

Hindu Temple Architecture in India

Dr. Vinod Kumar¹

¹ Sociology, Vallabh Government College, Mandi Himachal Pradesh 175001, India

Correspondence: Dr. Vinod Kumar, Sociology, Vallabh Government College, Mandi Himachal Pradesh 175001, India.

doi:10.56397/SAA.2024.03.04

Abstract

Religious edifices in India seems to have developed during the urban phase of Indus Sarasvati or Harappan civilization (3200-2600 BCE) and continuing afterwards, till the sixth century CE. The certain concepts of Gods and human beings have led to the emergence of temple as an architectural body. The relationship of Indus valley's people with the God or gods can be surmised in conformity with the antiquarian remains discovered in archaeological excavations conducted at the sites of Indus Sarasvati Civilization during the several last decades.

Keywords: Nagara, Dravida, Vesara, Sekhari, Saurastra and Solanki

Temple — Meaning and Concept One of the interpretations is that there was some religious edifice at Banawali in Haryana. This site was excavated by archaeologist Ravindra Singh Bisht, the remains reveal an apsidal structure of around 2500 BCE made of mud bricks with fire altars. However, it is difficult to say whether it was a closed structure with walls, roof, entrance, etc., it is assumed to be an open structure of the Vedic fire altar type. Texts like Sulba-Sutras mentions about the architecture of ritualistic open air sacrificial platforms or altars only used for fire related rituals and not regular temples. When the traditions and symbols of worship (objects of worship) are combined together that gave birth to the concept of House of God in which lies the origin of temple. This phenomenon seems to have developed in India only after 700 BCE, at the beginning of the Mahajanapada period. Terms like alaya, devalaya, prasada, devaprasada, badi, kalibadi, mandira, etc. means one and the same "house".

In temple architecture two places are kept in mind significantly, one for the God and the other for devotee. The place for the image of God is called garbhagriha i.e., the womb of the mother which is the only place untouched by the atmospheric pollution hence the purest of all and sacred. The space for devotees is called mandapa, located in front of the garbhagriha. This concept was adopted in the fourth-fifth centuries CE.

Temple — Forms and Features In India, temples can be recognized on the basis of their regions, forms and features. The North Indian or Nagara style temple architecture has the most significant feature of curvilinear tower as its superstructure also known as sikhara is four-sided, square or oblong with a pointed finial at its top. Another style of temple with different forms and features is seen in South and it is known as Dravida style. Here the superstructure is stepped vimana of six or eight sides with a round stupa (well

fashioned boulder) at its top. The Vesara style of temples are the combination of both Nagara and Dravida, its superstructure is bell-shaped.

Temple-Evolution and Growth Architecture of temples have developed out of the types of houses such as huts (Neolithic period) and different ground plan such as round, square, rectangular, the apsidal and oval. Any temple plan will majorly fall into this category. There can be additions to it such as star shaped and a transept. At Vidisha the remains of apsidal or oval shaped temple dated to 500 BCE were unearthed by M.D. Khare. They were the thatched huts of ordinary folks in a village datable to the period between 700 and 500 BCE seems to have provided the earliest model of temple the temple builders.

The architects or sthapatis, developed the architecture of temples with the advent of rich elite class who financed the construction of multi-storeyed, high ceiling buildings, with detailed carvings and decorative structures, entrances or gateways. This occurred in the reign of Sunga-Kusana, i.e., from 200 BCE through CE 200. Influence of foreigners belonging to the ruling and business classes can be seen in the architectural remains with decorative elements excavated from Mathura.

Nagara Temples As stated, Nagara style temples are the north Indian temples with curvilinear shikhara. They are majorly recognised as temples built by Guptas, Chandelas, Odishan temples, temples of Rajasthan and Gujrat and temples of Rajput period.

