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Art and Architecture: North India and South India

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Abstract

The centuries between the eighth and the thirteenth stand out rather prominently from the point of view of the making of cultural traditions in India. The most arresting feature of these traditions is regionalism, which gets reflected in every sphere, whether it be the formation of political power or the development of arts or the transformations in languages and literature or even religious manifestations. In very general terms, the emergence of regional cultural units such as Andhra, Assam, Bengal, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, etc. was the outcome of significant material changes. The pace of agrarian changes and the developments in the non-agrarian sector were setting the tone of feudal socio-economic formation. The political structure was deeply affected by these developments. It should, not, therefore, surprise us if the cultural ethos too got permeated by similar strains. The Mudrarakshasa, a play written in Sanskrit by Vishakhadatta and generally ascribed to the fifth century, speaks of different regions whose inhabitants differ in customs, clothing and language. The identity of some kind of sub-national groups is recognized by the Chinese pilgrim Hieun-Tsang who visited India in the first half of the seventh century and mentions several nationalities. The Kuvalayamala, a Jain text of the eighth century and largely concerned with western India, notes the existence of 18 major nationalities and describes the anthropological character of sixteen peoples, pointing out their psychological features and citing the examples of their language. The Brahma Vaivarta Purana, ascribed to the thirteenth century Bengal explicates deshabheda — differences based on regions/territories. This feature is reflected in art and architecture as well. We see the emergence of various regional traditions and it was during this time that different architectural languages such as Nagara, Dravida and Vesara matured. In this research article begin survey by looking at the various types of architectural styles and art traditions.

Keywords: Nagara, Dravida, Vesara, Rehka, Bhadra, Khakhara and Gaudiya

1. Temple Architecture

Indian temples have symbolized the very ethos of life-style of people through the millennia. The panorama of Indian temple architecture may be seen across at extremely wide chronological and geographical horizon. From the simple beginnings at Sanchi in the fifth century of the Common Era to the great edifices at Kanchi, Thanjavur and Madurai, is a story of more than a millennium.

The prominent Shilpa Shastras that deal with the subject of temple architecture are: Mayamata,

Manasara, Shilparatna, Kamikagama, Kashyapashilpa and Ishanagurudevapaddhati. In the majority of these works the subject is dealt with under the three heads:

- the geographical distribution
- their differentiation from the point of view of shapes, and
- their presiding deities and castes.

All these topics, however, are not mentioned in all these works. Some later texts as the Kamikagama and Kashyapashilpa show that the nature of ornamentation, number of storeys, the size of prasadas etc. also constituted bases of differentiation.

1.1 Major Styles

The ancient texts on Indian temple architecture broadly classify them into three orders. The terms Nagara, Dravida and Vesara indicate a tendency to highlight typological features of temples and their geographical distribution: These terms describe respectively temples that primarily employ square, octagonal and apsidal ground plans which also regulate the vertical profile of the structure. Nagara and Dravida temples are generally identified with the northern and southern temple styles respectively. All of northern India, from the foothills of the Himalayas to the central plateau of the Deccan is furnished with temples in the northern style. There are, of course, certain regional variations in the great expanse of this area. A work entitled Aparajitapriccha confines the Nagari (Nagara) style to the Madhyadesha (roughly the Ganga-Yamuna plains) and further mentions Lati and Vairati (Gujarat and Rajasthan respectively) as separate styles. The local manuscripts of Odisha recognise four main types of Odisha style temples, viz., the Rehka, Bhadra, Khakhra and Gaudiya.

The Dravida or southern style, comparatively speaking, followed a more consistent development track and was confined to the most southerly portions of the subcontinent, specially between the Krishna river and Kanyakumari. The term Vesara is not free from vagueness. Some of the texts ascribe the Vesara style to the country between the Vindhyas and the river Krishna but there are texts placing it between the Vindhyas and the Agastya, the location of which is uncertain.

Since the temples of the Nagara type are found as far south as Dharwad (in Karnataka) and those of the Dravidian type as far north as Ellora (in Maharashtra), a narrow and compartmentalized geographical classification is misleading. At certain periods there occurred striking overlapping of major styles as influences from different regions confronted each other, e.g., the temples of the early Chalukyas whose kingdom was strategically positioned in the middle of the peninsula in the seventh and eighth centuries. The Kandariya Mahadeva temple in Khajuraho is another striking example where the various architectural elements combined into an integrated whole. Similarly, the Kerala temples display variety in their plan types. Square, circular or apsidal-ended buildings are utilized. The earliest examples in Kerala go back to the twelfth century.

