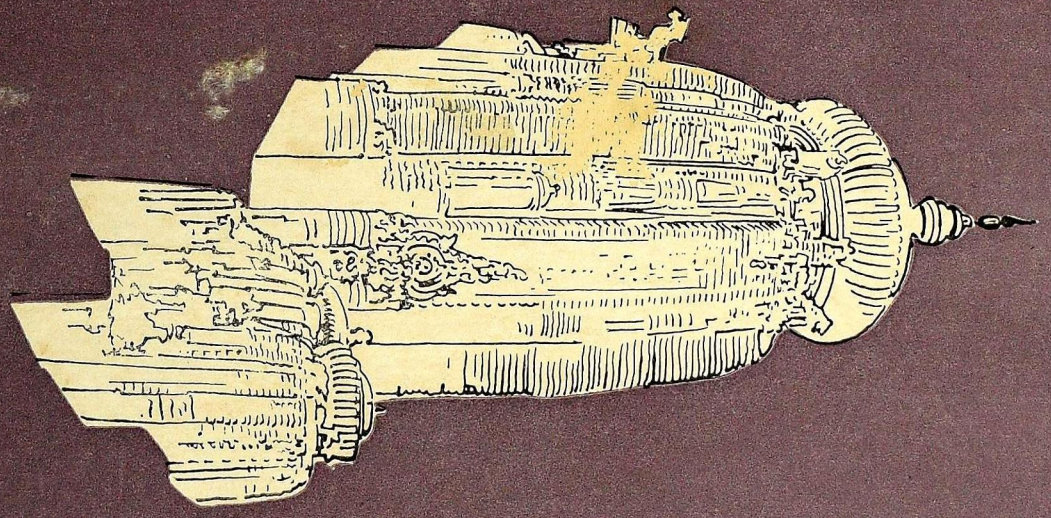
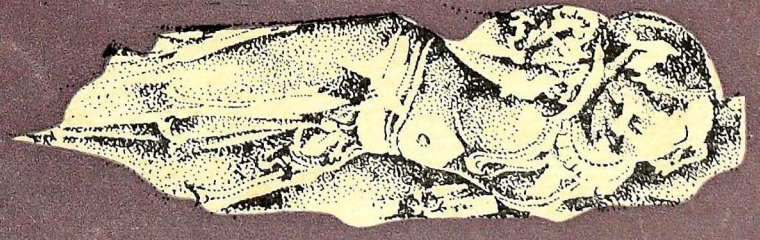


TEMPLES OF NORTH INDIA

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION



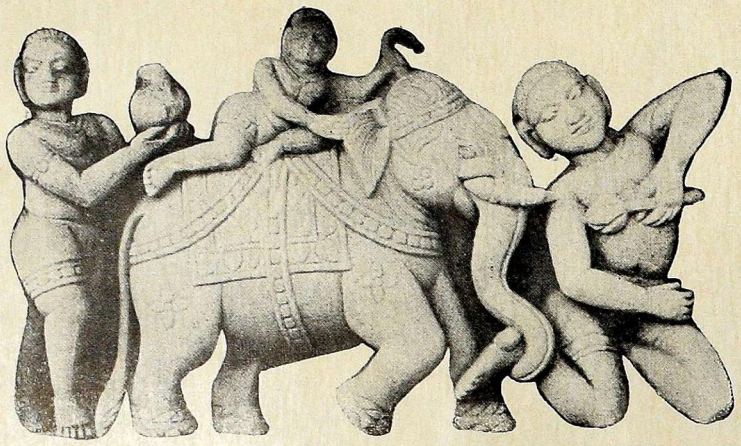
Revised edition August 1959 (Sravana 1881)

Rs. 1·50

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, PUBLICATIONS DIVISION, DELHI-8, AND PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, FARIDABAD

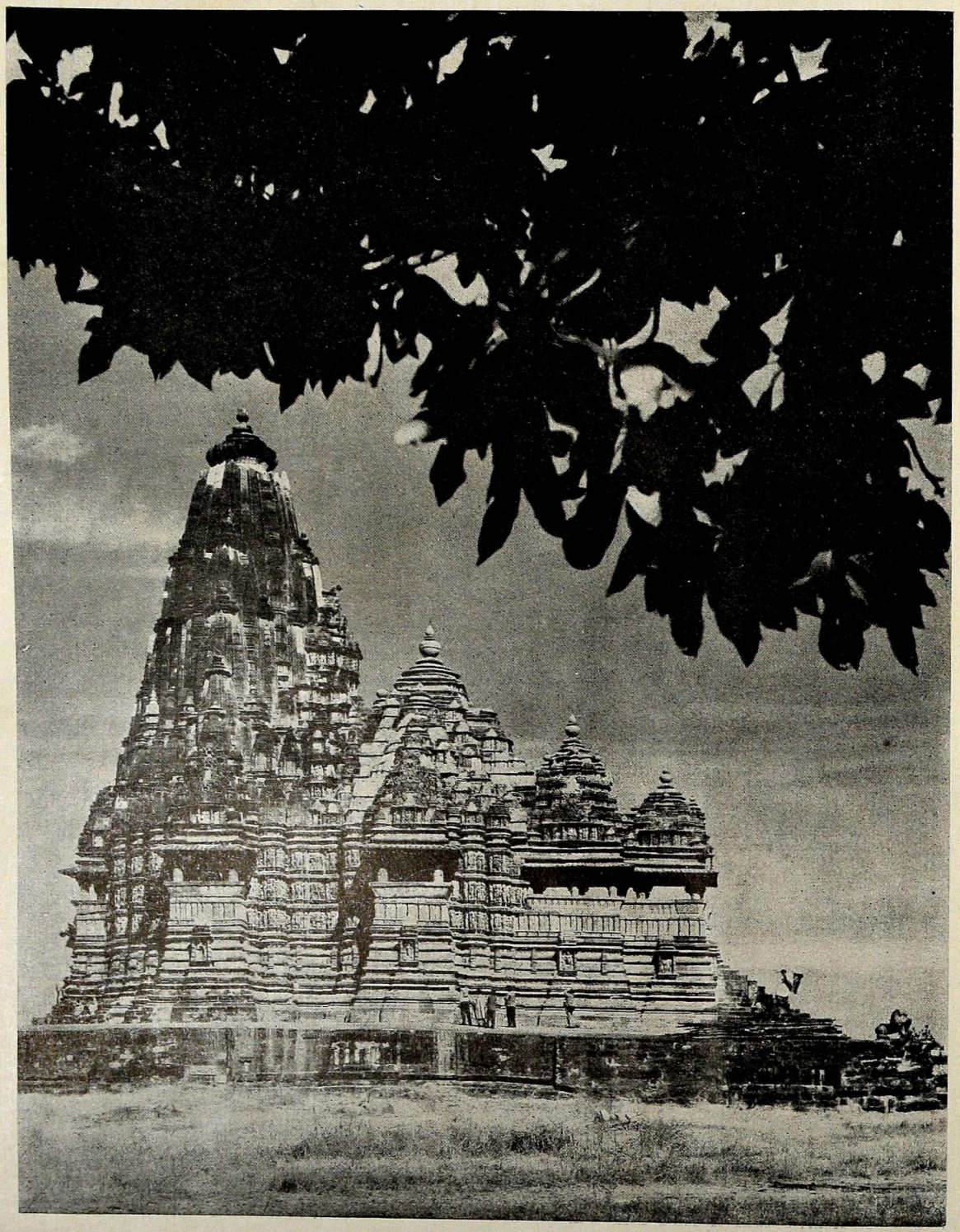
TEMPLES OF NORTH INDIA

THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India



1948

CONTENTS



Khajuraho

INTRODUCTION

The most eloquent record of man's intellectual and emotional evolution is the architecture of the age to which he belongs, for in it the deepest human feelings and aspirations stand changeless, captured in rock, brick, or stone, for all to see. This is even truer of temples which are erected in a spirit of reverence and emotive dedication and are, as such, projections of the religious consciousness of a people. The fully-developed Hindu temple thus becomes an ideal for the union of the human with the divine, its upward movement and lofty spire expressing something of the human desire to reach out and mingle with the Infinite.

The Indian temple owes its genesis to the crude circle of stones within which pre-historic man enshrined sacred relics, human or divine. To cover them and to mark the holy spot, he used a cap-stone which has its counterpart in the *sikhara* or the spire of the fully-developed temple. The same spirit of reverence which characterises the menhirs and dolmens of ancient India informs all the subsequent styles of temple architecture that have flourished in India.

The mounting *sikhara* represents the human quest for the divine, and where the final tapers to a point, the human and the divine merge into a single entity. As the human aspires to the divine, the divine, too, descends, seeks out the human, and imparts grace in the same measure. The latter symbolism is clearly expressed in the Tejapala temple at Mount Abu where the pendant of the dome drops from the carved ceiling in plastic designs of great beauty till it ends in a drop or point which hangs suspended over the interior of the shrine.

It has been pointed out that the outstanding quality of Indian temples is their spiritual content. That the Indian mind is preoccupied with the religious, philosophic and metaphysical qualities of a work of art is reflected in temple architecture more clearly than in any other form of art. The profound significance of the subject-matter in the reliefs of temple walls bears testimony to this view. Nevertheless, it is true that, as the requirements of the ritual of worship grew in complexity, the architectural plan of the Hindu temple became more elaborate, thus offering increasing scope for the aesthetic feelings of the builders.

The *Silpa Sastra* divides temples into the Nagara type, the Dravida type and the Vesara type. Throughout the greater part of the country,

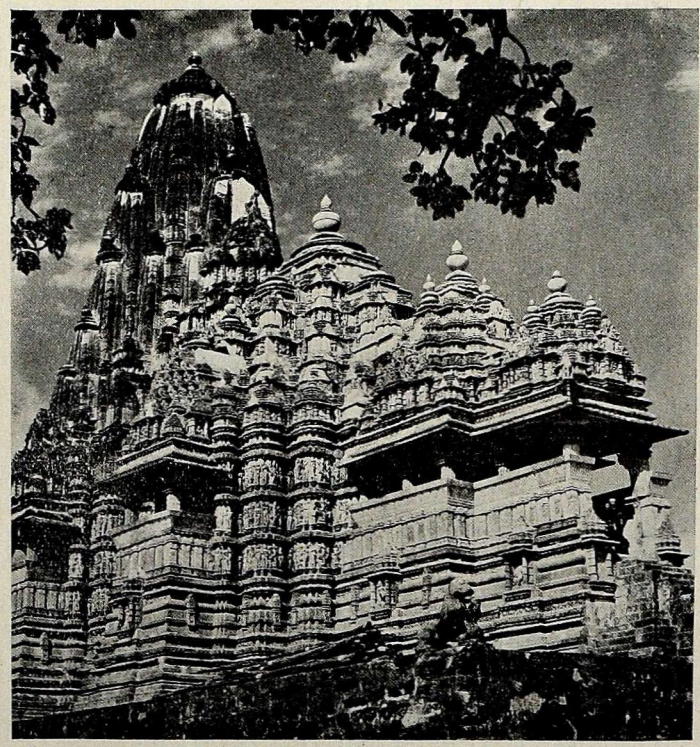
however, the principal architectural features of the temple are the same. The sanctuary, which is the main part, is called the *vimana*. In the *vimana* is a small chamber called the *garbhagriha* or the inner sanctum where the divine emblem or image is kept. The part surmounting the *vimana* is known as the *sikhara*. The *mandapa* or pavilion for the assembly of devotees, and the *antarala*, which is a vestibule connecting the *vimana* and the *mandapa*, and the *pradakshinapath* or the circumambulatory passage surrounding these complete the essential plan. The Kandariya Mahadev temple in Khajuraho is the most complete example where the various architectural elements are combined into an integrated whole. The *natmandir* or dance hall and *bhogmandir* or refectory were evolved subsequently in the Orissan temples to add to the dignity and magnificence of the deities who were honoured in them. Fundamentally, there is no structural difference between the Hindu and the Jain temples in the North except that the need for housing the various Tirthankars dominates the disposition of space in the latter. Moreover, the Jain temples achieve their effect from the grouping together of a number of shrines on such high spaces as the hills can provide, and are characterised by an air of seclusion and aloofness.

The term Nagara merely means metropolitan, or that which is in vogue, and as such did not follow any specific architectural rules. However, by the Nagara or Indo-Aryan style is understood that type of architecture which prevailed in North India during the great ages of temple-building in its history. The exterior of this type of temple is characterised by horizontal tiers, as in the *jagamohan* or porch in front of the sanctum of the Sun temple at Konarak, and the *vimana* is usually circular in plan. The Dravida type, on the other hand, has a polygonal, often octagonal *sikhara* 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*. Combinations of these various styles can be found in a single temple. For instance, the *vimana* of the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar is of the Vesara or apsidal type, whereas the *jagamohan* is of the Nagara type. A combination of the Nagara and the Dravida styles can be seen in the star-shaped Chalukyan shrines of the Hoysala dynasty in Mysore. However, since the temples of the Indo-Aryan type are found as far south as Dharwar and those of the Dravidian type as far north as Ellora, a narrow geographical classification is misleading. Another important difference which in some measure influenced the subsequent fate of these temples was that the Dravidian temples were confined to the southern extremity of the peninsula which comprises only one-third of the country as a whole, while the Indo-Aryan temples were distributed over the vast remaining area and were, in spite of a certain uniformity of style, more varied.