Gupta Temples Gupta empire and Gupta culture was established by Sri Gupta in CE 320. His successor followed his ideologies and enhanced it greatly. One astonishing fact about the reign of Guptas is that the temples of all the religions flourished simultaneously and there was no clash amongst them. The period of Gupta art is known as the period of "Indian Classical Art". The fusion of art with architecture can be seen in these temples in a complementary manner. This led to the most important phase in creating the new aesthetics and development of temple architecture in India. Thereafter there was the evolution in art and architecture of temples that suited to the climatic condition of the region. This reign produced sthapatis or architects who were interested in experimenting with the architecture and produce marvels.

Construction of the Gupta temples were done by using dry stone masonry in the desired shape and form. There was no use of mortar. The technique of tenon and groove method was used in joining the stones. One block of stone tenon was inserted in the hole in which the hole was created. Some examples of famous Gupta temples in stones are Temple no. 17 at Sanchi, the Kankali Devi at Tiwaga, Parvati temple at Nacana-Kathura, the Siva temple at Bhumara, the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh and the Brick temple at Bhitargaon. In this period a basic plan for temples emerged out which became the standard for the temples in India. This plan had a simple square cella with flat roof fronted by a low-pillared porch or mandapa. Here the cella or garbhagriha was for the God and the extended porch for the devotees. These two structures or units of temple were supposed to be in the same axis since the devotee should have the darshan of the deity standing right in front. The circumambulatory path or pradakshina-patha was a later addition to the garbhagriha for the devotees to take a round of it. With the passage of time, new innovation in art and architecture of temple was adopted. The shikhara was raised over the roof of a house like structure, decorative motifs like angels flying, goblins or dwarfs, couples, images of river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna, dvarapalas (doorguards), demi-Gods, lion heads, floral scrolls etc. appeared on the shikhara, lintels, doorjambs, pillars, mandapa, ceiling of garbhagriha and walls of the temple. The right type of religious ambience was created in the temples which attracted more of the devotees. The raised crowd of the devotees was managed in the temple by introducing a vestibule or antarla between the garbhagriha and mandapa. The mandapa was also converted into a larger area to accommodate great number of devotees and was then called mahamandapa. Other additions to the temple architecture were the inclusion of ardha-mandapa and mukha-mandapa. Entering the mahamandapa directly was not considered good, so ardha-mandapa was added to it which was smaller than mahamandapa with a small porch to it known as mukha-mandapa.

Burnt bricks were also used in the construction of temples in Gupta age. The best known is located at Bhitargaon in Uttar Pradesh. Unique feature of this temple is the round arch made of bricks placed edge to edge.

The pillars in Gupta period had a new form of capital known as “vase capital” or “purnakalsa” which replaced the Mauryan tradition of inverted lotus or bell capital. The vase had foliage patterns as a decorative feature on the Gupta pillars. Such pillars were made at Gupta temples in Khoh. Temple 17 at Sanchi shows the tradition of Gupta temples built from ashlar or dressed stone masonry. Here the pillars are square at the base, followed by octagonal and then sixteen-sided sections and culminated in an inverted lotus. Whereas at the Kankali Devi initial form of vase capital can be seen which supported a massive block of stone (abacus) carrying lion finials. Like the Mauryas, Guptas continued the tradition of free-standing pillars and these were not replaced by vase capital as it is evident at Bhitari in Uttar Pradesh, erected by king Kumaragupta.

Temples of Rajput Period

After Guptas, smaller kingdoms emerged in north, central and north western India. These dynasties flourished in between the seventh and eleventh centuries and sponsored the construction of temples in their realm.