1.2 Presiding Deities

Temples were dedicated not only to two great gods of the Brahmanical pantheon, viz., Shiva and Vishnu but to the great Mother Goddess as well. In fact, consecration and depiction of divinities big and small, benevolent and malevolent, celestial and terrestrial, atmospheric .and heavenly, devas and asuras and countless folk deities such as yakshas, vakshis, apsaras and kinnaris represent a world of their own. It is indeed fascinating to see that even animal or bird 'vehicles' (vahanas) of these divinities shed their muteness and become eloquent carriers of meaningful symbolism. Thus, Nandi, the agricultural bull of Shiva is fully expressive of the god's sexuality; tiger, the mount of Durga embodies her fierce strength and aggressiveness. The river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna are identified by their vahanas, viz. crocodile and tortoise respectively. Lakshmi's association with elephants, lotus flowers and water not only symbolise her popularity as the goddess of fortune but more importantly as a divinity conveying the magical power of agricultural fertility — an aspect that goes back to the days of the Rigveda. Swan carrying Saraswati typified not only her grace and elegance but classic Kshiranira viveka — the tremendous intellectual discerning capacity which is an integral element of this goddess of learning. The Kashyapa Shilpa has a chapter on the deities to be enshrined in the principal styles mentioned above. Thus, the Shantamurtis (peaceful, calm and serene deities) are to be installed in Nagara; couples or moving deities in vesara shrines; and heroic, dancing or enjoying

deities in the Dravida structures. However, these injunctions about presiding deities, like the basic styles, ought not to be taken in a compartmentalised sense. Similarly, textual prescriptions about the Nagara, Dravida and Vesara styles being associated with brahmana, kshatriya and vaishya varnas respectively cannot be taken literally.

1.3 Shapes, Plans and Language of Temples

Each temple style has its own distinctive technical language, though some terms are common but applied to different parts of the building in each style. The sanctuary, which is the main part is called the vimana where the garbhagriha or the inner sanctum containing the main presiding deity is located. The part surmounting the vimana is known as the shikhara. The other elements of ground plan are: mandapa or pavilion for the assembly of devotees; antarala, which is a vestibule connecting the vimana and mandapa and the pradakshina Patha, i.e., circumambulatory passage surrounding these. The natmandir or dance hall and bhogamandapa evolved subsequently in the Odishan temples such as the famous Sun temple at Konarka, to add to the dignity and magnificence of the deities who were honoured in them. The exterior of the Nagara type is characterised by horizontal tiers, as in the jagamohan or porch in front of the sanctum of the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar, and the vimana is usually circular in plan. Fundamentally, there is no structural similarity between the Brahmanical and the Jain temples in the north except that the need for housing the various Tirthankaras dominates the disposition of space in the latter. The Dravida style has a polygonal, often octagonal shikhara and a pyramidal vimana, which is rectangular in plan. A temple of the Dravida type is also notable for the towering gopurams or gate towers of the additional mandapas.

1.4 Ecological Setting, Raw Materials and Regionalization

The stylistic evolution of temples was also rooted in ecological setting which gave them specific regional identity. In the relatively heavy rainfall areas of the western coast of India and Bengal, temples have sloping tiled roofs, giving rise to timber gables. To overcome the hazards of snow and hail, wooden sloped roofs are also employed in the temples of the Himalayan belt. In general, the hotter and drier the climate, the flatter the roof; open porches provide shaded seating, and pierced stone screens are utilised to filter the light. Some such features which are noticeable in the famous Lad Khan temple of the Chalukyas at Aihole (north Karnataka) are direct adaptations of thatch and timber village and community halls. The distribution of space in Jain shrines was affected by their placements on high hills. These structures are characterised by an air of seclusion and aloofness. Some such typical examples can be seen at the Shatrunjaya and Palitana hills in Gujarat or the Dilwara temples at Mount Abu in southern Rajasthan. Apart from the ecological influences, the availability of raw materials also affected styles of craftsmanship. While the transition from wood to stone attributed to the Mauryas of the third century BCE was in itself a great step forward, local raw materials played a dominant role in techniques of construction and carving. No wonder, the Pallava King Mahendravarman (early seventh century) is called vichitra-chitta (curious minded) because he discarded conventional perishable materials such as brick, timber and mortar and used the hardest rock surface (granite) for his cave temples at Mahabalipuram. Hard and crystalline rocks prevented detailed carving, whereas soft and sedimentary stone permitted great precision. Friable and schist like stones, such as those used by the Hoysala architects and craftsmen at Belur and Halebid (Karnataka) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries promoted the carving of mouldings created by sharp and angled incisions. Brick building traditions continued to survive where there was an absence of good stone and techniques of moulding and carving bricks doubtless influenced the style of temples in these areas, e.g., the temples at Bishnupur in Bengal. The influence of timber and bamboo techniques of construction represent a unique architectural development in north-eastern state of Assam. Almost no stone temples are found in the Himalayan valleys of Kulu, Kangra and Chamba. It is obvious that timber and brick building traditions dominate temple forms in these areas. The sloping and gabled roofs which are preserved only in stone in the temples of Kashmir can be seen in these areas in pure wooden context. In the ninth century or so, a remarkable multi-towered temple was excavated into a natural escarpment at Masrur in Kangra.