Furthermore, since the path of the Muslim invader lay through the North, the Indo-Aryan temples suffered, time and again, at the hands of religious iconoclasts. Where they were not completely razed to the ground, they were dismantled and mutilated beyond recognition. There are countless instances where a solitary archway or a carved pillar which somehow escaped destruction is all that remains to represent an entire school of northern architecture, which in some cases flourished for several hundred years.

The flat-roofed temples of the Gupta emperors, though they continued the traditions of the stupas and rock-cut caves of the third century B.C., marked, at the same time, the beginning of a new architectural epoch, which lasted from about 320 to 600 A.D. It was during this period that the Indo-Aryan temple was shaped, but it was not until two hundred years later that this temple type was firmly established and a clear distinction arose between the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian temples. At this time, the

Kandariya Mahadev temple, Khajuraho



country embarked on an era of temple-building which involved great religious concentration and intensity of feeling. The next great flood of creative energy and of impassioned architectural activity came in the 11th century and lasted for over two hundred years. The most magnificent of North India's temples among which are those at Konarak and Khajuraho, belong to this latter phase, of which all structures are characterised by vitality, exuberance and splendour.

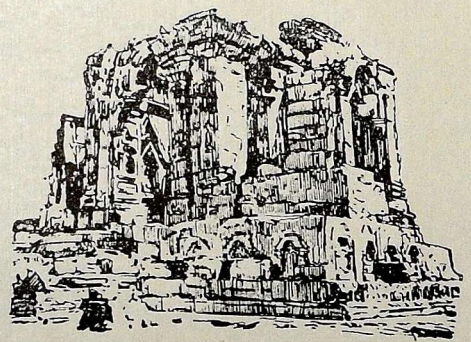
Owing to its wide distribution, it is easier to deal with the Northern mode of temple-building by relegating its various phases to the geographical regions where they flourished than by considering the architectural styles of the various ruling dynasties separately.

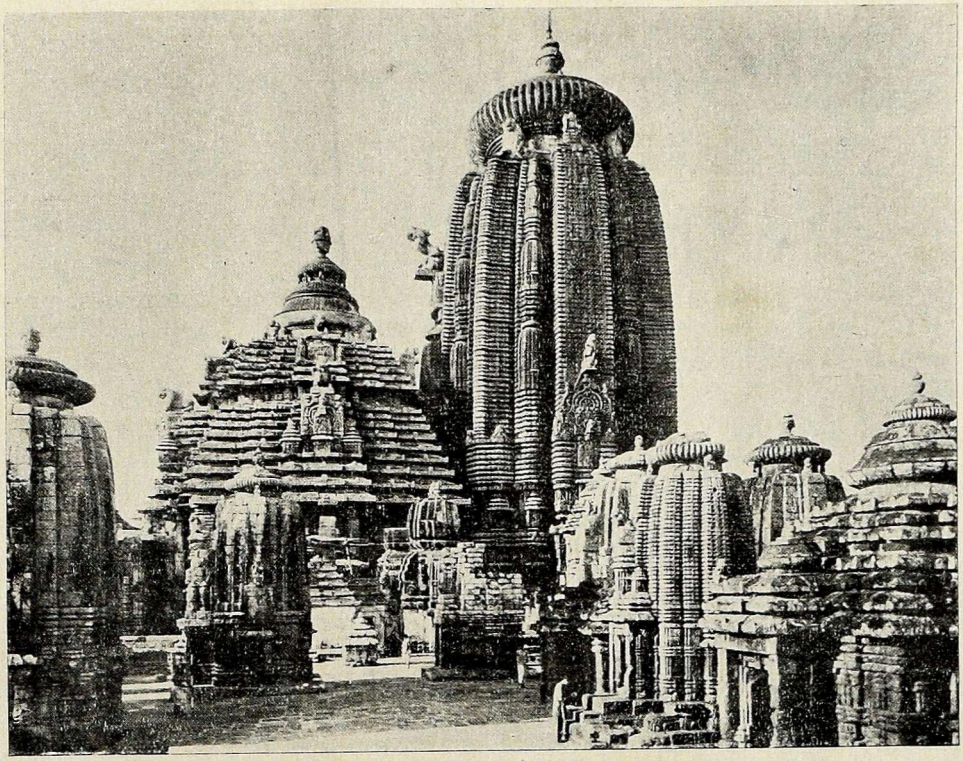
Of the six main regional developments into which the temples of North India divide themselves, the one in Kalinga or Orissa is the most definite in character. The group of temples at Khajuraho in Central India, though of later date, have much in common with the Orissan style. Then comes the small but distinctive groups at Gwalior and Brindaban (Mathura). South of this is an area where the most southerly examples of the Indo-Aryan temple are found. Rajasthan forms a fifth geographical unit which represents what may be termed the post-Gupta period of temple architecture. And lastly, south of this region are Gujarat and Kathiawar which were the scene of another important epoch of temple-building.

No account of North Indian temples can be said to be complete without a reference to the temples of Kashmir and other Himalayan regions, and those of Bengal.

In the pages that follow only the most remarkable and representative examples of these styles have been dealt with.

All these regional developments have their own special features to be accounted for largely by the availability of materials and partly by the local tradition of building. None the less, there is a common undercurrent of thought, a uniformity of procedure, style and form which show unmistakably that basically all these temples belong to the same wide movement.





The Lingaraja temple, Bhubaneswar

ORISSA

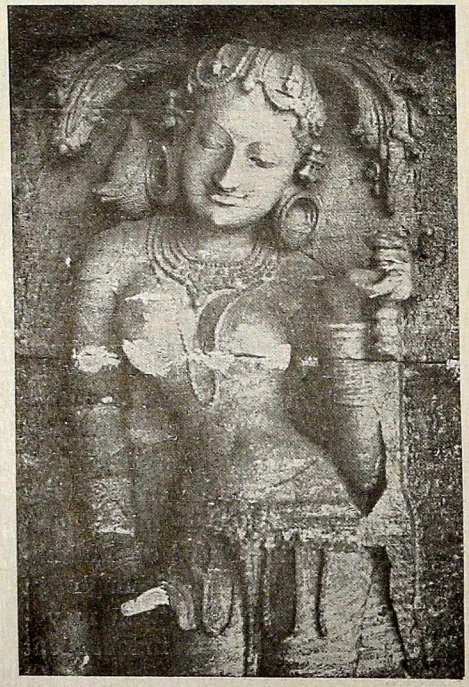
Under the ancient name of Kalinga, Orissa was the seat of great empires as far back as 300 B.C. In the course of its history innumerable kings founded great cities and built magnificent temples, some of which have been acclaimed by critics as the most remarkable examples of architectural achievement in all Asia.

Although Orissa presents a fairly large variety of styles in temple-building, it has nevertheless a characteristic architectural genius of its own and its temples have been described as one of the most compact and homogeneous architectural groups in India. In these the Indo-Aryan style of architecture may be seen at its best and purest. Another view, however, is that the sustained architectural activity, of which Orissan temples are the culmination, originally approached this region from the neighbourhood of Mukhalingam in the South, although in many ways this architectural movement was largely an independent growth.

The temple-building movement in Orissa, which reached its peak of excellence in the 10th and 11th centuries, stretches from roughly 750 to 1250 A.D., and illustrates more coherently than any other similar movement the growth and development of the Nagara style of architecture.

Generally speaking, all Orissan temples follow a common structural plan. A typical temple consists of two apartments. The *deul,* corresponding to the Southern *vimana,* is the cubical inner apartment which enshrines the image, and is surmounted by a tower. In front of this is the *antarala* or porch called the *jagamohan* which is usually square-shaped and has a pyramidal roof. Occasionally, one or two more *mandapas,* such as the *natmandir* and the *bhogmandir,* were added in front of the *jagamohan,* but these, where they exist, were almost without exception super-imposed on the original plan.

Sculpture from the Lingaraja temple, Bhubaneswar



Bhubaneswar has the richest profusion of temples and is known as the temple town of Orissa, not only because of the large number of temples found there but also because it is the home of the famous Lingaraja temple. The city of Bhubaneswar is believed to have been created by Yayati, founder of the Kesari dynasty of Orissa. The striking concentration of temples in Bhubaneswar is partly accounted for by the fact that the city was the seat of powerful religions. The sacred lake of Bhubaneswar was once encircled by 7,000 shrines, of which about 500 now survive in different stages of dilapidation.

The great Lingaraja temple, believed to have been built about 1000 A.D., is a later product of this revivalist movement and has been acclaimed by many as the finest example of a Hindu temple in India. It stands in a cluster of 65 smaller shrines in a spacious compound 520′ by 465′ and its mighty tower (*vimana*) dominates the landscape for miles around. Constructed without mortar, this tower is 127 feet high and is divided into vertical sections. The angles of the recesses are filled in with miniature *vimanas* and on the top below the *amalaka* are figures

representing a lion crushing an elephant. The *vimana* is hollow and consists of several superimposed chambers accessible by a stairway built through the wall which is 7′ thick. The temple, as originally designed, consisted of the *vimana*, called Sri Mandir in Orissa, where the image of Tribhubaneswar, the Lord of the Three Worlds, popularly called Lingaraja, is housed, and the *jagamohan* or the entrance porch to the inner chamber. In the *garbhagriha* is enshrined the *swayambhulinga*, or self-established Linga, the symbol of Siva. The *natmandir* or dance hall, and the *bhogmandir* were probably added a century or so later, although they are in perfect harmony with the architectural scheme as a whole.

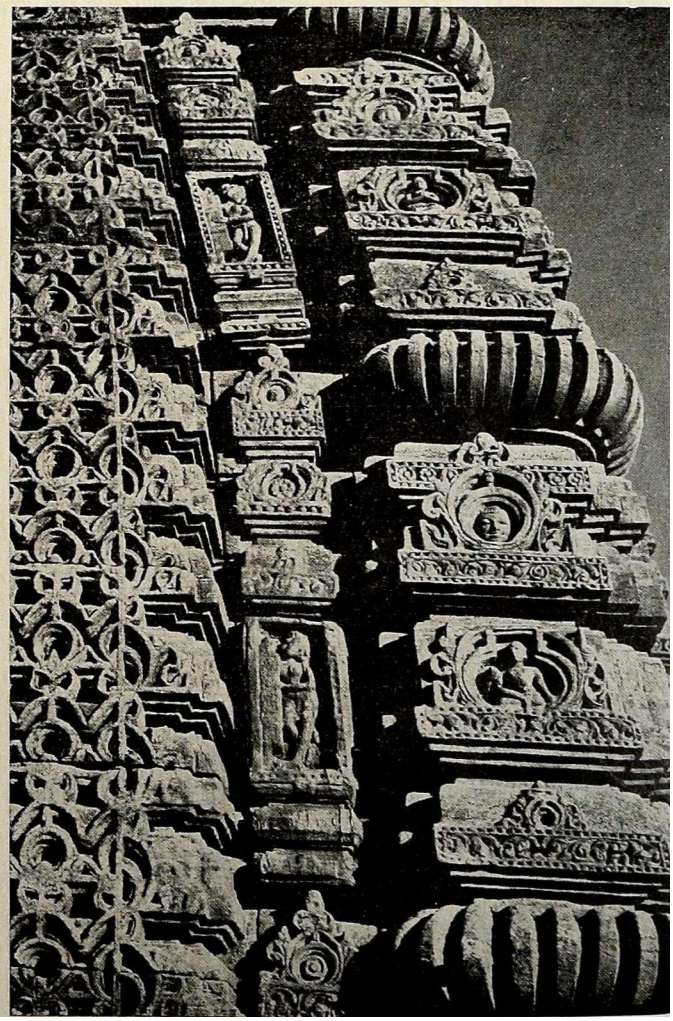
The interiors of these halls are, generally speaking, devoid of all ornament, but the outer walls of the building are lavishly carved and embellished with sculptures which are among the best specimens of Orissan decorative art. Although the plastic decoration presents an effect of exuberance and luxuriousness, particularly in the case of human figures, there is little of the florid extravagance which characterises some of the Southern temples.

Among the other notable temples in the neighbourhood are those of Bhagavati, Parvati, Ananta Basudeva, Brahmeswar, Bhaskareswar, and Kedareswar.

The small temple of Parasurameswar, also at Bhubaneswar, is believed to be a good specimen of early Orissan architecture of the post-Buddhist period, as is seen from its rudimentary *vimana*. Although dating as far back as circa 750 A.D., it is still in a good state of preservation.

It is notable for its intricate stone engraving of the marriage of Siva and Parvati and for the elaborately sculptured medallions on its front facade. The royal lion, Kesari's proud symbol, is conspicuous by its absence. In place of the bold, strapping animals depicted on the walls of other

Detail from the Parasurameswar temple, Bhubaneswar



Orissan temples, those at Parasurameswar are almost invariably victims of the huntsman's spear.

Another example of the early phase is the Vaital Deul, although it differs fundamentally from the Parasurameswar temple in that it derives from quite another tradition. The tower of its inner sanctuary is reminiscent of the *gopurams* of Dravidian temples, and many architectural features, such as its elongated vaulted roof in two storeys, its ridged finials and its gable-ends, suggest that like those structures, it, too, developed from the Buddhist chaitya-hall. The Vaital Deul has four replicas of the main shrine in each angle of the *jagamohan,* which is also of uncommon design, and is thus representative of a *panchayatana* or five-shrined type of temple in the earliest stages of its evolution.