Gurjara-Pratiharas (8th-11th Century)

Temples built in the early reign of Pratiharas shows various stages of the development in central Indian temple architecture. The Teli ka mandir is dedicated to Shakti cult at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh and it is one of the oldest Pratihara temples. The architecture of this temple reveals rectangular mula-prasada (root or original) i.e., the main shrine where the deity is consecrated and an oblong sikhara which is similar to the Dravida style. A unique feature of this early temple is the “phamsa” a stepped pyramidal roof built above the porch. The exterior of the temple is decorated with kudu (window arches), lotus medallions and a very basic form of Latina shikharas i.e., shikhara resembling sugar loaf. In the later period Pratiharas further developed the mula-prasada and its super structure. Overhanging eaves, mandapas or halls with open Vedika (railings) were provided for good ventilation. The Dravidian features can also be seen in the Ghatesvara temple of 10th century at Baroli in Madhya Pradesh. It has stepped pyramidal roof over its square portico with Dravidian decoration on parapets. Temples at Baroli has taller shikharas than the usual Pratihara temples. The temple of this period has raha-pagas or

central bands known as jalis or screens designed in stencil techniques, projecting in the form of human tongues like triangular and pointed. This is little beyond from gandi (neck) and reaches the base of the larger amalaka. This is the characteristic feature of the central Indian sikhara. The purna-kalasa crowns the sikhara. In the later period the sikhara were decorated with two amalakas where the smaller amalaka was placed over the larger one. The temples of Gyaraspur are more developed from the temples at Baroli in art and architecture. Here the temples provide the earliest known example of Sekhari style, a central Indian temple architecture. At the base of mula-prasada there are miniature “Latina” sikhara clustered on the base of main sikhara.

Kalacuri

Around tenth century another dynasty the “Kalacuri” were in great power in the central India and a transitional phase of temple architecture was witnessed in India. For instance, the temples at Amarakantaka and Sohagpur. Temple plan of Kesavanarayana temple at Amarkantaka where grabha-grha, antrala and the mandapa, all are aligned in one axis, the mandapa leads to antrala which in turn opens to the grabha-grha, all are aligned in a single line. Pancha-ratha or the five-fold projections plan is seen in the shikhara along with its grabha-grha with double amalakas crowning the superstructure. Here the mandapa has stone seats with decorated back rests known as kaksasanas. The development of ardha-mandapa in front of the mula-mandapa or the main mandapa can be seen in the Viratesvara temple at Sohagpur. This temple is built on a common platform known as adhithana with the shikhara having saptaratha plan, i.e., having seven projections and crowned with three amalakas.

Chandelas

Chandelas were once the feudatories of Gurjara-Pratiharas, but became independent by tenth century. Literature, art and architecture flourished in their reign. Khajuraho was their capital city with magnificent temples manifesting great works of architects and artists. These marvels were built of high-quality sandstone ranging from buff to pink or pale yellow and granite. Some of their temple elements were similar to the elements of Pratihara temples i.e., a stepped pyramidal

superstructure and shallow portico in the form of an ardha-mandapa or else mukha-mandapa raised over a plain platform. Chausath yogini (sixty-four yoginis) was built entirely of granite. It is dedicated to sixty-four Goddesses raised on high jagati and oriented on a north-east-south-west direction. The temple has a central courtyard surrounded by thirty-four smaller shrines (originally it was sixty-four) built of dressed stones with monolithic doorjambs and lintels. They are surmounted by the embryonic forms of Nagara shikhara.

Later the artists developed more art in the temple architecture, urshasrnga or subsidiary sikhara were built around the main sikhara. Temples are stated to be of two types in Khajuraho, one is temples of nirandhara types and the second is sandhara types. The nirandhara type temples will not have pardaksinapatha or circumambulatory path whereas in sandhara type temples there is no circumambulatory path around the sanctum. The most important characteristic feature of the Khajuraho temples is the balconied windows with slopping sun-shades or chajjas and this is famous in the sandhara type temples. The plan of the such temples is called "Latin Cross" as the sanctums were provided with outward projecting balconies on their three sides, this gives a shape of cross in which three upper arms — the top and the sides are of equal length, only the lower arm is longer than the rest. Typical Nagara style and the largest temples in Khajuraho are the Kandariya-Mahadeva, the Lakshmana and the Visvanatha temples. These temples have one main shrine and four subsidiary smaller shrines at its four corners standing on the same platform and they are called pancayatana temples. Each compartment or mandapa has its own shikhara. These temples were built with the balconies or opening with three sides with chajja in the ardha-mandapa in order to provide ample air and light. Entry of these temples is through an elaborately carved makara-toran, then the first hall known as ardha-mandapa which provides kaksanas on its sides and this mandapa is also open on the three sides and its pillars support the roof and overhanging chajjas. The ardha-mandapa opens into the larger mandapa which has openings for good ventilation and kaksanas. Then the opening is into the mahamandapa, an enclosed hall with balconies on either sides. At the centre of mahamandapa there are four columns that