1.5 Role of Decorative Elements

The evolution of various styles in terms of

decorations, ornamentations and other embellishments is a natural phenomenon. However, it needs to be stressed that these elements did not affect the basic structure of temples already outlined above. Amongst conspicuous decorative elements one can mention the growth of pillars from simple oblong shafts in early Pallava structures to extremely finely chiselled (almost giving the impression of lathe work) columns in Hoysala temples. Later still, the temples of Madurai and Rameshwaram give extraordinary place to long corridors studded with animals based caryatids. The niches, pavilions and horse shoe-shaped windows (kudu), among others, are also important decorative motifs which help in the delineation of stages of evolution. In general, the tendency is to make constant increase in embellishments. To illustrate, the kudu which at the Mahabalipuram monuments has a plain shovel-headed finial, develops a lion head in the Chola monuments. The process of excessive ornamentation is noticeable in north India too. Shikharas, ceilings and other walls receive great attention of artisans and craftsmen. Extremely exquisite carvings in marble in the ceilings at Dilwara Jain temples at Mt. Abu do not serve any structural purpose and are purely decorative.

Sometimes it is argued that multiplication of roofs constitutes a distinctive feature of temples of Malabar, Bengal and the eastern and western Himalayas. In a west coast or Malabar temple the walls resemble a wooden railing in structure and were made of wood, though stone copies from about the fourteenth century also exist. Such temples (for example, the Vadakkunathan temple at Trichur —15th-16th century) may have either a simple pitched roof of overlapping slabs, or they may have a series of pitched roofs one above another, which bear an obvious resemblance to the multiple pitched roofs of Chinese and Nepalese temples. In the Kashmir valley of the western Himalayas, temples bear two or three roofs which were also copied from the usual wooden roofs. In the wooden examples the interval between the two roofs seems to have been left open for light and air; in the stone buildings it is closed with ornaments. Besides this, all these roofs are relieved by types of windows comparable to those found in medieval buildings in Europe. Example of such roofs in Kashmir may be seen in Shiva temple at Pandrethan and Sun temple at Martand. In Bengal, temples have been identified which have been borrowed from leaf-huts that are very common in the region. In this form of temple we also find the same tendency to a multiplication of roofs one above another. The temples at Bishnupur such as the famous Keshta Raya (17th century) are built with a variety of roofs forms on square and rectangular plans. Even contemporary Mughal architecture makes use of this so-called “Bengal roof” in sandstone or marble.

2. Organization of Building Programme

In the erection of the structural temple an organized building programme was followed. Bricks were baked either on or near the site and stone was mostly quarried locally. From reliefs carved on temples and from a palm-leaf manuscript that has been discovered and which concerns the building operations carried out at the world famous thirteenth century Sun temple at Konarka it is learnt that stone from quarries was sometimes transported to the building site on wooden rollers drawn by elephants or floated on barges along rivers and canals. At the site the masons roughly shaped the stone blocks which were then hoisted into position by rope pulleys on scaffolding. Ramps were also constructed of timber and sand to facilitate the placing of extremely heavy stone pieces in place. A classic example of this is the stone constituting the huge shikhara of the Brihadishvara temple at Thanjavur. This stone weighing about 80 tonnes is popularly believed to have been raised to its present height of about 200 feet by being dragged on an inclined plane, which had its base about seven kilometres away at Sarapallan (literally, meaning ‘elevation from depression’). Occasionally, as in Konark, iron beams were used in the sanctuary and hall. The architects, artisans and workmen engaged in the various activities associated with the building of a temple were organised into groups which functioned as guilds. The above-mentioned Konark temple manuscript lists the workmen, their salaries and rules of conduct and provides an account over several years of the various building operations. Quite often, these get reflected in stone as well, e.g., an eleventh century panel from Khajuraho shows cuttings, chiselling and transporting stone for temples.