The Raj Rani temple belongs to a much later period of Orissan architecture (circa 1100-1250 A.D.) and in its plastic decoration and certain other features, such as the *deul,* suggests a strong kinship with the Central Indian type of temple represented at Khajuraho. It is built of yellowish sandstone, locally called *rajrania,* which probably accounts for its somewhat unusual name.

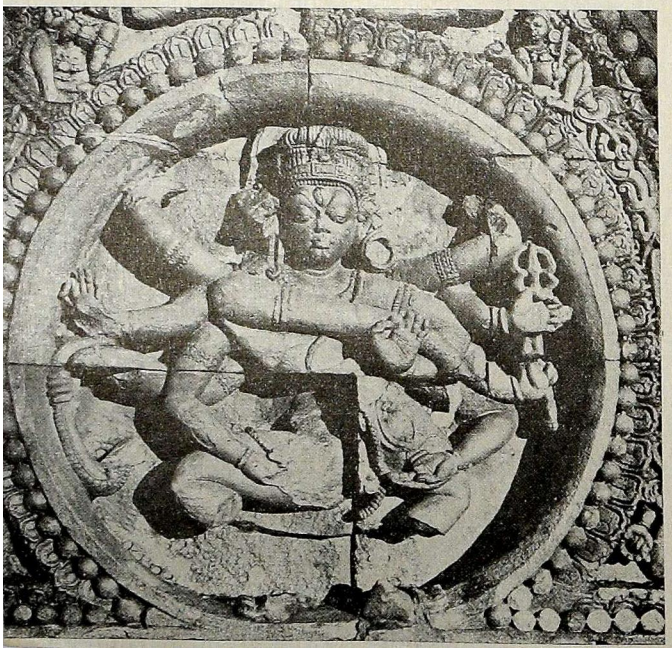
The various parts of the temple are not in the same alignment, but follow a diagonal arrangement which might have been the beginning of the use of the same principle in other regional styles.

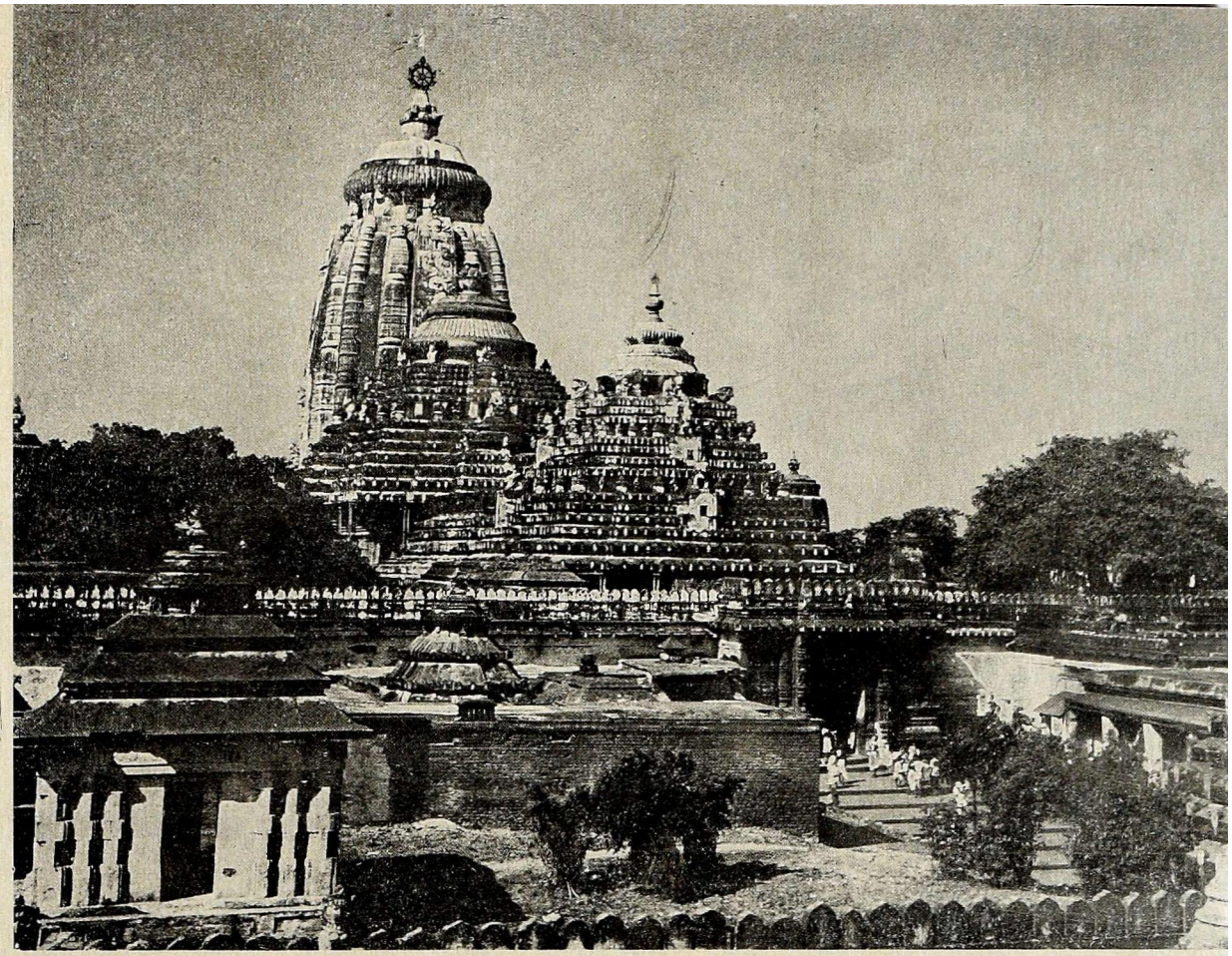
Small but elegant, the Mukteswar temple probably dates from about 975 A.D. and represents the middle period (circa 900-1100 A.D.) of the Orissan style in its early prime. It has been called a miniature gem of architecture for its graceful proportions and beautiful finish. The arched gateway or *torana* is the "creation of an artist of superior vision and skill" as also the large figure design repeated on each side of the tower, which is only 35′ high.

Another notable example of the middle period is the well-known temple of Jagannath at Puri, a much larger and somewhat later structure than the Lingaraja temple, although both these great structures are built on more or less the same principle.

Historical evidence suggests that this temple was originally built as a tower of victory by Choda Ganga in 1030 A.D. when he conquered Kalinga, but that it was consecrated many decades later. There are earlier

A medallion from the Parasurameswar temple, Bhubaneswar



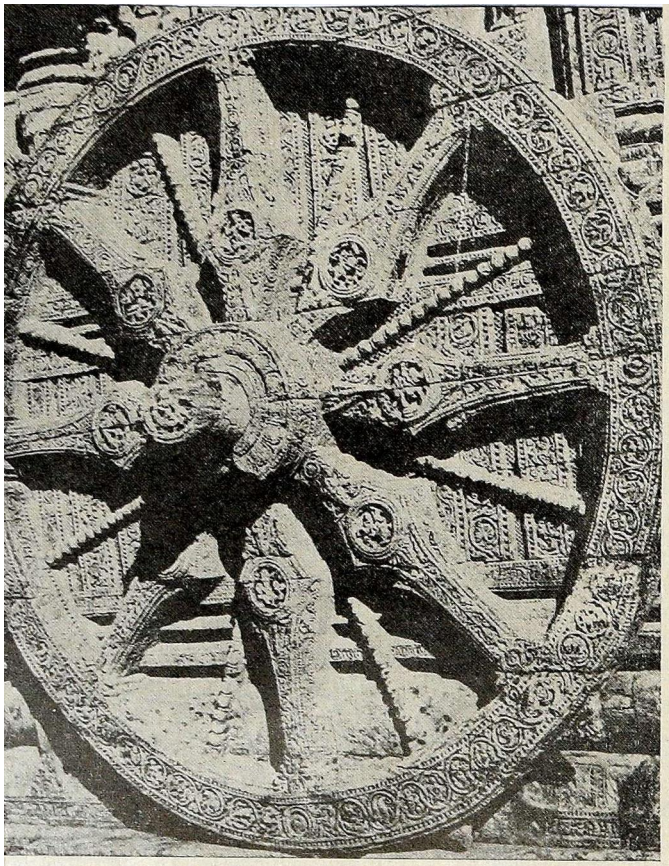


The Jagannath temple, Puri

inscriptions which mention Purushottam Kshetra, of which Puri is an abbreviation, to which visitors came and Sankaracharya is believed to have visited it in the 9th century. It is not improbable that the temple occupies the site of some still more ancient shrine.

The temple consists of four edifices in one alignment from east to west, the *bhogmandir*, the *natmandir*, the *jagamohan* and the *deul* or the inner sanctuary, which is surmounted by a conical tower 192 feet high. The *natmandir*, with its ceiling of iron beams, and the *bhogmandir*, however, are believed to have been added in the 14th or 15th century, long after the original structure was completed. The former, with its 16 pillars, is the only real example of a hypostyle hall in Orissan architecture. A significant feature of the inner enclosure is that, as in the Lingaraja temple, it stands in a large courtyard, 440′ by 350′ surrounded by a high wall.

In the inner sanctuary are the three holy images of Jagannath, his



Sculptured wheel from the temple of the Sun, Konarak

brother Balbhadra, and his sister Subhadra.

The entrance to the shrine is decorated with scenes from the life of Krishna, and the gates and walls are heavily ornamented with marble figures of lions and sentries. The profuse decoration on the walls of the *natmandir* and *bhogmandir* is, however, stylised and comparatively lifeless. This clearly indicates that when these structures were erected, the Orissan style of architecture had entered a period of decline.

To preserve the temple from the corroding effects of sea breezes, parts of the stone masonry and the elaborate carvings have been covered with thick plaster. Crowned with Vishnu's flag and wheel, the tower, however, retains its commanding appearance in spite of the heavy cement overlay.

Distributed around the main building are some 30 to 40 shrines of various dimensions and designs, as in the case of the Lingaraja temple, but here these secondary structures are grouped on higher ground, thus adhering more closely to the Buddhist stupa tradition.

Magnificent in its isolation, the temple of the Sun at Konarak, about 20 miles north-east of Puri, has been hailed as the supreme achievement of the architectural genius of Orissa, coming as it did at the apex of continuous development for centuries. It was built during the reign of the Eastern Ganga King Narasimha Deva I (1238-64 A.D.), but is now in ruins, the heap of masonry forming a land-mark which the sailors called the Black Pagoda, as distinguished from the white temples of Puri.

The great tower of this temple has lost much of its height within living memory and the *vimana* along with the shrine of the presiding deity has crumbled. However, enough remains to make a conjectural reconstruction possible and it is likely that the basic plan of the temple was not unlike that of the Jagannath and Lingaraja temples. Abul Fazl, Akbar's official historian, appears to have seen the temple before it became a heap of ruins and records in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that he was amazed at the beauty of

the spectacle. Although the temple was grandiose in conception, there is reason to believe that it was never quite completed, for the grandeur that the plan of the temple sought to achieve was too ambitious to be carried out in practice.

The Konarak temple is dedicated to Surya, the sun-god, and is unique for its supremely imaginative character. The structure as a whole is conceived of as a *rath* on 24 wheels, Time's winged chariot, which the sun-god rides. The base of the temple is, therefore, an immense terrace with 12 giant wheels, each 10 ft. high, on either side. On the raised platform thus created, the temple-building was erected in two conjoined parts forming the *deul* and the *jagamohan*. The *natmandir* and the *bhogmandir* were detached structures all enclosed within a courtyard measuring 865 ft. by 540 ft.

The carriage of the sun-god is drawn by seven splendidly caparisoned horses, straining their necks to pull the massive chariot. The extraordinary dynamism and mobility of these sculptured animal figures are striking to a degree.

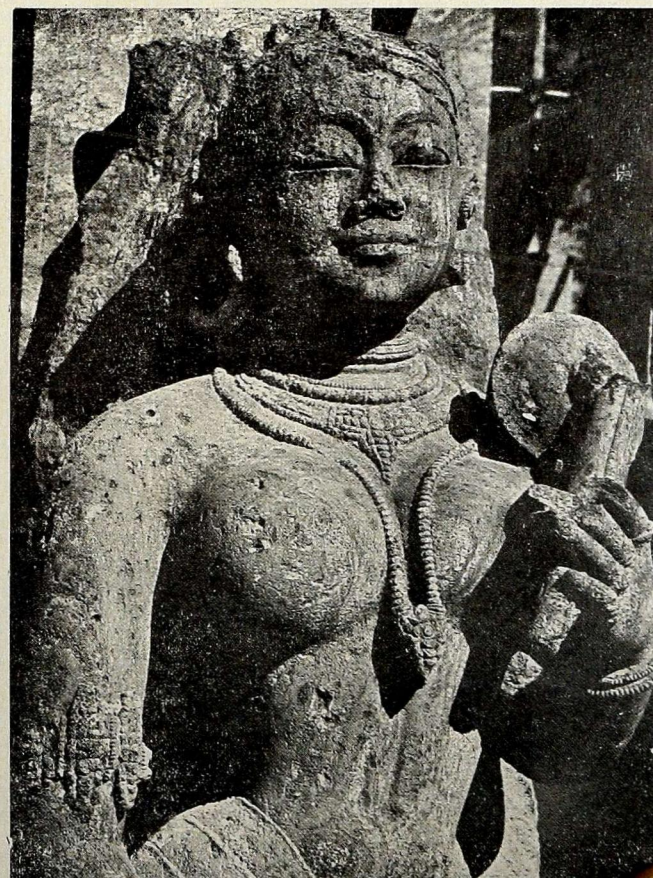
Today, this superb edifice lies in ruins, the *jagamohan* or assembly-hall being the only part which is still intact enough to testify to the past glory of the whole.