support beams or architraves and the ceilings. The garbha-grha of these temples is of sandhara type with a plan called "Latin Cross".

The interior of the Khajuraho temples is richly carved with beautiful sculptures. The interior appears to be a virtual art gallery where one can witness the zenith of ancient Indian art and enjoy seeing iconography of gods and goddesses, geometric and floral patterns.

Odishan Temples Odishan temples are amongst the finest example of Nagara style architecture. They prospered between the seventh and thirteenth centuries CE. They are majorly located in Puri and Bhubaneswar. The most prominent of these temples is the Sun temple at Konark which is the most magnificent and constructed in the middle of thirteenth century. These temples were called deul (the term emerged from Sanskrit term devalaya) by local architects or sthapatis. There are three types of deul or temples:

1) Rekha-deul — its sikhara or spire is linear or straight. Here Rekha means straight and deul means temple.

2) Pidha-deul — its sikhara has tiers of diminishing pidhas or platforms. Here pidha means a low flat wooden tablet to sit on. It is also called jagamohana, which is infact a mandapa raised in front of the sanctum.

3) Khakhara-deul — the top of the sikhara looks like a gourd or barrel shaped roof. Here khakhara has been derived from the term khakharu i.e., a pumpkin and gourd. The architects used terms derived from human body for the different parts of the temple. The following major parts of the Odishan temples are:

1) Pabhaga or paga — the foot part. The term is applied to the basal platform or low adhisthana on which the temple stands.

2) Jangha — the thigh. This term is called for the vertical part of the temple which houses the garbha-grha, antrala, and the mahamandapa.

3) Gandi — the trunk. This term stands for sikhara.

4) Mastaka — the forehead. This indicates the top front part of the temple on the sikhara.

5) Khapuri — the skull-top or head. This is applied for the rounded stone placed above the sikhara which looks like the top of the skull.

6) Sirsa — the top most part of the head. This

represents by the finial.

The Odishan temples have two or more halls used for different purposes and each one is constructed separately, namely “natya mandapa” the hall of dance and “bhoga-mandapa” the hall of offerings. It may be noted that Rekha-deul, pidha-deul, natya-mandapa and bhoga-mandapa are placed in one axial alignment and facing the garbha-grha. The temples have an addition of torana-dvara, an independently standing arched gateway in front of the temple. Earliest Odishan temple are at Bhubaneswar, Parasuramesvara temple is one of them and has triratha type Rekha-deul i.e., with one projection on each of the four sides. Temple with architectural perfection also known as the “gem of Odishan architecture” is the Muktesvara temple at Bhubaneswar. This is considered the second stage of development in the Odishan temples in the early 10th century. The temple has fully developed gandi or shikhara of the Rekha-deul and jagamohana of the pidha-deul. Later the temple architecture became more complex, the triratha type rekha-deul got enlarged to the pancaratha, saptaratha and finally to the navaratha type.