3. Chronological and Geographical Spread of Indian Temples

In this section we mention some of the

prominent temples according to their chronology and geographical spread.

3.1 The Northern Style

Northern, central and western India (fifth-seventh centuries): The Parvati temple at Nachna (south-east of Khajuraho, M.P.); the Dashavatara temple at Deogarh. (Jhansi District, U.P.); the brick temple at Bhitargaon (Kanpur District, U.P.); the Vishnu temple at Gop (Gujarat); Mundeshwari temple (an unusual example of octagonal plan) at Ramgarh (Bihar) and temples at Sanchi and Jigawa (both in Madhya Pradesh).

The Deccan and Central India (sixth-eighth centuries): The Cave temples at Ellora (near Aurangabad in Maharashtra), Elephanta (near Mumbai) and Badami (north Karnataka); Early-Chalukyan temples in north Karnataka at Badami, Aihole (Ladkhan temples), and Pattadakal (Papanatha and Galaganatha temples).

Western and central India (eighth — thirteenth centuries): Harihara and other temples at Osian (north of Jodhpur, Rajasthan); Jelika Mandir (Gwalior); Candella temples at Khajuraho (specially, Lakshman, Kandariya Mahadev and Vishvanatha); temples at Roda (north of Modhera in Gujarat); Sun temple at Modhera (Gujarat) and Marble temples of the Jains at Mt. Abu (Rajasthan).

eastern India (eighth — thirteenth centuries): Parashurameshvara Vaital Deul, Mukteshwar, Lingaraj and Rajarani temples (all at Bhubaneshwar); Sun temple at Konarka (Odisha) and the Jagannatha temple at Puri (Odisha). The Himalayan belt (eighth century onwards): Sun temple at Martand; Shiva temple at Pandrethan and Vishnu temple at Aventesvamin (all in Kashmir); temple at Masrur (Kangar, Himachal Pradesh) and Brahmanical temples in Nepal (Kathmandu, Patan and Bhadgaon).

3.2 The Southern Style

The Deccan and Tamil Nadu (sixth — tenth centuries): Cave temples, the Rathas and the 'Shore' temple of the Pallavas at Mahabalipuram (near Chennai); the Vaikuntha perumal and Kailasanatha temples at Kanchipuram (also near Chennai); Chalukyan structures at Aihole (Meguti temple), Badami (Malegitti Shiva temple) and Pattadakal (Virupaksha temple) and the Kailash temple at Ellora carved out under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas.

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala (tenth — seventeenth centuries): Brihadishvara temples of the Cholas at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram; Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebid and Somnathpur (all in Karnataka); Later-Chalukya temples in Karnataka (at Lakkundi and Gadag); the Pampati temple of the Pandyas at Vijaynagar; the Shrirangam (near Trichinopoly, Tamil Nadu) and Minakshi temples (Madurai, Tamil Nadu); the Kattilmadam (at Chalpuram, district Palghat, Kerala) temple and Parashuram temple at Tiruvallam (near Trivandrum).

3.3 The Vesara Style

The Buddhist chaitya halls of the early centuries of the Common Era and situated in the Western Ghats in the modern state of Maharashtra may be said to be prototypes of this style. Its most conspicuous feature is the apsidal ground plan. As already mentioned, there is certain vagueness about its essential components and geographical distribution. Amongst the early examples (seventh — tenth centuries) can be cited the structures at Chezarla (Andhra Pradesh), Aihole (Durga temple), Mahabalipuram (Sahdeva and Draupadi rathas) and Kerala (Shiva temples at Trikkandiyur and Tiruvannur). The classic post-tenth century examples include the Nataraja shrine at Chidambaram (Tamil Nadu) and the Vamana temple at Kizhavellur (District Kottayam, Kerala).