Not all of the splendid fragments are in their original position. Much of the imposing appearance and vitality of the structure is to be attributed to the pyramidal roof with its three tiers and sculptured groups of figures.

The sculpture which embellishes the immense outer surfaces of this architectural masterpiece is no less exquisite in its luxuriance and unrestricted invention than the vast structure itself.

The exterior has been chiselled and moulded either into abstract designs or fantastic human and animal forms, and every motif and subject known to the Indian mind has been drawn upon. The sculptures, executed in hard stone to ensure their preservation, display an exuberance of

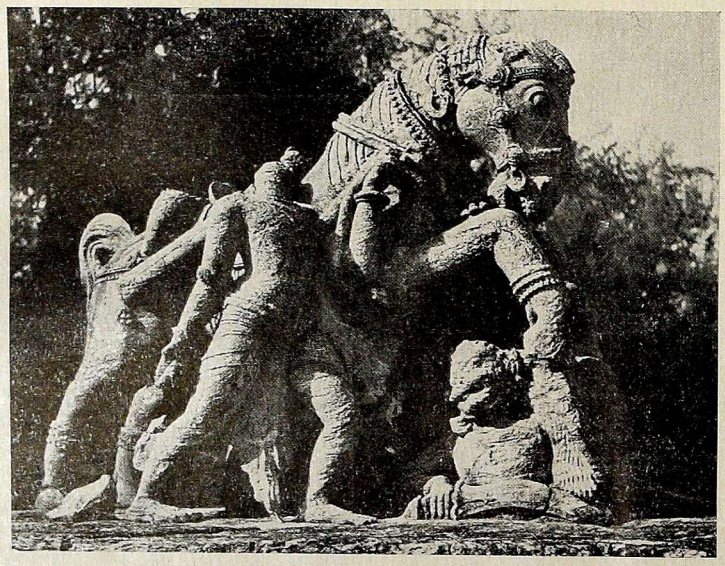
Sculpture from the temple of the Sun, Konarak



mood and appearance rarely met with elsewhere. The technique, too, varies from designs carved with minute precision to vigorous groups modelled on a massive scale. An expert has observed, probably on the strength of the latter, that architecture in Orissa is but sculpture on a gigantic scale.

Much of the relief work on the outer walls of the temple at Konarak —as of certain other temples in Orissa—has an obviously erotic import. This is indicative of the emergence of a phase in Hinduism known as Tantrism, the *mithuna* ritual of which is depicted in the carvings of this temple as well as of the temples in Madurai and Khajuraho. According to *Tantric* thought, all human experience, which by implication also includes experience connected with carnal desire, has a value, for it is only through experience that man can attain the stage of self-immolation.

Of the minor temples of the Orissan type, the most important are to be found, in various stages of preservation, at Jajpur, Satyabadi, Kendrapara and Khiching in the district of Mayurbhanj.



Sculptured horse from the temple of the Sun, Konarak

CENTRAL INDIA

The Deogarh Temple

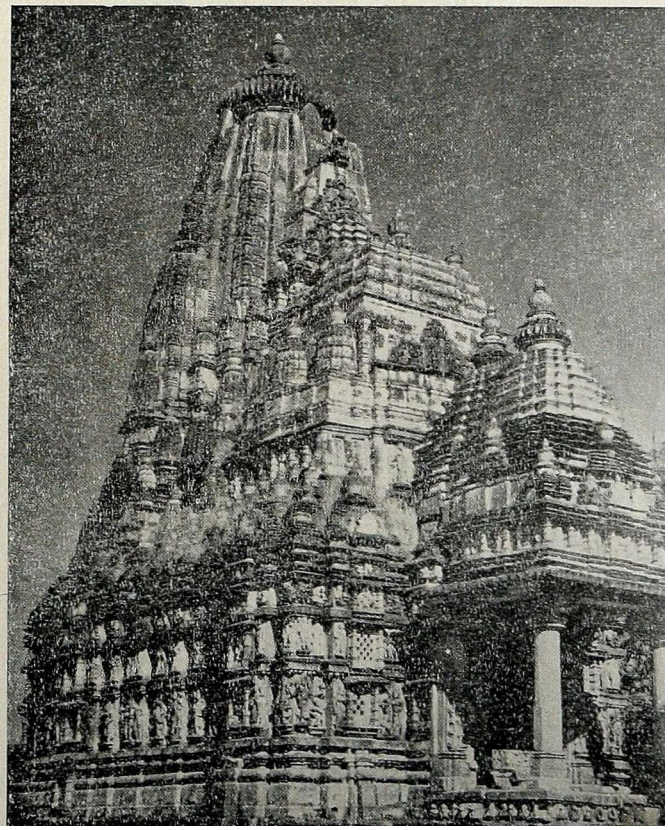
The Gupta temple at Deogarh, locally known as Sagar Marh, is one of the earliest and most superb examples of the Indo-Aryan or Nagara type of temple, of which only a few are now left. Dedicated to Vishnu, the temple was probably built about the beginning of the sixth century.

The main structure consists of a square sanctum with a pyramidal *sikhara,* rising in the centre of the plinth access to which can be had by a broad flight of steps from each side. A small square shrine once stood at each of the four corners, constituting a *panchayatana* type of temple along with the central shrine.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Deogarh temple is its richly carved doorways and the lithic representation of various Hindu gods and goddesses. The three panels of Gajendra-Moksha, Nara-Narayana and Ananta-Sayi Vishnu have been conceived in such a natural and realistic manner that one is struck with wonder at the ingenuity and skill of the craftsmen of yore. These and other sculptures found near the temple, in addition, provide a wealth of information about customs and manners in the Gupta age.

The Khajuraho Group

One of the most developed and refined expressions of the Indo-Aryan architectural genius is to be found in the group of temples at Khajuraho in Bundelkhand in Madhya Pradesh. Of the 85 temples originally built by the Chandella Rajputs, between 950 and 1050 A.D., only about 20 now remain. These, however, are well preserved, considering that they have been neglected for nearly a thousand years. Unlike the temples in Orissa,



The Parsvanath temple, Khajuraho

these shrines are not the result of a slow, concerted development spread over several centuries, but rather a brilliant, although comparatively short phase in Hindu temple architecture when intense religious feeling and aesthetic talent combined to produce buildings of great beauty.

A unique feature of the Khajuraho temples is that, contrary to custom, they are not enclosed within a wall, but stand on a high terrace of solid masonry, as though in an effort to rise above their temporal surroundings. In addition, the constituent parts are not built as separate units but present an architectural synthesis of striking unity. The Khajuraho temples are, however, not as imposing in size as the Orissan, but achieve the same grandeur through their graceful proportions and superb surface decoration. The largest of these is only about a hundred feet in length. As a rule there are three main compartments, namely, the *garbhagriha,* the *mandapa* and the *ardhamandapa* or entrance portico, arranged in the manner of a cross. The *antarala,* the *mahamandapa* or the transepts and the perambulatory passage supplement the other compartments in the more developed examples.

An erotic group from a Khajuraho temple

The aspiring quality associated with most styles of temple architecture is emphasised in the Khajuraho group to a marked degree. The entire mass of granite or sandstone, of which most of these are constructed, appears to have an upward movement, the effect of loftiness being further enhanced by a number of pronounced vertical projections. The range of open porches with overhanging eaves running horizontally around the temple serves to let in light, thus throwing a band of vivid shadow over the entire composition.

The exterior of the temples, decorated with parallel friezes in high relief, displays a rare wealth of human and divine forms, pulsating with life and warmth, moving in a pageant of unending variety and presenting themes of inexhaustible interest. The graceful animation of these

life-like forms, the consummate skill with which they are executed on stone walls, and the vast variety and ingenuity of the techniques employed are unparallelled in any other similar style of temple architecture.

The tenuous, flowing lines of the *sikhara* give it an elegant and refined quality which the Orissan *sikharas* do not possess in the same degree. The solid strength of these temples becomes instinct with fresh beauty on account of the graceful *sikharas*.

In sharp contrast with the austerely simple interiors of the Orissan temples, the halls at Khajuraho are richly adorned with sculptures. In addition to the oversailing courses of masonry, the highly sculptured ceiling is supported by four pillars, one at each corner of the hall which bear heavily ornamented bracket capitals. The pillars are carved above and below, with grotesque half human figures of dwarfs and griffins. In the spaces in between are statuettes of sculptured feminine forms in attitudes of enchanting grace and loveliness. The sharp contrast presented by the forbidding appearance of the former and the pervasive beauty of the latter perhaps symbolises the triumph of beauty over ugliness, or that of the spiritual over the bestial.

As in the wall sculptures of the Orissan temples, eroticism is a recurrent theme in the shrines at Khajuraho. Various theories have been advanced to account for this, but the commonly accepted explanation is that the many erotic groups depicted here with such abandon represent, as already mentioned, the *mithuna* ritual of the Tantric cult according to which personal salvation can be attained only through experience, both sensual and spiritual. Another belief is that, being a powerful human experience signifying complete fulfilment through union, the sexual experience here symbolises the fusion of the human with the divine. Yet another theory holds that since such sculptures are usually found on the exterior surfaces of a temple and are absent from the interior, it may be concluded that they are meant to test the devotion of the worshipper or to warn him against entering the sanctum until he has conquered carnal desire. Whatever the significance of these sculptures may be, it is fairly clear from their intrinsic artistic merit that the sculptors who fashioned them found the temple walls an easy canvas for the depiction of such an elemental theme as love between man and woman.

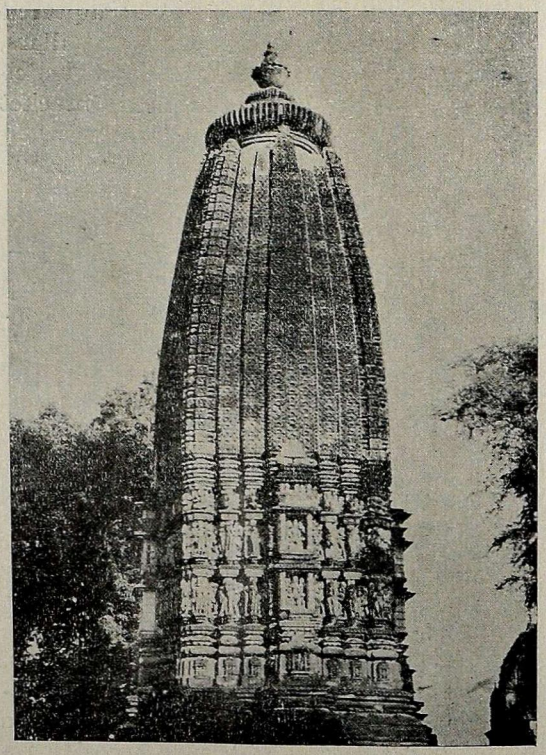
The twelve Vaishnava and Saiva temples to the north-west of the site form the most important of the groups at Khajuraho. Among these is the Siva shrine of Kandariya Mahadev, the largest and most representative of all the Khajuraho

temples. Planned like a double-armed cross, this temple has an air of vibrancy attributable as much to the masterly skill with which the various parts of the temple are harmonised as to the superb gallery of sculptures which embellishes its walls.

Built on the same principle as the Kandariya Mahadev, but much smaller in size, are the Siva temple of Visvanath and the Vishnu temple of Chaturbhuj. The former is believed to have been built about 1000 A.D. and both are of the *panchayatana* type. Facing the Visvanath temple and built on the same platform is a small temple which houses a colossal statue of Nandi, Siva's bull. The temple of Devi Jagadamba, now dedicated to the goddess Kali, was originally a Vishnu shrine. There were four additional shrines, but these have now disappeared. The Chhattraka-patra temple is dedicated to Surya, the sun-god, and is noted for its elegant proportions. Another notable temple is dedicated to Varaha, the boar incarnation of Vishnu, a colossal monolithic statue of which is installed in the centre. The Matangeswara and Parvati temples are also notable examples of the north-western group at Khajuraho.

Basically similar to the Brahmanical temples, the six Jain temples grouped together on the south-east of the site are remarkable in that there is an almost complete absence of window openings which characterise the foregoing group. Parallel friezes of statuary relieve the monotony of the walls to some extent. At intervals, portions project like buttresses from sculptured friezes and are carved into pillared niches where the sacred images are enshrined.