The grandest achievement of Odishan style temple is said to be the Sun temple at Konark in Puri District built in 13th century by the Ganga king Narasimhadeva I on the sea shore of Bay of Bengal. The temple appears to be dark in colour and was named as “Black Pagoda” by the early European writers. The temple is originally built of khondalite stone which was available locally. The temple is conceived as a chariot of the sun god Surya. Its alignment is east-west, with the Rekha-deul and pidha-deul of pancaratha plan. The temple was once struck by the lightning since then the Rekha-deul is dilapidated. A huge amalaka crowns the pyramidal roof of pidha-deul. There were four images of Surya inside the temple, one of these is in the National Museum, New Delhi. The temple has 12 pairs of wheels, each about 10ft in diameter, with a set of spokes and elaborated carvings. Seven horses are shown in the posture of moving. The temple represents the seven rays of the sun and its entrance is guarded by two lions crushing elephants and each elephant in turn lies on a top of a human body. The temple is adorned by thousands of surface images of deities, celestial and human musicians, dancers, lovers and scenes of courtly life, ranging from hunts and

battles to the pleasures of the worldly life.

Temples of Gujarat and Rajasthan

The temples of Gujarat fall in the category of Nagara style. In Gujarat after the Gupta period, the kingdom of Maitrakas of Vallabhi started with the new elements of structural temple activities that came to be known as the “Saurashtra style”. It has four types of superstructure, 8 namely, (i) the kutina resembling the Dravida sikhara, (ii) the valabhi (wagon-vault/ salasikhara), (iii) the phamsana (wedge shaped, stepped pyramidal), and (iv) the Latina (single sikhara variety with curvilinear profile). The phamsana sikhara is crowned by a Dravida type domical finial and not the amalakas, etc. The temples consisted of the square garbha-grha with or without mukha-mandapa. There were both sandhara and nirandhara temples. The temple wall shows ratha projections and following the Gupta tradition the whole temple stands on a jagati or platform. Some of the Maitraka temples of 6th and 7th century are at Gop; the Vishnu temple at Kadvar, the Bilvanatha temple at Bilesvara and the Surya temples at Pasnavada, Srinagar and Jhamra.

A transition from Saurashtra style to Nagara style takes place by the early 8th century in the temple architecture of Gujarat. The temples of this period exhibit a rudimentary sikhara in the triratha form, a garbha-grha with a pradaksina-patha and a closed mandapa with a porch and slopping roof. Under Solankis the temple architecture style was Maru-Gurjara (a mixture of old regional traditions). This comprises of the garbha-grha, gudha-mandapa or mahamandapa and antrala (a porch in front of the gudha-mandapa). The ranga-mandapa of these temples is half-walled and open which allows free passage of air and light. The sikhara is as usual in all Nagara temples, starts on top of the cornice and adorned with urahsrnga. The curvilinear sikhara is topped with a massive amalaka over which rests the candrika (capstone) and kalasa (pot finial).

Temple style of Gujarat is unique because of its decorated entrance known as kirti-torana and a temple tank. Mandovara is a term used for a decorated wall of the Gujarat temples. It is the most important element and main part of the hall of the temple. Special attention was given to decorate it with beautiful relief sculptures. The Sun temple at Modhera is one of the magnificent

temples from the period of Solankis. The temple has been ruined partially. It is east-facing, built of golden-brown sandstone, stands on a broad terrace, known as the kharasila, which made of solid brick faced with stone. The temple complex is fronted by a stepped well or a kunda. The temple has kirti-torana and consists of the sabha-mandapa, gudhamandapa and garbha-grha, all aligned in a single axis. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the Muslim rulers of Delhi invaded Gujarat and put an end to the Solanki dynasty as well as their magnificent architectural activities.