4. Temples and Indian Cultural Ethos

Indian temples symbolized the very mundane urges of humans and were for varied activities of the community as a whole. To begin with, general education within the temple was of great importance. Many endowments to temples were specifically made for the establishment of colleges which were incorporated into temple complexes. Teaching of such subjects as grammar and astrology as well as recital and teaching of texts such as the Vedas, the Epics Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Puranas were encouraged. Music and dance generally formed part of the daily ritual of the temples and during special celebrations and annual festivals these played a particularly dominant role. Large temples would maintain their own musicians — both vocal and instrumental, together with dancers, actors and teachers of performing arts. The life-size delineations of such musicians in a tenth century

temple at Khajuraho as well as in the Sun temple at Konark and nata mandir (dancing hall) forming an absolutely integral element in the Odishan and other temples also provide eloquent testimonies to that effect. And, of course, who can forget the performance of the great cosmic-dance of the Mahadeva Shiva himself at the Chidambaram temple. No less important was the institution of devadasi. These temple maidens played a significant role in dancing as well as in singing of devotional hymns by which the temple god was entertained. The fact that the Chola emperor Rajaraja (1984-1012) constructed two long streets for the accommodation of four hundred dancing women attached to the Brihadishvara temple (Thanjavur), gives us an idea of the lavish scale on which he endowed the temple and its functions. Many temples had regular festivals which provided opportunities for mingling of mythology and folklore, as for instance, the annual rathayatra of the Jagannatha temple at Puri. The undertaking of pilgrimage (tirthayatra) is yet another mechanism through which the participation of the community in temple activities was facilitated. As temples provided work and the means of livelihood for a large number of persons, they were able to exert great influence upon the economic life of people. Even small temples needed the services of priests, garland-makers and suppliers of clarified butter, milk and oil. One of the most detailed accounts that have been preserved of the number of people who were supported by a temple and the wages they received is that given in an inscription on the above-mentioned Thanjavur temple, and dated 1011 CE. The list includes cooks, gardeners, dance-masters, garland-makers, musicians, woodcarvers, painters, choir-groups for singing hymns in Sanskrit and Tamil, accountants, watchmen and a host of other officials and servants of temples, totalling more than six hundred persons.

5. Sculptures: Stone and Metal Images

The regional spirit asserting itself is seen in sculptural arts as well. Stylistically, schools of artistic depictions of the human form developed in eastern, western, central and northern India. Distinctive contribution also emerged in the Himalayan regions, the Deccan and the far south. A great majority of these regions produced works of art that were characterised by what has been described as the "medieval factor" by the great art historian and critic Niharranjan Rai. This "medieval factor" was marked by a certain amount of slenderness and an accent on sharp angles and lines: The roundness of bodily form acquires flatness. The curves lose their convexity and turn into the concave. Western and central Indian sculptures, eastern Indian and Himalayan metal images, Gujarati and Rajasthani book and textile illustrations, Bengal terracottas and wood carvings and certain Deccan and Odisha miniatures registered this new conception of form through the post-tenth centuries. The pivot of the early medieval sculpture is the human figure, both male and female, in the form of gods and goddesses and their attendants. Since these cult images rest on the assured foundations of a regulated structure of form, it maintains a more or less uniform standard of quality in all art-regions of India. Curiously, the creative climax of each art-region is not reached at one and the same time all over India. In Bihar and Bengal it is reached in the ninth and tenth centuries; in Odisha in the twelfth and thirteenth; in central India in the tenth and eleventh; in Rajasthan in the tenth; in Gujarat in the eleventh; and in the far south in the tentheleventh centuries. It is in the Deccan alone that the story is of increasing torpor and petrification — indeed, Deccan ceases to be a sculptural province after the eighth century.

It is not only the cult images but non-iconic figure sculptures too which conform to more or less standardised types within each art-province and hardly reveal any personal attitude or experience of the artist. The multitude of figures related themselves to a large variety of motifs and subjects. These include: narrative reliefs, historical or semi-historical scenes; music and dance scenes, mithuna couples in a variety of poses and attitudes, arrays of warriors and animals and shalabhanjikas (women and the tree).

Metal images cast in brass and octa-alloy (ashta-dhatu), copper and bronze emerge in profusion in eastern India (Bihar, Bengal and Assam), Himalayan kingdoms (especially Nepal and Kashmir) and more particularly in the south. The north Indian images largely portray Brahmanic and Buddhist deities permeated with tantric influences. The main types represented in the remarkable galaxy of south Indian metal images are the various forms of Shiva, especially the Nataraja; Parvati; the Shaiva saints such as Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar; Vaishnav saints called Alvars and figures of royal donors.