The Parsvanath is the largest and



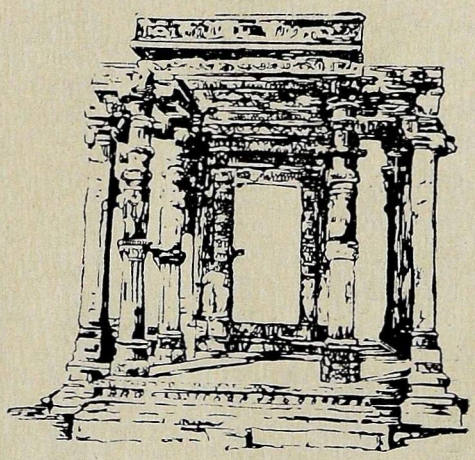
The sikhara of the Adinath temple, Khajuraho

most beautiful Jain temple at Khajuraho. The sanctum contains an ornamental throne and a sculptured bull, the emblem of Adinath, the first of the Jain Tirthankars. The modern image of Parsvanatha was installed late in the 19th century. It is significant that this Jain temple also houses images and sculptures of Brahmanical gods and goddesses, for it speaks of a spirit of toleration not often seen in places of worship.

A cluster of 12 pillars, standing a little apart from the main group, is all that remains of the Jain temple known as Ghantai, but these have attracted considerable attention on account of their Attic beauty. According to Percy Brown, it is "evidently the handiwork of a group of the most accomplished craftsmen of the time."

Along with Jain temples, this south-eastern group also includes Brahmanical ones such as the Duladev and the Chaturbhuj. The Kunwar Math, lying south of the Jain group near Kurar Nala, is perhaps the finest example of this class. The remains of temples, belonging to the same period and of the same type, have been found as far as Rewa in Madhya Pradesh (*e.g.*, the Visvanath temple at Maribag).

Temples which may roughly be called Central Indian are found in various states of preservation scattered all the way from Jabalpur to Jhansi, and as far as Osia in Rajasthan. The Siva temple at Baroli believed to date from the 9th or 10th century, compares very well



with contemporary structures in Orissa, both from the point of view of richness of design and fineness of sculpture.

Udaipur

Udaipur, about 40 miles from Bhilsa in Madhya Pradesh, is yet another ancient and remarkable site. The famous temple which stands here was built about 1059 A.D. It has a covered porch, a pyramidal roof and a tower ornamented by four flat bands of elegant design and great beauty, the whole surmounted by an *amalasila* or a vase. The temple is profusely carved and is regarded as a remarkable example of the Indo-Aryan style of architecture. Since it was constructed about the 11th century A.D., it seems probable that the Udaipur temple must have caught some of its fire from Khajuraho.

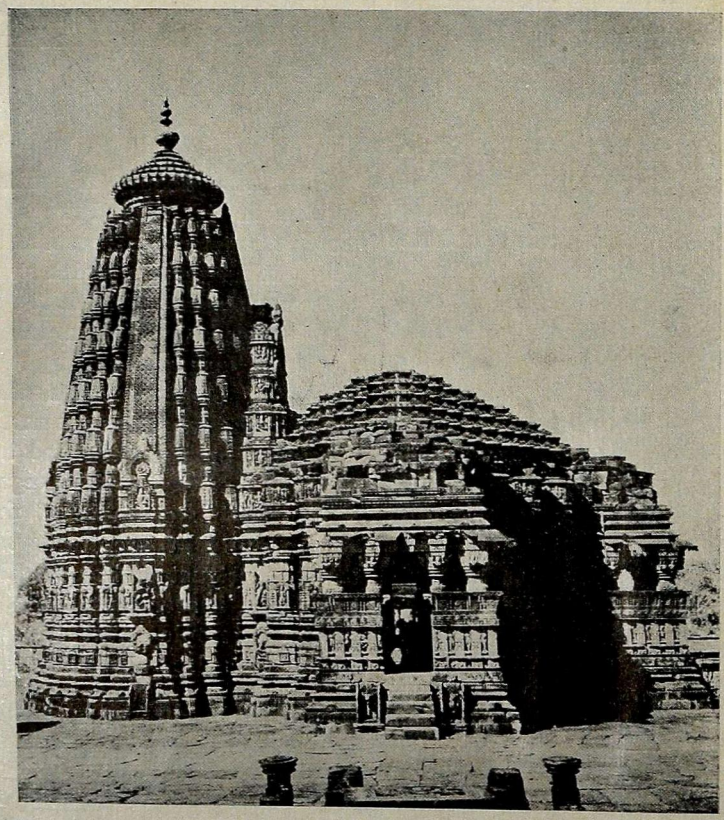
Gwalior and Brindaban

Within the Fort at Gwalior is a group of temples which form a

separate series by themselves from the standpoint of architectural style and chronology. Of the eleven religious structures within its walls, five are temples belonging to the eleventh century.

The Teli-ka-Mandir or the Oilman's temple is probably the earliest of the temples in the Gwalior Fort. Although commanding in appearance, this temple consists only of the sanctuary with a porch and doorway leading into the inner chamber. There is no *mandapa* and no pillared hall which is so characteristic of the fully-developed temple in this part of the country. This structure is a rare specimen of a Brahmanical sanctuary, for, like the Vaitul Deul at Bhubaneswar, the shape of its roof bears testimony to its Buddhist heritage. Instead of a spire it has a ridge of the type found on the vaulted roof of a Buddhist chaitya-hall.

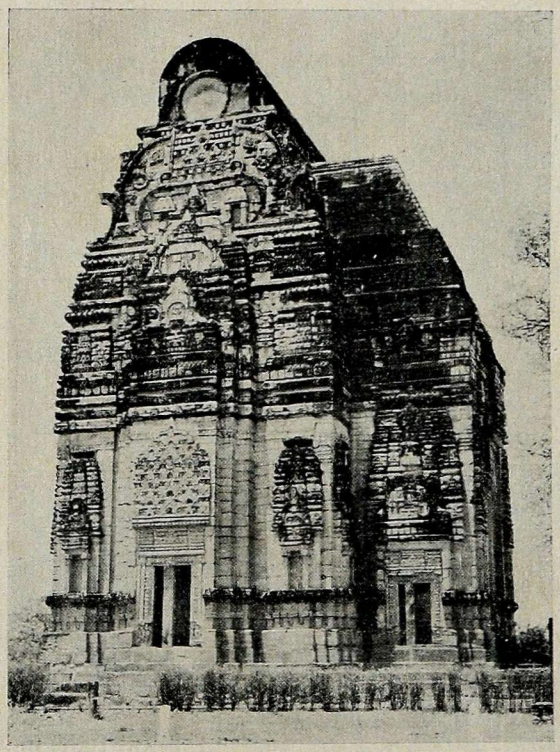
There are two other temples of importance, both designated Sas-bahu or the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The larger of these appears to have been completed in 1093 A.D. and has an appearance of imposing



The Nilakantesvara temple, Udaipur (Madhya Pradesh)

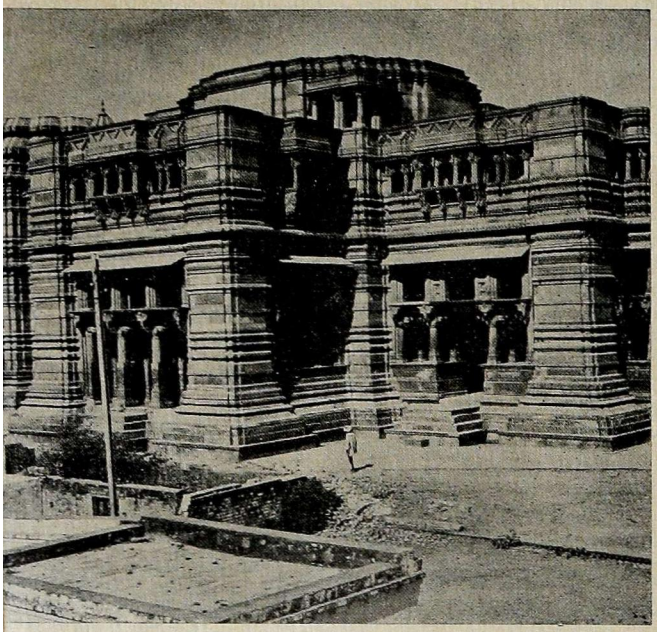
solidity. Now only the cruciform porch, which is three storeys high, survives. A unique architectural feature of this temple is that the building has been raised several storeys high solely with the help of beams and pillars, and no arches have been used for the purpose. The smaller Sas-bahu temple, though more elegant in appearance than the bigger Sas-bahu temple, is stylistically only a reduced and simplified copy of the latter.

On the road to the Fort lies a small temple dedicated to Chaturbhuj, the four-armed, a name given to Vishnu. It was built in 875 A.D. and is believed to be the oldest temple in Gwalior. It has a small dome over its pyramidal roof which resembles that of the Teli-ka-Mandir in many respects.



Teli-ka-Mandir, Gwalior

The series of Brahmanical structures at Brindaban, about 6 miles from Mathura, are of a much later date. The town of Brindaban is associated with Krishna, for it is believed to have been the scene of his most notable exploits. Almost all the temples are built of red sandstone and represent a highly localised architectural idiom. Most of them were built towards the end of the 16th century or the beginning of the 17th, at the behest of Hindu princes who had allied themselves to the Mughal emperor Akbar and were followers of Chaitanya, the great preacher of the Vaishnava cult. The largest and most important is the Govind-deva temple, built in 1590 A.D. by Raja Man Singh of Ambar. Only the spacious cruciform *mahamandapa* remains, for the rest of the building was completely destroyed during the reign of Aurangzeb. The *mahamandapa* has an elevation of several storeys and contains open arcades and a vaulted dome composed of intersecting, pointed arches. In design the Govind-deva temple, with its accentuated angles and openings, is an innovation in the field of temple architecture. The constructional plan of the roof of the *mandapa* has been adopted from contemporary mosques and is evidence of Muslim influence on Hindu crafts-



The Govind-deva temple, Brindaban

men. The complete absence of figured sculptures and decorations on the walls, which bear distinct Islamic touches, signify the change that had taken place in the political and religious set-up.

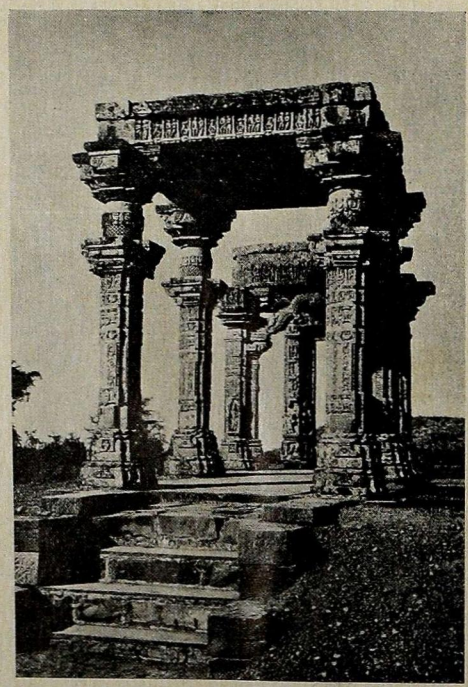
The temple of Jugal Kishore, of which only the shrine and the *ardha-mandapa* survive, is next in importance. This shrine is octagonal in plan and has a rectangular assembly hall attached to one of its sides. The most distinctive feature, however, is the *sikhara* which tapers into a conical tower, with a ponderous *amalasila* or finial at the apex.

The other notable temples at Brindaban are the Madanmohan, Gopinath and Radhaballabh.

Eran and Gyraspur

At Eran in the Saugor district of Madhya Pradesh is a group of buildings extending from the 5th to the 11th century which admirably exemplify the post-Gupta development. Among these are shrines dedicated to Varaha, Narasimha, and Vishnu. The ruins (now known as Ath Khamba and Char Khamba) at Gyraspur are the remains of the pillared halls of temples belonging to the 10th and 11th centuries. The temple of Mala De dates from the 10th century.

Ath Khamba, Gyraspur, Bhilsa District



THE DECCAN

A tract of country between the rivers Tapti and Krishna, although geographically forming part of the Deccan, was the scene of yet another significant phase of temple building in the Indo-Aryan style, which lasted from the 11th to the 13th century. Inspired by such noble architectural traditions as the rock-cut Ajanta and Ellora caves, this architectural movement was also influenced by the Solanki temples of the adjoining region of Gujarat and by the Chalukyan temples immediately to the south of this area.

Most of the Indo-Aryan temples in the Deccan are of moderate size and are built according to a diagonal plan. The *sikhara*, pillars and wall surfaces have distinctive features unique to this style of architecture.

The temple of Ambarnatha in the Thana district of Bombay State dates from 1060 A.D. and is the finest example of this style, although it is not situated within the geographical limits of the Deccan. Built near a deep pool, this structure displays a lavish use of intricate plastic decoration.

At Balsane in Khandesh there is a group of nine temples probably built over a period of 150 years which lasted up to the beginning of the 12th century. Of these, a triple-shrined temple resembles that of Ambarnatha, while others display characteristics reminiscent of the rock-cut *viharas* at Ajanta and Ellora, and the Chalukyan temples.

The *panchayatana* temple of Gondeswara at Sinnar in the Nasik district is a well-preserved structure erected in the first half of the 12th century, when this style of building was in its prime. Built nearly a century earlier, the temple of Eswara at Sinnar is the most northerly example of the Chalukyan temple which has assumed marked Indo-Aryan features.