The Gurjara-Pratihara of Mandore gave importance to the temple architecture of Rajasthan during 8th-10th century. Numerous temples were built at Osian, Jagat and Kiradu. These Nagara style temples were pancayatana consist of the mula-prasada or main temple in the centre which is surrounded by four smaller shrines at four corners. There is an open mandapa which is richly carved and usually stands in front of the garbha-grha, which in turn, is fronted by the mukha-mandapa. Some of these early temples do not have pradakshinapatha and antrala (vestibule). There is also the influence of Solanki architectural style of Gujarat from 10th century onwards in Rajasthan. Some of the famous temples of Rajasthan are Jaina temple at Nagada, Hari-Hara 1 at Osian, Pipla mata temple at Osian, Ambika Mata temple at Jagat, Somesvara temple at Kiradu and Vimala Vasahi at Mount Abu. An interesting fact about the Vimala Vasahi is that it has a false dome. It leads to an octagonal mandapa, whose pillars support an imposing corbelled dome decorated with sixteen celestial nymphs.

Dravidian Temples

Another style of temple with different forms and features is seen in South and it is known as Dravida style. Here the superstructure is stepped vimana of six or eight sides with a round stupi (well fashioned boulder) at its top.

Pallava Temples

The reign of Pallavas (7th-9th century CE) is considered to be excellent in the erection of magnificent temples. Their port-town Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram was the centre of structural activities. These activities started in the period of the ruler Narasimhavaram II Rajasimha who built at least five temples. In the earlier period hard igneous

rocks were used for the temple building like granite for Olakkannesvara temple, granite for Shore temple and gneiss for Talagirisvara and Mukundunayanar temples. Later soft sandstone also came into the use. The characteristic feature of the Rajasimha style temples is pillars and pilasters with roaring lions.

Discussing the Shore temple at Mamallapuram, it has three structures or shrines within the temple complex dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu. The first shrine is called Rajasimhesvara, a three storeyed vimana type temple, dedicated to Shiva, has a square plan but the griva and sikhara are eight sided which shows its Dravidian architecture. The pillars and pilasters have roaring lions. The second shrine is called Ksatriyasimhesvara dedicated to Shiva. It has fourstoreyed vimana with a square plan and octagonal griva and sikhara surmounted by a polished basalt finial. As the decoratives of hara, the second and third talas have kutas and salas. The third shrine is known as Narapatisimhapallava Visnugrha dedicated to Visnu. It is a mandapa shrine, a single storeyed hall type structure and stands between the two temples Shiva. Other famous temples of Pallava period are Kailasnatha temple and Vaikuntha Perumal temple. The Kailasnatha temple is located at Kanchipuram and dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is built from sandstone masonry and has four storeyed Vimana in square plan with octagonal griva and sikhara. The temple has circumambulatory path and the entire temple complex is enclosed by an outer wall called prakara. The Vaikuntha Perumal temple is also located at Kanchipuram and dedicated to lord Vishnu. The temple is built from sandstone and stands on moulded adisthana. The temple has Vimana in square plan with octagonal griva. Check Your Progress-1 10 and sikhara with a covered circumambulatory path. The Vaikuntha Perumal temple is considered to be the last architectural marvel of the Pallavas.

Chola Temples

The cholas (5th-13th centuries) had their empire all over Tamil Nadu and the peripheral regions of Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala. The Chola temples have some similar elements of the Pallava and Chalukya architectural traditions. Chola temples are considered in three phases. The first phase or the early Chola phase have the temples namely; Sundaresvara, Vijayalaya, Colesvaram and the Koranganatha. The early Chola temples have square vimana with

ardha-mandapa in the front. The main temple is surrounded by eight sub-shrines known as asta-parivaralya or eight family shrines. In the second phase the architecture reached to its zenith under the ruler Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I. The temples were adorned with rich sculptural embellishments. The Brhadisvara temple is one amongst these temples at Tanjavur dedicated to lord Shiva and built of large granite stones. It has the tallest vimana of 66m through sixteen storeys and each storey carries hara elements. The vimana is crowned by a huge monolithic "cupola" with stupi or finial. The mula-prasada has an antrala or vestibule with flights of steps or sopana. There is mahamandapa and detached Nandi-mandapa in its front which is a later addition. The temple has two storied circumambulatory paths.

