nave. The chapel dedicated to the infant Jesus consists of a wooden tabernacle and a magnificent Baroque wooden

retable behind, with gilt ornaments. A medallion representing Jesus in the center is surrounded, presumably, by his disciples.

On the side of the southern transept a chapel was constructed in 1665 as the final resting place of St. Francis Xavier (Fig. 5.111). The barrel-vaulted nave, similar to the façade of the Chapel of Blessed Sacraments with its twisted pilasters, marble medallions, flying and standing angels, and statues of the infant Joseph, is decorated with paintings on the ceiling. The sarcophagus of the saint is placed in a room behind. The interior of the room is richly decorated with wooden carvings and large paintings on the walls and ceilings narrating the life and miracles of the saint.



Fig. 5. 111. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Casket containing the Holy Body.

1594-1605. Wood, Marble and Gold.

Saint Francis Xavier arrived in Goa in 1542. From India he traveled to Japan and China, where he died in 1552. According to his wishes the body was brought to

Goa and housed in the chapel. The body was placed in silver sarcophagi designed by an Italian Jesuit and built by a goldsmith in Goa in 1635-41. The façade of the casket bears Corinthian columns supporting an entablature above resembling crown. There are glass panels in between the columns. A Florentine jeweler designed the marble pedestals of the sarcophagus in 1640. The sacred, if shriveled, face of the saint was visible through the glass panels. The body was frequently made available to view until 1952, when finally the body was sealed in an airtight glass coffin. The glass panels on the casket were painted with scenes depicting life of the saint.

At the bottom of the pedestal a dramatic carving depicts a shipwreck and the followers of the Saint attacked by natives (Fig. 5.112).

Some of his injured followers have fallen on the beach and some have fallen in the shallow waters. The natives, some armed with sticks, are swarming. The saint is carved arriving between the natives and his followers, holding cross in his raised hands.



Fig. 5.112. Old Goa. Basilica of Bom Joseph. Carving below casket. 1594-1605. Marble.

A corridor beside the chapel leads to the large quadrangle of the Professed House. The sacristy is located in the quadrangle facing the exit from the church. The richly carved wooden door of the sacristy is decorated with the elders of the basilica and other figures. To the left of the door, fresco paintings depicting the trials and tribulations of the saint are arranged vertically like a pillar. The vaulted sacristy room with altar at the apse is used to store sacraments.

The Convent and Church of Saint Francis of Assisi built in 1661 stands at a short distance to the north of Basilica of Bom Jesus (Fig. 5.113).



Fig. 5.113. Old Goa. St. Francis of Assisi Church. 1562-1652. Laterite and mortar.

Eight Franciscan friars originally built a small chapel in 1517. Another church was constructed on the spot in 1521, which was later pulled down and the present church was built in 1661 retaining the entrance of the earlier church. The

exterior of the church is Doric in style. The interior rib-vaulted nave is without aisles (Fig. 5.114). A massive arch a few meters from the entrance supports the ceiling with a gallery above. Galleries run along the side walls, supported on internal buttress walls decorated with intricate floral designs, and the lower surface of the arch is painted with attractive designs. The main altar in the barrel-vaulted nave stands facing the entrance on a platform with steps. There is a tabernacle in front of the retablo. The retablo, with a hollow center, is flanked by Corinthian pilasters. Around the hollow center of the altar, statues of saints are carved in niches. The arch above has a large crucifix in a niche flanked by pilasters supporting the entablature above. The saint is shown embracing Jesus.



Fig. 5.114. Old Goa. St. Francis of Assisi Church. Interior. 1562-1652. Laterite, wood and mortar.

Flanking the niche on both sides, saints are carved, standing. The side walls have large paintings on wood depicting scenes from the life of St. Francis of Assisi (Fig. 5.115). To the north of the main altar are a belfry and sacristy. The convent attached to the church houses an archeology museum now.



Fig. 5.115. Old Goa. St. Francis of Assisi Church.

Paintings on sided wall. 1562-1652. Laterite and mortar.