All over the country, the post-Gupta iconography prominently displays a divine hierarchy which reflects the pyramidal ranks in feudal society. Vishnu, Shiva and Durga appear as supreme deities lording over many other divinities of unequal sizes and placed in lower positions as retainers and attendants. The supreme Mother Goddess is clearly established as an independent divinity in iconography from this time and is represented in a dominating posture in relation to several minor deities. Even hitherto a puritanical religion like Jainism could not resist the pressure of incorporating the Mother Goddess in its fold, which is fully reflected in the famous Dilwara temples at Mt. Abu in Rajasthan. The pantheons do not so much reflect syncretism as forcible. In the rock-cut sculptures of Ellora one can feel the fighting mood of the divinities engaged in violent struggles against their enemies. The reality of unequal ranks appear in the Shaivite, Jain and Buddhist monastic organizations. The ceremonies recommended for the consecration of the acharya, the highest in rank, are practically the same as those for the coronation of the prince.

6. Paintings, Terra-Cotta and the "Med-IEVAL Factor"

The medieval tradition in paintings has the following traits: sharp, jerky and pointed angles, e.g., at the elbow and the shoulders, sensuous facial features — sharp and peaked nose, long wide swollen eyes projected sharply and crescent lips, richness of variegated patterns, motifs etc. gathered and adapted to the grip of sharp curves, and an intense preference for geometric and abstract patterns of decoration. The manifestations of these traits can be seen in the paintings on the walls of the Kailasha temple (eighth century) of Ellora; the Jaina shrine at Sittanavasal (ninth century) and the Brihadishvara temple at Thanjavur (eleventh century), both in Tamil Nadu. However, these traits are still more pronounced in the well-known manuscript-illustrations of Bihar and Bengal, Nepal and Tibet in the post-tenth centuries. Textiles surfaces also offered a very rich field for the development of this tradition. At least from the thirteenth century onwards west Indian textile designs, and later, those of the Deccan, south, Odisha and Bengal also register their impact in unmistakable terms. The feudal ethos of the post-Gupta economy, society and polity is also noticeable in the terracotta art. The change is noticeable in the patrons and content of depictions. Art activity, as a whole, was being feudalized. The pre-Gupta art at Bharhut, Sanchi, Karle, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, etc. was patronised mainly by the mercantile and commercial class, artisans and craft-guilds as well as royal families. Art in the Gupta period (fourth-sixth centuries), when feudal tendencies had just begun to appear, reflects that vitality and zest of renewed Brahmanism — for the first time Brahmanical temples were constructed in permanent material, i.e., stone.

The art of the post-Gupta centuries (650-1300 CE) was supported mainly by kings of different principalities, feudatories, military chiefs, etc. who alone could patronise large-scale art activities. The terracotta art, which had once symbolised the creative urges of the common man, ceased to be so and instead became a tool in the hands of resourceful patrons. The output of miniature portable terracottas made for the urban market dwindled in the post-Gupta period. Though some of the old urban centres such as Varanasi, Ahichchhatra and Kannauj survived and some new ones like Tattanandapur (near Bulandshahr in U.P.) emerged in the early medieval period, very few of them have yielded terracottas. Instead of producing for the market, the clay modeller (pustakaraka) become subservient to the architect and now produced for big landlords, Brahmanical temples and non Brahmanical monasteries. Terracotta acquired the character of an elite art and was preserved in feudal headquarters and religious centres such as Paharpur, Rajbadidanga (Bengal), Vikramashila (Bihar), Akhnur and Ushkar (Kashrnir). Terracottas in the post-Gupta centuries were used by landed aristocrats and kings to decorate religious buildings and their own places on auspicious occasions such as marriages as recorded by Bana in the Harshacarita.

7. Summary

This article explores the notion of regionalism as the hallmark of the making of Indian cultural traditions with special reference to art and architecture between the 8th – 13th centuries. Architectural styles like the Nagara, Dravida and Vesara developed with broad regional specificities. The basis of classifying the temple styles in terms of geographical distribution, differentiation in ground plans and presiding deities has been offered in this Unit. In this

period distinctive technical language developed for describing architectural features. The role of 'medieval factors' in sculptures, terra-cottas and paintings have been explored.

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