In the third phase of Chola temples, the plan became more complex. Beside the gopurams additional pillared mandapas were built within the temple complex. Some of them are in the shape of a ratha or wheeled chariot drawn by elephants and horses. Worshipping of Surya is evident in this period as shrine Suryanar at Tirumangalakkudi may be dated (1075-1120) to the period of Cholas. The temple is built of stones and bricks. The Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram is stated as a "sculptors dream re-lived in stone". Here the front mandapa is in the form of huge chariot drawn by horses. The temple has beautiful paintings, sculptures and relief panels. The most unique art of this temple is the musical stone pillars just in front of the temple. They produce different stone when struck and have attracted people all the time.

Chalukyan Temples The early western Chalukyans (CE 535-757) ruled over the entire Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. They built the temples at their capitals at Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal, Bagalkot, Alampur, Kudaveli, Panyam, Mahanandi, Satyavolu and Kadamarakalava with Latina form of temple superstructures. The temples of this period were neither true Nagara nor true Dravida, nor true Vesara. At Aihole, basic concept of Hindu architecture was followed. The garbha-grha was fronted by the pillared mandapa, later garbha-grha was developed into mula-prasada. Antrala, closed sabha-mandapa and mukha-mandapa were added to the mula-prasada. The sikhara, lacks originality and elegance. These temples have circumambulatory path. Some of the earliest temples at Aihole are

the temples of Konti-gudi group and the Ladh-khan temple. At Badami, Dravidian style of temple architecture is found. Their Vimana has typical Dravidian characteristics and in the Malegitti Sivalaya temple the 11 octagonal Sikhara is crowned by a heavy dome. The temples in Badami have octagonal griva and sikhara with hara elements which are of typical Dravidian style. Some of the Chalukyan temples are Papanatha, Virupaksha, Malikarjuna and Nava Brahma temples.

Unlike the early Chalukyas, the later Chalukyas relied more on fine grained dark marble like smooth and soapy chloritic schist than sandstone for their temples. They continued the tradition of multi-storeyed vimana with ornamentation around the cella and shikhara. The temples of this era are usually oblong without a circumambulatory path around the sanctum but the broad adhisthana extended beyond the temple walls provide a path for circumambulation around the whole temple complex. Often the main entrance was attached with the sides of maha-mandapa and not the mukha-mandapa. Some of the later Chalukyan temples are, the Jaina temple at Lakkundi, the Kallesvara temple at Kukkanur, the kasivisvesvara temple at Lakkundi and Malikarjuna temple at Kuruvatti. The later Chalukyas gave more significance to the fusion form of Deccan architecture by involving and modifying new arts and elements from the north and south and also adopting indigenous styles into the existing architectural traditions.

Vijay Nagar Temples

The Vijay Nagar empire (CE 1336-1565) was the great centre of art and architecture. Its capital was Vijayanagara, modern day Hampi. The kings of this dynasty built great marvels in hard stones like granite and they also made additions to the already existing temples. The temples of Virupaksha, the Hazararama and Vitthalaswami at Hampi are amongst the best examples of the Vijayanagra art and architecture. These rulers combined various elements of art and architecture from the Dravida order of Pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas, similarly the Vesara order of the Chalukya-Hoyasala traditions and indo-islamic style of the Deccan was adopted.

Their temple complexes consisted of paralleled series of rectangular prakaras or side walls with gopurams at the centre of each side. Vijayanagra rulers erected tall and massive gopurams,

known as raya- gopurams. They were generally seven to eleven storeys tall. The temples had large number of pillared mandapas for various rituals and cultural programmes. There is the absence of mortar in the construction of Vijayanagara temples. The most attracting feature of the temple was the kalyana-mandapa of the time. The so called "thousand pillared mandapa", a huge hall with too many rows of pillars. The Vijayanagra pillars are carved in very details with lions and elephants' trunks, mythical beasts, floral and faunal designs. For the first in south India, the goddesses Ganga and Yamuna along with their vehicles or vahanas were represented at the entrances of the gopurams during this period.