Saint Catherine's Cathedral was constructed over a period of about 90 years from 1562 to 1652, during the reigns of six Portuguese kings. The palace of the former archbishop stands between the Church of St. Francis of Assisi and the Cathedral of Saint Catherine. From the very beginning, the construction of the Cathedral faced financial and other problems. It was nearly completed in 1619 and consecrated in 1640; the altars were finished in 1652. This, the largest extant church in Goa, is constructed on a raised platform 76m (236 ft.) long and 55m (171 ft.) wide with a façade 35m (109 ft.) high (Fig. 5.116).



Fig. 5. 116. Old Goa. St. Catherine Cathedral. 1562-1651. Laterite and mortar.

There are three entrances leading into the nave and aisles. The main arched entrance is decorated with a pair of Corinthian pillars on each side standing on a pediment. The tower on the southern side of the Cathedral façade collapsed in 1776. The bell in the existing tower is called the Golden Bell because of its rich sound.

The oblong Cathedral appears like a Greek cross from the inside. The interior has a long barrel-vaulted nave, aisles and transepts (Fig. 5.117). On the wall of the nave there are two wooden pulpits projecting from two columns. The chapels along the aisles are separated by buttress walls. There is a raised platform at the junction of the transept. There are four chapels in the left aisle. The first chapel starting from the entrance in the nave is dedicated to Our Lady of Virtues, shown seated on an ivory pedestal with the infant Jesus. The second chapel is dedicated to St. Sebastian, standing on an ivory pedestal in front of a tree, about to become a martyr as with two archers aim arrows at him. The third, the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, is viewed behind a grilled door under an arch decorated with floral paintings, cartouches and paintings of Jesus on the sides (Fig. 5.118). The nave behind the grill is decorated all over with flowery paintings. The retable

is beautifully decorated with pilasters and angles. The next chapel is dedicated to Our Lady of Life.



Fig. 5. 117. Old Goa. St. Catherine Cathedral. Interior. 1562-1651. Laterite and mortar.



Fig. 5. 118. Old Goa. St. Catherine Cathedral. Gilded screen in front of Chapel of Blessed Sacrament. 1562-1651. Wood.

There are four chapels on the right side, dedicated to St. Anthony, St. Bernard, the Cross of Miracles and the Holy Ghost. The chapel of the Cross of Miracles is seen behind a delicate wooden screen carved with foliage and flying angels (Fig. 5.119). There may be no more intricately-carved wood screen in India.

The Convent and Church of St. John of God was constructed in the early eighteenth century about 200m (600 ft.) from the Basilica of Bom Jesus on Holly Hill (Fig. 5.127). This plain-looking convent and church were abandoned in 1835. From 1844 it was used as a residence of chaplains, confessors

and others employed on behalf of the nuns of Sta. Monica. The Church and Convent have been renovated and given a new roof, and presently the buildings are used as a home for the elderly.



Fig. 5.127. Old Goa. Saint John of God. Convent and Church. 18<sup>th</sup>. Century. Laterite and mortar.

The Church of Saint Augustine built by Augustine Friars on Holy Hill is situated near the Church of St. John of God. Constructed between 1597 and 1602, the colossal church with eight richly decorated chapels, four altars and convent with numerous cells had four lofty towers (Fig. 5.128).



Fig. 5.128. Old Goa. Partially collapsed tower of Saint Augustine Church. 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

Laterite and mortar.

It was possibly the biggest church of its time. Due to religious suppression, the Augustinians abandoned the church around 1835. The vault collapsed in 1842. The façade and half of the front tower

collapsed in 1931. The partially collapsed tower, under renovation at the time of this writing, is 46m (133 ft) high. The richly decorated eight chapels, four alters and three towers also collapsed, most of them in 1938. The government appropriated the property and sold the materials.