Built in the later half of the 12th century, the well-proportioned temple of Lakshmi Narayana near Pedgaon in the Ahmednagar district is a miniature model of this class, and displays certain decorative motifs obviously derived from Gujarat.

The Hemadpanti temples, of which the most representative are to be found in the Berars, are ascribed to Hemadpant, a semi-legendary figure who was a great patron of temple architecture and probably a Prime Minister of the last of the Devagiri Rajas, who had ascended the throne in 1272 A.D. This style of northern architecture flourished in the Deccan during the latter half of the 13th century and continued up to the early 14th. Hemadpanti temples are characterised by their heavy proportions and the sparing use of figure sculpture on their outer surfaces.

RAJASTHAN

The great architectural movement which swept Rajasthan and the adjacent region from the 8th to the 11th century was really a later flowering of the virile development inspired by the Guptas during the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries. A great deal of this fine architecture, however, was destroyed during the earlier Muslim invasions.

As many as 26 temples were demolished to provide material for the Qutb Mosque at Delhi. Judging from the thousand temple pillars used in the Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra, another monument of the Afghan invaders at Ajmer, at least 50 temples must have been despoiled to build it. However, the exquisitely carved pillars in these mosques still give a fair idea of the beauty of Hindu workmanship in the post-Gupta phase of its development.

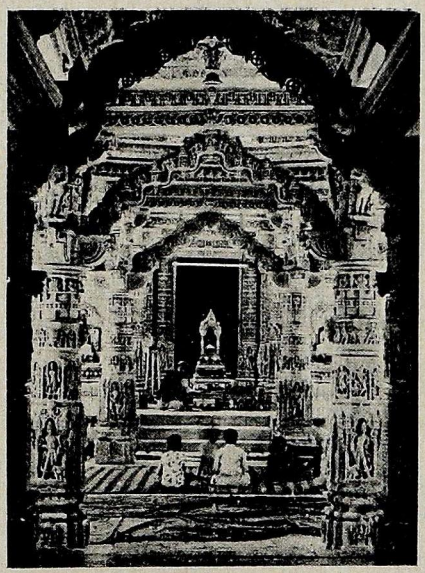
Like the great literary masterpieces of this period, the architecture, too, testifies to high aesthetic ideals. The plastic embellishments in the temples frequently consist of foliage motifs and voluptuous feminine forms, thus reflecting a love of Nature and of beauty which also characterise the great literature of this age.

The village of Osia, 36 miles from Jodhpur, is the site of some sixteen badly damaged and crumbling Brahmanical and Jain temples. The earlier of these, built in the 8th and 9th centuries, form a separate group, remarkable for the fact that no two temples in it are alike and that each of them displays an originality of composition quite rare in such a series.

Of these, the one dedicated to Surya, the sun-god, is remarkable for its elegance and grace. The temple dedicated to Mahavira, however, is the most complete example of a Jain shrine at Osia. It consists of a richly decorated *torana* leading to an open porch, a closed hall, and the sanctum, all intact and dating from different periods. The stylised and stiff treatment of the pillar in the temple of Pipla Devi, built in the 10th century, illustrates the decline of this school of architecture.

Contemporaneous with the post-Gupta style are the example of rock-cut temples of the Indo-Aryan type in Rajasthan. At Damnar, about fifty miles from Jhalra Patan, there is a rock-cut temple which has a somewhat complex composition of eight shrines. The Kotheswara temple at Pathari and the Udayeswara temple at Udaipur belong to the same date.

The temple of Kalika Mata in Chittor and the Siva temple at Baroli are notable examples of 10th century architecture in Rajasthan. The temple of Ekalinga Mahadev, 12 miles from Udaipur, is a structure



The Vimala Vasahi temple, Mount Abu

of unusual design and was built by Bapa Rawal in the 8th century. The neighbouring village of Nagda, an ancient site, has a large number of beautifully sculptured temples. Kumbha, Rana of Mewar and husband of the celebrated Mirabai, built a number of temples at Chittor in the 15th century. Of these, a Siva temple and two temples dedicated to Krishna are worthy of note.

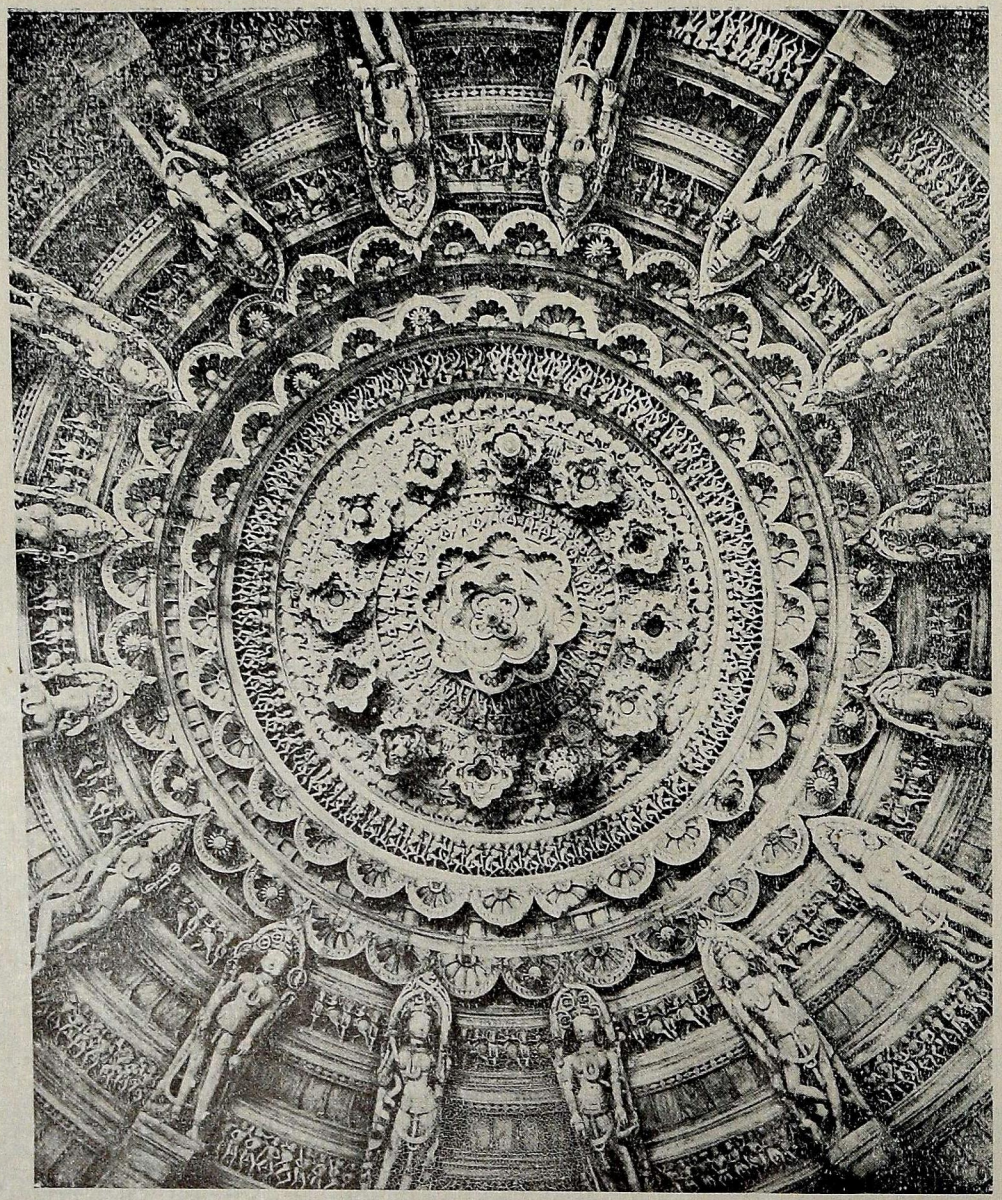
The Kathiawar style of temple architecture in the 11th century was so widespread that instances of it are found in Rajasthan, too. There is a group of five badly damaged temples at Kiradu in the Mallani district of Marwar, each of which displays many characteristics of the Solanki style of building. Certain Gupta influences are also apparent, obviously arising from proximity to Gupta territory.

Of these five temples, the one dedicated to Vishnu is probably the oldest, but the best preserved is the elegant shrine of Someswara. The skeleton of a magnificent pillared hall still bears testimony to the intense devotion with which these deserted structures must have been built. The square shafts of the richly wrought pillars end in the vase and foliage motif so characteristic of Gupta decorative art, and above this is a circular disc and capital, consisting of four brackets.

In the 11th century Rajasthan, like Gujarat, was the traditional home of merchant princes who spent fabulous sums to commemorate their religious faiths.

Vimala Shah, the Minister of the first Solanki ruler, Bhimadeva I of Gujarat, built the first Jain temple at Dilwara.

Constructed entirely of white marble, which must have been brought from the famous Makrana quarries, the Vimala Vasahi temple is one of the oldest and most complete examples of Jain architecture. It is one of a group of shrines, for the Jains believed high places to be sacred and generally built temples where the holy hills could be their foundation. The temple, which is 98′ long and 42′ wide, is surrounded by a lofty wall containing 52 cells, each of which contains the image of a Tirthankar. Most of these have now been replaced. These cells are screened by a double arcade of carved pillars. A pavilion facing the entrance-porch contains a procession of marble elephants, each bearing a statue of Vimala Shah and



Detail from a Jain temple at Dilwara, Mount Abu

his family. Most of these figures have now disintegrated.

The temple consists of an open portico and a vestibule, both formed by a simple grouping of pillars. The octagonal dome of the shrine is formed by eleven concentric rings containing patterns of endless variety

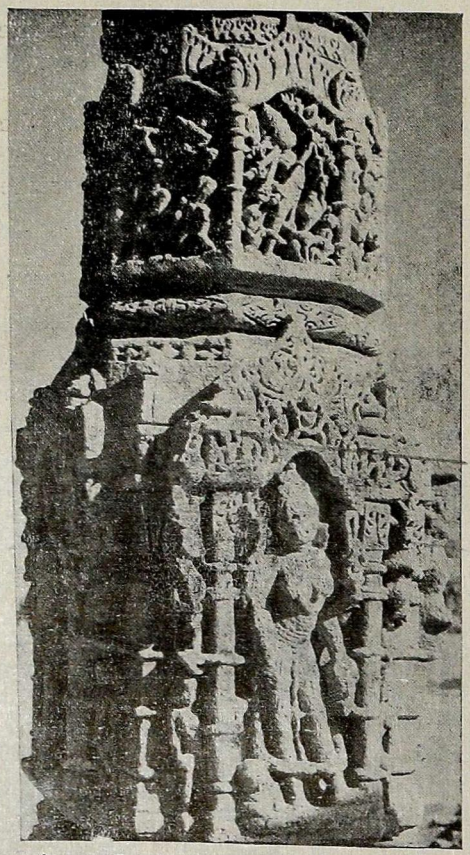
and is upheld by eight carved columns. A series of sixteen brackets, bearing images of the Goddess of Knowledge, supports the rings of the dome. The intricately carved reliefs illustrate incidents from Jain literature and legend, including *Satrunjaya-Mahatmya.* A notable feature of the decoration is the exuberance of detail and the effective repetition of the same motif. The temple is not so much an architectural achievement as a remarkable example of tireless inventiveness and caprice in sculptured decoration.

Vastupala and his brother Tejpala, who belonged to the Porwad Jain community and became the Ministers of Vivadhavala, built another famous temple at Mt. Abu during their terms of office. Jain literature contains glowing accounts of their charity and military prowess, and it is believed that Anupama Devi, the wife of Tejpala, was responsible for the erection of the Abu temple.

Built nearly two hundred years after the temple of Vimala Shah, the Tejpala temple at Mt. Abu follows more or less the same architectural plan as the former and is among the last monuments built in the Solanki style. In the matter of detail, however, the Tejpala temple is a natural evolution from the Vimala Vasahi, and what it loses in creative vigour it amply compensates in refinement and mechanical perfection.

The striking feature of the Tejpala temple is the pendant of the dome which, according to Fergusson, "hangs from the centre more like a lustre of crystal drops than a solid mass of marble." The principle cell contains a colossal image of Neminatha with his conch-shell symbol on the seat. The florid reliefs and carvings on the porticoes of the 39 cells represent episodes from the life of the presiding deity. The series of Jain and Brahmanical structures at Ashalgarh near Mt. Abu and the Jain temples at Kumbharia in the neighbourhood belong to the same architectural complex.

From the ritualistic point of view, however, the most complete example of a Jain temple is the Chaumukh temple at Ranapur in Jodhpur district. This is a rare instance where the architect is not anonymous. An inscription on a pillar states that Depaka, the builder of this temple, did so at the behest of "a devout worshipper of the Arhats", named Dharanaki in 1439 A.D. The presiding deity of this temple is Rishabhadeva or Adinath, a quardruple (*Chaumukh*) image of whom is installed in the inner shrine which is open on all the four sides which stands in the centre of a lofty basement. Close to the angles of the rectangular courtyard are four subsidiary shrines, and eighty domes, supported by 400 columns, surmount the entire structure. Surveyed from across the ascent, the temple has the appearance of a forest of pillars where the play of light and shade presents a fascinating spectacle. The massive substructure of the wall which encircles the shrines in an unbroken circuit emphasises the fact that a desire for seclusion marks the devotional ceremonies of the Jains.