Vesara Temples

The Vesara style of temples are the combination of both Nagara and Dravida, its superstructure is bell-shaped.

Temples of Hoyasala Period

The rule of the royal house of Hoyasala is especially known for the unique accomplishments in the field of temple art and architecture. The most recognized of all the temples at Belur is the Cennakesava temple built by the Hoyasala king Visnuvardhana in CE 1117. The Hoyasalesvara temple in Halebid is a star shaped shrine with a different plan and elevation than the other contemporary temples in India which were commonly square and rectangle in plan. Usually, these temples stand in an enclosure with a usual garbha-grha fronted by an antrala and a pillared mandapa known as navaranga/gudha-mandapa. Some temples also have mukha-mandapa or sabha-mandapa. The navaranga are specially known for its "lantern ceilings" because they have deep niches or domes constructed by means of stone beams placed diagonally across the corner of the square. The navaranga of the Amrtesvara temple has forty-eight domes with carvings.

Hoyasala temples have multi shrines or more than one mula-prasada, thus according to its number in a single temple complex the temples are classified as ekakuta (single), dvikuta (double), trikuta (triple), catuskuta (quadruple) and pancakuta (quintuple). The Hoyasala sikhara is Vesara in style, i.e., bell-shaped, blended with the asta-bhadra or star-shaped plan. The main sikhara is crowned by a huge thousand-petalled lotus-like member which is capped by a khapuri (skull). Over it rests the

kalasa finial in the shape of a beautiful water pot. The broad jagati, projecting from the adhithana serves as a circumambulatory path.

Dilwara Jain Temples

The Jaina temple complex of Dilwara at Mount Abu had some Solanki architecture influence and it is considered to be in the category of Vesara style of temple architecture. Particularly the Vimala-Vasahi and the Luna-Vasahi shows the blending of regional art traditions. They have astonishing sculptural decoration signifying a strong central Indian influence.

These temples were mostly made of white marble. They have phenomenal torans, carved ceilings with lotus motifs, female bracket figures, and also open backyards with deva-kulikas i.e., images of gods and goddesses. The Brahmanical and Jaina temples have almost the same plan. The Vimal-Vasahi temple is dedicated to Adinatha, it is east facing with mula-prasada, gudha-mandapa (closed hall), sabha-mandapa (assembly hall) and deva-kulika (subsidiary shrines). Its entrance porch has a false dome. Temple Luna-Vasahi shares the similar architectural and artistic elements with the Vimala Vasahi temple.

Conclusion

The certain concepts of Gods and human beings have led to the emergence of temple as an architectural body. When the traditions and symbols of worship (objects of worship) are combined together that gave birth to the concept of House of God in which lies the origin of temple. This phenomenon seems to have developed in India only after 700 BCE, at the beginning of the Mahajanapada period. Terms like alaya, devalaya, prasada, devaprasada, badi, kalibadi, mandira, etc. means one and the same "house".

In India temples have different styles and forms like Nagara style, Dravidian style and Vesara style. Nagara style temples are the north Indian temples with curvilinear shikhara. They are majorly recognised as temples built by Guptas, Chandelas, Odishan temples, temples of Rajasthan and Gujrat and temples of Rajput period. Temples built by Pallava, Chola, Chalukya dynasties and temples of Vijay Nagar are of Dravidian style. Vesara style temples are visible at Dilwara, Belur, Halebid etc.

References

Jha, D.N. (Ed.). (1987). *Feudal Social Formation in*

Early India. New Delhi: Manohar.

Sharma, R.S. (1983). *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

Sharma, R.S. (1987). *Urban Decay in India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

Sharma, R.S. (1980). *Indian Feudalism*. 2nd Edn. New Delhi: Macmillan.

Sharma, R.S. (1983). *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*. New Delhi: Macmillan India.