The Church and Convent of Saint Monica near the Church of St. John of God were built in 1606-1627 (Fig. 5.129). This huge three-storied church and convent with three arched-shaped buttress walls supporting the façade is square, with a

large inner courtyard with numerous cells, cloistered verandah and halls. The lime plaster on the exterior of the church was replaced with cement. The vaulted ceilings of some halls are painted with floral decorations and scenes from the Bible. The building was destroyed by fire in 1636, but was rebuilt. The convent, also called the Royal Monastery, has eleven chapels and a seminary for girls. The church in the monastery is dedicated to St. Mary. Since 1964 the building is used as center for training nuns and is the largest such institution in Asia.



Fig. 5.129. Old Goa. Church and Convent of Saint Monica. Façade. 1606-1627. Laterite and mortar.

Near the tower of St. Augustine Church is the Royal Chapel of St. Anthony; the national saint of Portugal, built in the seventeenth century with a fort-like façade (Fig. 5.130). It was closed in 1835 and reopened after renovation in 1894. After complete restoration it was inaugurated again in 1961. Adjacent to the Chapel is the residence of the sisters.

Fig. 5.130. Old Goa. Royal Chapel of Saint Anthony. 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Laterite and mortar.



About 50m (150 ft.) from the Convent of Sta. Monica is the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, built in 1544-1549 (Fig. 5.131). The church was built on the spot where Albuquerque stood to observe the battle with the forces of Bijapur Sultan

in 1510, when he took a vow to build a church. The vow was full filled, albeit after his death. The fort-like church, built in Manueline style, has a two-storied façade with tower-like columns and windows near the roof (Fig. 5.131).



Fig. 5. 131. Old Goa. Church of Our Lady of the Rosary. Rear view. 1544-1549. Laterite and mortar.

The tiled roof of the church is supported on wooden rafters. There are two chapels and three altars in the church. The main altar is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. To the right of the main altar is the cenotaph of a lady whose marriage was performed by St. Xavier. The cenotaph is carved in the decorative style of Gujarat.

Near the southern border of Old Goa is the Convent and the Church of the Cross of Miracles, built in 1619 to house the Cross of Miracles.



Fig. 5. 132. Old Goa. Church of Our Lady of the Rosary. Main Altar. 1544-1549. Laterite and mortar.

The church disintegrated and the present single-storied church, with numerous cells, was constructed in 1674 on the same spot, but it is in ruins. The Convent housed the congregation

of the Oratory of Philip Neri of Goa. The church and the convent were abandoned in 1835 and the Cross of Miracles was transferred to the St. Catherine Cathedral in 1845.

Alfonso de Albuquerque ordered the construction of the Chapel of St. Catherine, in 1510, a few meters to the west of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. It is built on the spot

where the city gates stood, through which Albuquerque entered to take the city from the Muslims. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1552 to commemorate the entry of Albuquerque into the city on St. Catherine's day. The chapel is plain, with small towers flanking the façade and it had one altar, which is empty now (Fig. 133). The chapel was raised to the status of Cathedral by order of the Pope in 1534 and it remained so till the new Cathedral was constructed.



Fig. 5. 133. Old Goa. Chapel of Saint Catherine. Laterite and mortar. 1510.

The Chapel of St. Francis Xavier is located on the road to Ponda about 300m (1800 ft.) from the Basilica of Bom Jesus. The original chapel was constructed prior to 1545 but was abandoned in 1570. The present chapel was constructed in 1884, in Doric style. It is a plain chapel with one altar originally dedicated to St. Anthony or St. Jerome. As St. Francis Xavier used it, after his canonization in 1622 it was dedicated to him.