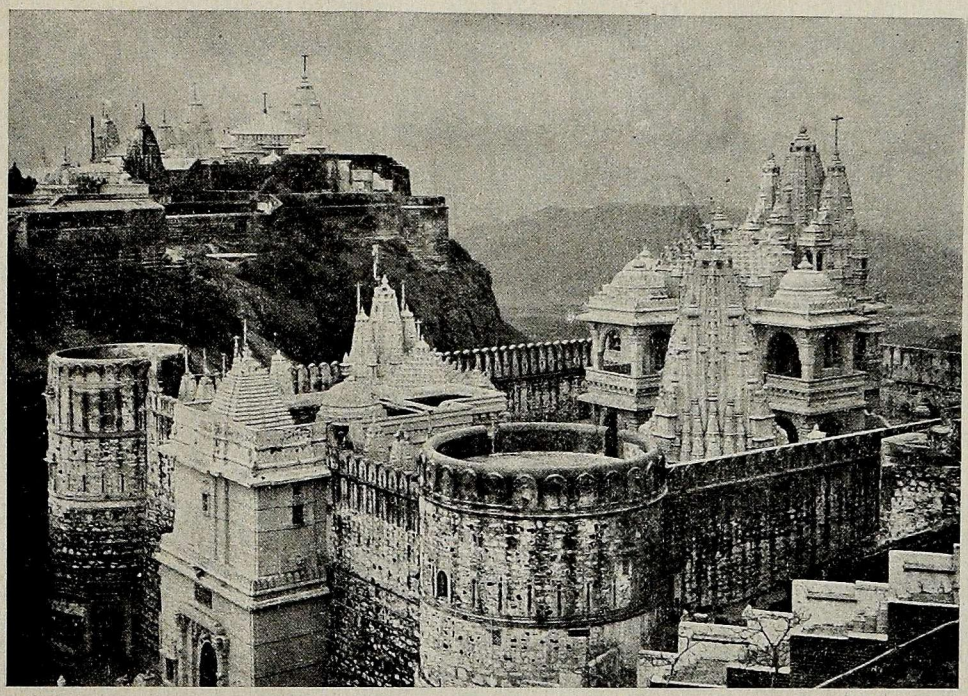


A carved column from the Surya temple, Modhera

The temples built in Western India between Mahmud Ghazni's expedition to Somnath in Kathiawar in 1025-26 A.D., and the conquest of this part of the country by the Sultans of Delhi in 1298 A.D., represent one of the richest and most prolific developments of the Indo-Aryan style of architecture. The havoc and destruction caused by Mahmud Ghazni's raid, however, did not last long, for the Solanki rulers were a stable and powerful dynasty who spared neither time nor energy in repairing the damage. Contrary to what one might expect, Ghazni's campaign of desecration seems to have given an added impetus to temple-building in the peaceful period that followed. The great prosperity of the Solanki rulers was due largely to the geographical position of Gujarat which was then the centre of commerce. This was another factor which influenced the religious architecture of this region, for there is about it a lavishness which speaks of wealth both material and emotional.

At the end of the thirteenth century, however, a great many of these temples were despoiled by the Muslim conquerors who dismembered them to provide material for their mosques. To complete the damage, a devastating earthquake with its epicentre in Kathiawar occurred at the beginning of the 19th century, so that a large number of temples were reduced to crumbling ruins and shapeless masses of masonry.

The architectural plan of a typical Solanki temple consists of three horizontal sections, the *pitha* or basement, the *mandovara* or wall-face up to the cornice, and the *sikhara* or spire. The



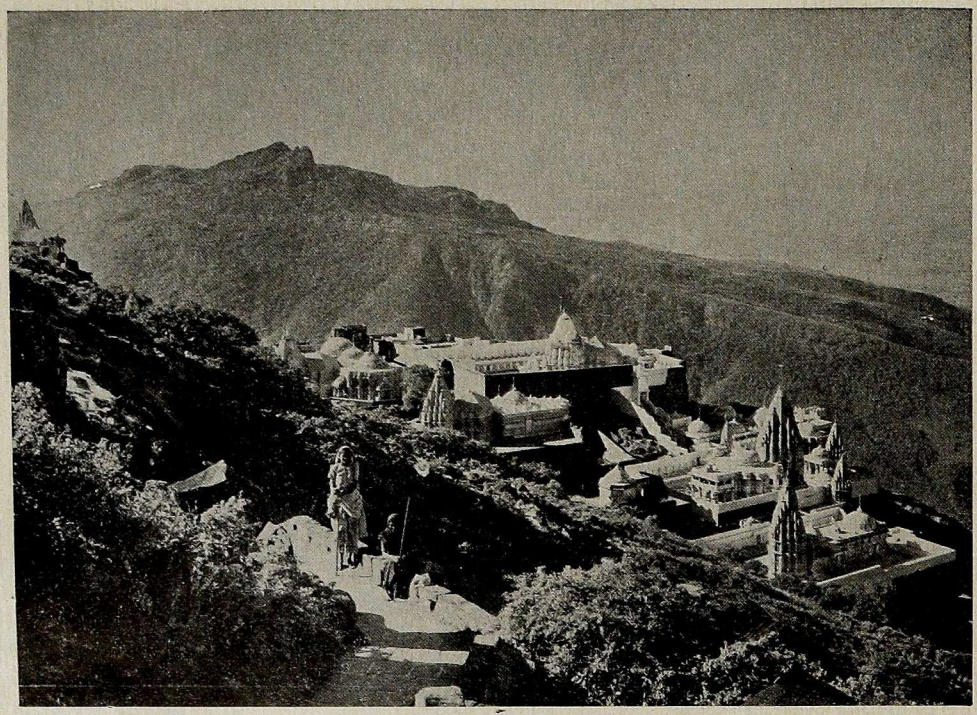
The Jain temples at the holy Satrunjaya hill, Palitana, Kathiawar

pitha is carved with motifs which are arranged in an order fixed by convention. The *garaspati* or horned *rakshasas* are the lowest; then come the *gajapatis* or elephant fronts, followed by *asvathara* or horses, and *narathara* or human forms. The *mandovara* is reserved exclusively for figure sculpture. The *sikhara* is distinctive, for it consists of a group of turrets or *urusringas* surrounding a larger central structure.

The interiors of these temples are markedly peristylar, and richly carved pillars are arranged so as to form halls and aisles. The inner walls of the halls, unlike those in the Orissan temples, are profusely carved.

About fifteen miles from Patan, the ancient capital of the Solankis in Gujarat, are four small temples at Sunak, Kanoda, Delmal and Kesara, all built in the 10th century and therefore the earliest examples of the Solanki style.

The Surya or the Sun temple at Modhera, now in ruins, was built in the same style a century later, when it found its supreme expression. The architectural plan resolves itself into a *suttamandapa* or pillard hall, connected by a narrow passage to the



The Jain temples at Girnar, Junagadh

gudhamandapa or assembly hall and the *garbhagriha,* both forming an enclosed rectangular building. The Modhera temple is famous for its fine display of proportions and the atmosphere of spiritual grace which it conveys. In the 11th century, similar temples were built in Rajasthan and Kathiawar also.

The Navalakha temple at Ghumli and a group of the same name at Sejakpur are typical examples of contemporary architecture in Kathiawar.

Palitana, about 35 miles from Bhavnagar in Kathiawar, is perched on the famous Satrunjaya hill, 1,077 ft. above sea level. It is amongst the most sacred of the five holy hills of the Jains. It has been described as the "first of all places of pilgrims, the bridal hall of those who would win evarlasting rest." For centuries shrines were added to this site by pious Jains who believed in the efficacy of temple-building as a means of spiritual salvation, thus making it a city of temples. The entire hill, which has two summits with a valley about 360 yards wide in between, is covered with temples grouped in separate enclosures called *tuks,* each having a principal temple and a number of smaller ones surrounding it. There are doors to the

entrance of these *tuks* which are closed at sunset. In all, the hill is said to have eleven *tuks,* more than five hundred temples, big and small. and about seven thousand separate images.

The temples of the Jains on Satrunjaya hills are elaborate in detail and exquisite in their finish although not so remarkable in their conception or in their sculptured figures.

The wave of iconoclastic zeal which swept the country during the 14th and 15th centuries did much damage to the earlier temples, some of which belonged to the 11th century. A great many of the present structures are, therefore, modern and have been built in the course of the last century. The more remarkable among these are the temples of Adinath, Chaumukh, Vimala Shah, Kumar Pal and Sampriti Raja.

The temple of Adinath or Mulanayak Sri Rishabhnath, named after the first of the twenty-four Jain Tirthankars, is situated on the southern ridge. It was originally erected in 960 A.D. but was restored in 1530. It is an imposing two-storeyed building with a lofty spire and a number of smaller shrines clustering round the base.

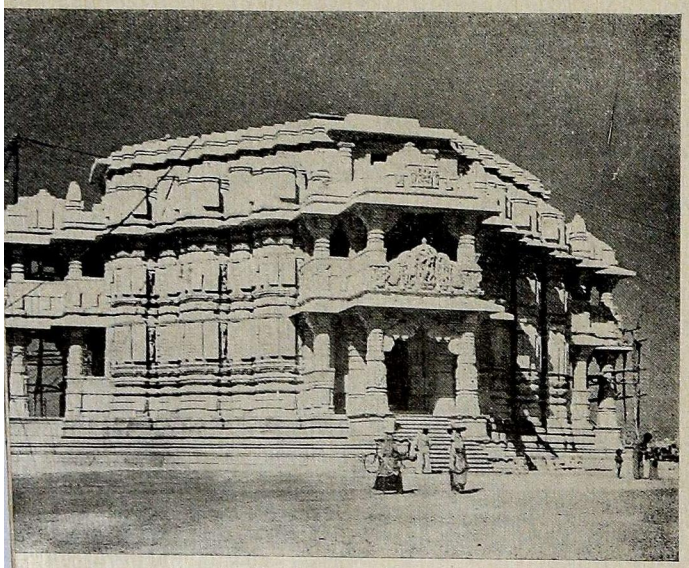
The temple of Chaumukh or the four-faced is the largest in the Khartarvasi *tuk* on the northern ridge. It was erected in 1618 A.D. by a rich banker of Ahmedabad named Devaraj. Unlike the Hindu shrine which is dark and has only one entrance door, this structure has entrances from all the four sides to the *antarala.* There are about 10 recesses which are meant for the images of Tirthankars. The pillars supporting the verandah are richly carved with flowered patterns, while the bracket capitals support musicians and dancing figures. The *sinhasan,* or the pedestal on which the great quadruple image of Adinath rests, is made of pure white marble. The shrine is said to have about a hundred and twenty images.

The third temple, small but unique in its arrangement, is found in the enclosure called Nandivaradwipa. Built in 1840, this structure is a square of about 32 ft. with verandahs on all sides. The interior is divided by piers into smaller squares and the arches between them support the domes of the roof. The five inner squares form a cross crowned by *sikharas* and have recesses for images. The five larger spires are believed to represent the five holy peaks—Satrunjaya, Ashtapada, on which Adinath, the first of the Tirthankars, attained *moksha,* Merusikhara, Sammeta-sikhara, and Samosan or Samavasarana.

The Motisah *tuk,* named after the builder Seth Motisah Amichand, is a square with round towers at the corners and was built in 1836. It has some fifteen smaller shrines besides the main one which is dedicated to Adinath.

After Palitana, the Girnar hill in the south of Kathiawar, which is about 3,500 ft. above sea level, is next in importance to the Jains and is regarded as sacred to Neminath, the 22nd

Jain Tirthankar. This site has been known from very ancient times, for a number of Asoka's inscriptions, the earliest of them dating from 250 B.C., have been found at the foot of the hill. There are about fifteen groups of temples in Girnar among which the largest and oldest is the one dedicated to Neminath. Little is known of the date of its construction but an inscription records that it was repaired in 1278 A.D. Subsequent restorations have changed its face so much that it is difficult to visualise its original appearance.



The new temple of Somnath, Kathiawar

Close to the entrance, there is an old triple temple dedicated to Mallinath, the 19th Tirthankar, and built by the famous Tejpala and Vastupala in 1230 A.D.

On the way to Neminath, there is a small but interesting temple known as Ambamata, which is visited by the newly married to ask for the blessing of the goddess for the continuance of wedded felicity.

Somnath

Somnath, the most celebrated city on the southern shore of Kathiawar, is known by several names—Deo Pattan, Prabhas Pattan, or Pattan Somnath—which it acquired during its long and chequered history. Somnath was once the most revered shrine in the country, for it had one of the twelve pre-eminent *Jyotirlingas* which had a special sanctity for the Hindus. Somnath's glory and fame are legendary. It is said that people from the remotest parts of the country came to worship at the shrine; revenues collected from 10,000 villages were spent on the maintenance of the temple; two thousand Brahmans served the idol and a golden chain attached to a bell plate announced the commencement of prayers.

Somnath rose and fell many a time and the amazing drama of the iconoclast's zeal for desecration and the devout Hindu's passionate desire for its restoration continued till the 15th century when the Hindus finally gave up in sheer despair and built a new temple nearby.