## GLOSSARY

		Chaitya window	Semicircular window on façade of Chaitya cave. Blind window with carving of a deity in the window.
Addorsed	Joined.	Chamara	Fly-whisk made out of long hairs of animal tail.
Altar	A raised platform on which sacrifice is offered or incense burnt as act of worship.	Chamundi	One of the mother goddess who destroyed demon Chunda and Munda.
Amalaka	Flat, round stone with ribbed margin used as superstructure of north and west Indian temples.	Chapel	Small church. A room for worship. Compartments in church for independent service.
Amitabha	One of the Jina Buddha.	Chiturbhuj	Four-armed Vishnu.
Antaralia	Vestibule. Small compartment between mandapa and sanctum.	Choir	A body of trained singers in church. A place of singing in the church.
Apsara	Minor female deities. Wives of Gandharvas.	Church	Place for Christian worship.
Apse	Semicircular end of the altar.	Convent	Building occupied by religious community particularly nuns.
Apsidal	Building with semicircular end.	Cornice	Horizontal projecting molding at the top of a wall or column.
Architrave	Beam or arch extending and resting on from one column or pier to another.	Digambara	Jain sect characterized by vigorous asceticism. Includes naked ascetics.
Ardha-mandapa	Front small hall of the mandapa.	Durga	Supreme mother. Deity created to demon who threatened stability of universe. Later became associated with Siva.
Avatar	Incarnation of a deity.	Entablature	Architrave, frieze and cornice above the columns on façade of church.
Balarama	Elder brother of Lord Krishna. Seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Both Lord Krishna and Balarama were born during the same period.	Hall Church	Church with row of slender columns separating nave and aisles.
Basilica	Roman Catholic Church accorded with certain prescribed form of public worship.	Gajalakshmi	Goddess symbolizing wealth, prosperity, abundance and suspiciousness.
Belfry	Tower of the church bell.	Garuda	Part human and part bird carrier of Vishnu. Destroyer of snakes.
Bhairava	Fierce aspect of Siva.	Gopi	Milkmaid.
Bhogamandapa	Hall for offerings of wealth, possessions or for enjoyment.	Gavaksa	Horseshoe shaped arch decoration.
Bodhisattva	A being who can attain nirvana and become Buddha but forsaking it to guide others on Buddhist path.	Gopura	South Indian temple gateway.
Buddha	An enlightened omniscient being.	Hariti	A Buddhist goddess. Patron of children.
Cathedral	A large church containing the official seat of the Bishop.	Hinayana	A sect of Buddhism whose primary aim is to achieve nirvana.
Chaitya cave	Cave with stupa but without residential facilities for monks.	Indra	Vedic god of thunder, rain and clouds. Head of the Hindu triad of gods. Presides over the council of Hindu Tri-

	ads of gods. Adopted by Buddhist and Jains to play various roles.	Mokasa	Release. Liberation where the individual realizes a state of oneness with the Universe.
Indrani	Consort of Indra.		
Jagamohan	Mandapa of the Orissa temple with pyramidal roof.	Monastery	Dwellings for residence of monks.
Jataka	Previous lives of Buddha.	Madura	Hand sign
Jina	A being who has attained the state of supreme knowledge.	Mukha mandapa	Front hall of the temple. Ardha mandapa.
Kailas	Mountain Range in Himalayas. Abode of Siva and Kubera.	Natamandira	Hall for dance and enjoyment.
Kala	Time. Death. Spouse of Kala is Kali.	Nagara	Architectural style of north Indian temples.
Kama	Love. Cupid.	Navagraha	Lintel of the front entrance of temple carved with planets representing deities.
Kaputa	Overhanging cornice.		
Kayotasarga	Meditation pose of Jain ascetics. Standing stiff with hands not touching the body.	Nave	Interior hall of the church along long axis.
Kinnaras	Part bird and part human or part horse creatures.	Nirvana	Attainment of the supreme knowledge and integration with the universe.
Krttika	Pleiades constellation containing six stars (not seven) each of which is mother of Kattrikeya, the son of Siva.	Pancika	God of wealth. Kubera. God of yakas.
Kudu	Decorative motif. Horseshoe shape blind window bearing a carving in the center.	Parinirvana	Attainment of complete nirvana. Final departure of Buddha after which, he has no more births.
Khumba panjara	Niche decorated with vase motif.	Pediment	Broad triangular part above a stand.
Kuta	Square doomed roof of the tower.	Pipal	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> . A tree bearing leaves with long pointed ends. Tree under which Buddha attained nirvana, also called Bodhi tree.
Lakulisa	Founder of Saivite sect Pasupata. Considered as an incarnation of Siva.		
Mahabharata	One of the epics of India narrating conflict between two sets of step brothers.	Prakrti	The urge to reproduce.
Maha-mandapa	The rare large hall of the mandapa usually with a central dome.	Pulpit	Elevated stand or desk to preach.
Mahasattva	Great being who has full filled the vows to achieve nirvana. Supreme Bodhisattva.	Ravana	Principal demon of Ramayana epic. King of Sri Lanka.
Mahavir	Great being. Twenty-fourth Jain Tirthankara.	Retable	Large wooden structure behind altar decorated with sculpture and paintings.
Mahayana	Great vehicle. A sect of Buddhism who believe in potential of all sentient beings capable of achieving nirvana.	Sacraments	Object of sacred significance.
Maitreya Buddha	He is both Buddha and Mahasattva. As mahasattva he resides in Tusita heaven awaiting his birth as next mortal Buddha who will attain nirvana. As Buddha of the future he preside over Ketumati the earthly paradise of great tranquility.	Sacristy	Room where sacred vessels and vestments are stored in a church.
Makara	Mythological quasi-crocodilian creature. Symbol of auspiciousness and the primal life source.	Saivite	Pertaining to Siva.
Mandapa	Open partially of entirely closed porch or hall with pillars, attached to the sanctum directly or with Antralia (vestibule) interposed in between.	Sakyamuni Buddha	Historical Buddha belonging to the Saka tribe.
Manusi Buddhas	Buddhas born before historical Buddha and who attained nirvana.	Sala	Barrel-shaped roof of decorative rectangular miniature shrine motif on south Indian temple Barrel shaped roof of temple gateway or tower.
Matrikas	Divine mothers, usually seven. Shaktis of Hindu gods.	Shakti	Consort of god. Female creative force. A spear like emblem of Kattrikeya.
Mithuna	Couples engaged in act of love.	Sankha	Conch shell. Attribute of Vishnu.
		Sikara	The upper most element of south Indian temple tower topped with finial.
		Stupi	Small round decoration with pointed end on south Indian temples.
		Swastika	Auspicious cross symbol.
		Tabernacle	Ornamental receptacle for sacred objects like bread or wine.
		Tantra	Tantric. Tantrism. Practices and beliefs associated with females. Sexual symbolism, secret esoteric traditions and practices. Generally prohibited indulgence in sex.

Tirthankara	Jain who has attained perfect knowledge. There are twenty-four Tirthankara in Jainism.
Transept	Area in the side arms of cross in Church.
Trayastrimsa	Heaven of thirty-three gods situate above mount Meru and presided by Indra/Sikara.
Triratna	Three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, Buddhist law (dharma) and monastic community Decorative motif bearing three prongs or divisions.
Trivikrama	A form of Vishnu who measured earth, space and heaven in three steps.
Vahana	Mounts of Gods.
Vaikunta	A form of Vishnu with a man, a lion, a boar or horse face.
Vaishnava	Pertaining to Vishnu.
Vajra	A flat or round artifact with identical but odd numbers of prongs at both ends. Thunderbolt. Diamond. Symbol of permanency and immutability. The adamantine Nature of universe in Buddhism. Symbol of phallus.
Vimana	Dwarf form of Vishnu.
Varaha	Boar incarnation of Vishnu.
Vault	Curved ceiling.
Vidalia	Decorative motif of rampart lion standing on dwarf or other animal.
Virabhadra	A form of Siva who destroyed Daksha's sacrifice.
Vihara	Rock-cut or free-standing monastery.
Yaksa	A nature spirit. Male is guardian of treasure. Female Yaksi is associated with trees and fertility.
Yantra	Mystic diagram with magical powers. The details and nature of these powers are known to Guru only.
Yogini worship	Worship involving implicit sexual practices.
Yoni	Female sex organ. Vulva.



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