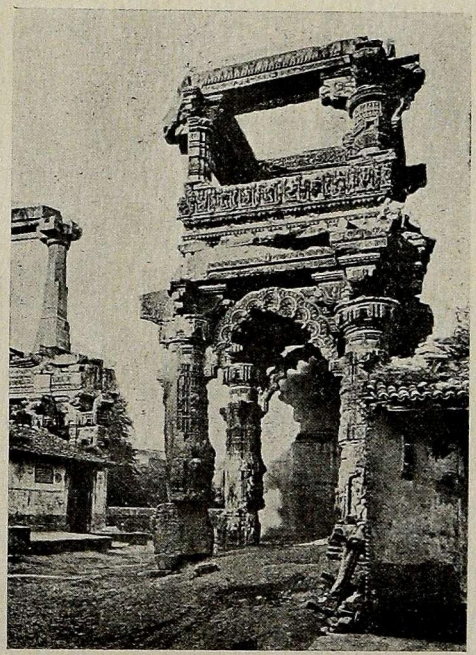
The present site of Somnath is a pile of ruins and little is known of the early history of Somnath. It is believed to have been erected by the Valabhi kings in about 480-767 A.D. The temple is dedicated to Someswara, the moon-lord Siva. The destruction wrought upon this temple by

Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025 is an important event in history. In his blind fury, not only did he spoil an object of beauty but also tore up the pages of history which Somnath bore on its walls. It is said that the temple was supported by pillars which bore the name of its embellisher, which history has lost for ever.

In its external design it compares well with the temple of Rudramala at Siddhapur and is more or less of the same length. The dome, however, is as large as any other built in this period. The temple faces east and had an enormous central hall with three entrances, each protected by a lofty porch. The fragments that lie scattered at a short distance from the site give some idea of the sculptured decoration of the temple. The richly carved doorways, the sculptured representations of Nandi, Siva's bull, and the figures of goddesses and their female attendants, must once have presented a plastic ensemble of great beauty. In the recesses of the balconied corridor, there is a mutilated form of Siva Nataraja. Though essentially a Brahmanical temple, the influence of Jain architecture is clearly discernible.

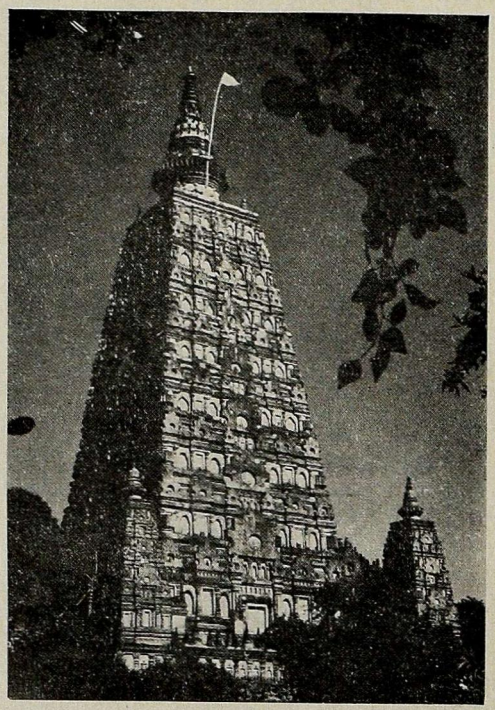
The ruins of the Rudramala temple at Siddhapur on the banks of the Saraswati river testify to the ornate grandeur that the Solanki style had achieved when it was nearing decline in the 12th century. Clearly, this temple must have been one of the biggest and most lavishly decorated structures.

The Rudramala temple, Siddhapur, Gujarat



OTHER IMPORTANT TEMPLES

The shrine at Bodh Gaya is the only surviving example of the type of Mahayana Buddhist architecture that flourished in the Gangetic region during the first millennium. During the early period of Mauryan rule (c. 400 B.C.), wood constituted the chief building material. This period was followed by an important phase of building in brick and it is to this phase that the temple of Bodh Gaya belongs. As it stands today, this temple gives but a poor idea of what its original design must have been, for its falling walls have been reinforced and restored numerous times through the years. The building consists of a plinth on which rests a square pyramidal tower, 180 feet from the ground. Each corner of the plinth has a small replica of the central tower so that the shrine corresponds to a *panchayatana* Hindu temple. The front of the building has a large niche in which an impressive image of the preaching Buddha is enshrined. The image must originally have been approached by a tall flight of steps, the entire structure being enclosed within a railing entered through an arched gateway or *torana*. Within the courtyard there is an Asokan lion pillar on each side of which is a colossal Yaksha figure.



The Mahabodhi temple, Bodh Gaya

Such sanctuaries or *viharas* were once so numerous in the Gangetic region that they are believed to have given Magadha the name of Bihar. The almost complete disappearance of these vast sanctuaries is to be attributed partly to the fact that the building materials used were not durable enough for the severe climate of this region, but mainly to the decline of Buddhism which was responsible for the desertion and subsequent dilapidation of these monasteries. The Bhitargaon temple

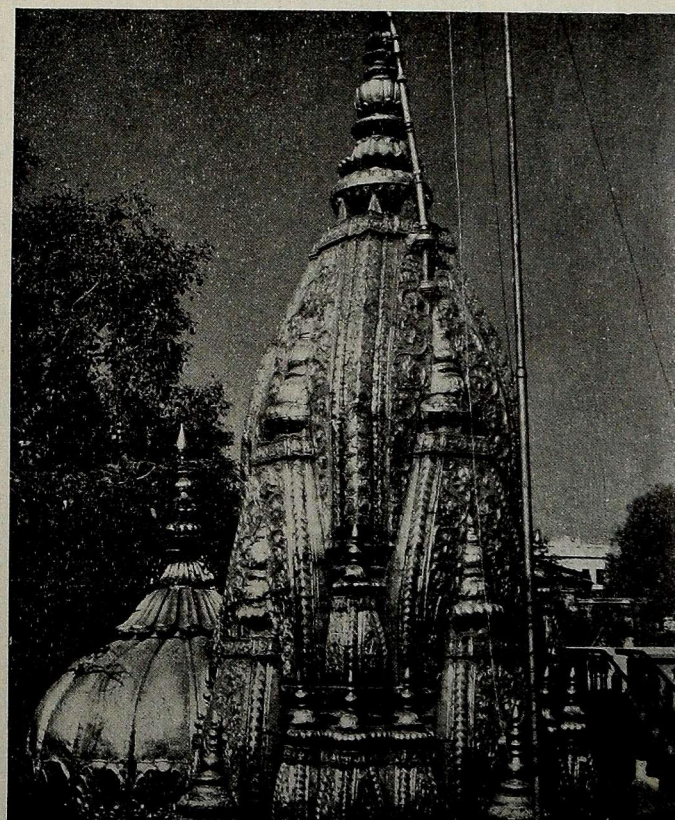
near Kanpur is of special interest, for it is one of the earliest and most remarkable structures in brick. Probably built in the 5th century A.D., it bears a striking resemblance in style to the temple at Bodh Gaya, which is believed to date from the same period. The central tower stands on a plinth and rises to a height of 70 feet. Like most early Brahmanical structures, it was not built for a large congregation of devotees but was designed to serve as the repository for an image.

The temple is in a sad state of preservation, but its general proportions are still intact. The skill of the builder is apparent in the treatment of its surfaces where the flatness inherent in brick structures has been relieved most ingeniously with recessed panels, string-courses, and sunk panels. Motifs derived from Buddhist sources have been used in the decoration, which is both simple and effective.

Similar shrines in the vicinity, presumed to have been built nearly five centuries later, were constructed on the same simple principles as the Bhitargaon temple, thus showing that this method of building was prevalent in these parts for a long time.

The Viswanath temple at Banaras is a small structure situated in the heart of the city and was built only in the 18th century. On the same site, there stood a much older temple which was destroyed and converted into the Razia mosque by Qutb-ud-din Aibak. During Akbar's reign, Raja Todarmal built a temple dedicated to Viswanath at Gyanvapi but this, too, met the fate of its predecessor at the hands of Aurangzeb. The builder of the present temple was Maharani Ahalyabai. Marked by a profusion of splendid cupolas, pinnacles and niches, all conforming to an ordered symmetry of design, this temple, in spite of the large number of temples found in Banaras, can be said to dominate the life of the city. An ornate dome of gilded copper caps the central portion of the roof, while on its eastern flank rises a richly decorated spire, also of gilded copper, which was the gift of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The western

The sikhara of the temple of Viswanath, Banaras

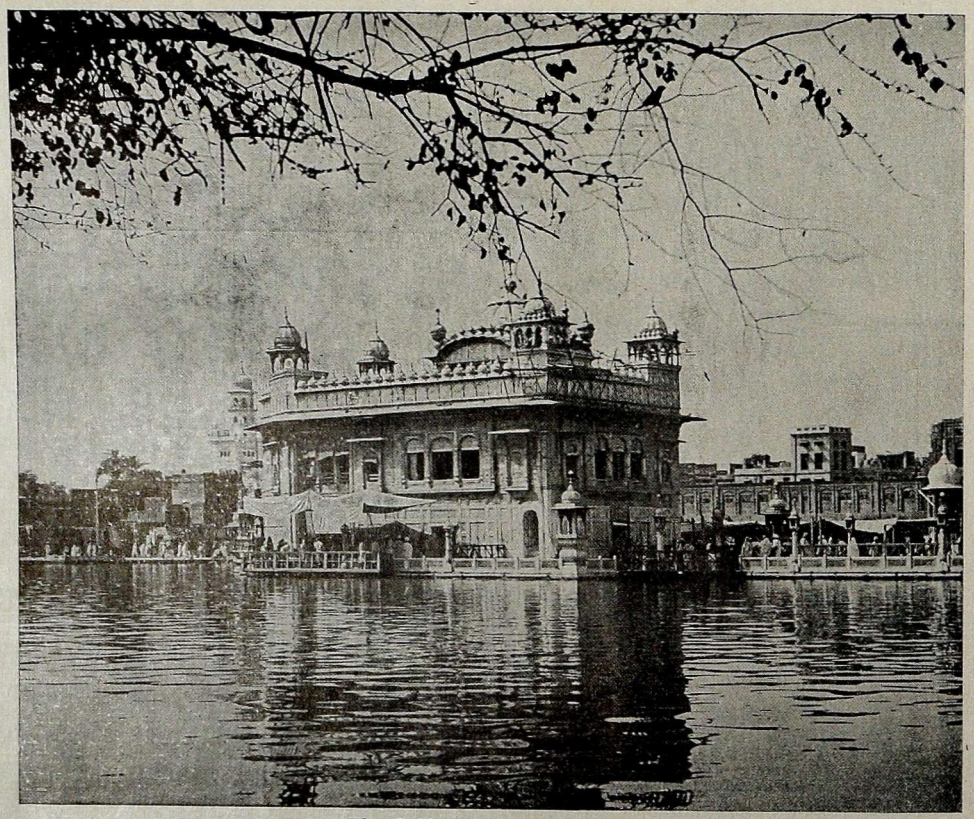


flank of the shrine supports a similar spire of carved sandstone.

Visweswara, the presiding deity of the temple, is represented by a plain black marble column which is housed in the inner sanctuary behind a silver door below the gilt spire.

The Golden Temple at Amritsar, also known as Hari Mandir and Darbar Sahib, was built under the guidance of Arjun Dev, the fifth Sikh *guru*. A small shrine and the pool have existed ever since the town came into being in the late 16th century, but the famous temple, as it stands today, was built in stages and shared the ill fortunes of the Sikh community during the days of the Punjab feudatories. When the Sikhs asserted their supremacy, however, the temple was restored to its former glory, and grew in splendour as time passed. During Ranjit Singh's time, the lower portion of the temple was decorated with marble, while the remaining upper half was inlaid with copper surmounted by a thin plate of gold.

The temple, reflected in the Surrounding pool of water, presents a



The Golden Temple, Amritsar

beautiful spectacle, particularly in the evening when the causeway leading up to it and the temple are brilliantly lit. Many parts of the structure are paved with marble slabs offered by devotees at the shrine. In the marble portico with silver doors is a large kettle-drum which announces the commencement of prayers and a flag mast bears the saffron ensign of the Sikhs.

Of the three storeys, the topmost is a canopied gilded dome surrounded by golden turrets. The interior is decorated with fine filigree and enamel work in gold. Frescoes in lime, a speciality of local artists, adorn parts of the inner walls, while marble slabs inlaid with precious stones decorate the outer surfaces.

Kashmir

The ancient sites of Ushkar, built by the Kushan king Huvishka about the 3rd century A.D., and Harwan, a typical Buddhist settlement of the type that flourished in Gandhara, provided the earliest glimpse of the building art in Kashmir.

During the reign of the great Lalitaditya, who ascended the throne in 724 A.D., temples constructed of stone masonry sprang up in large numbers all over Kashmir. This building activity coincided with the wave of religous emotion which swept over India about the same time and resulted in a fever of temple-building.

Lalitaditya's triumphs in the realm of territorial expansion created a cultural climate of which grandeur was an important ideal. The monumental Buddhist shrine at Parihasapura, now a mass of sculptured stones, and the temple of the Sun at Martand show this quality, not only by their stupendous size but also by the bold confidence with which they were built.

The Martand temple has been called "the materialised spirit of a transcendant vision". Built on a plateau encircled by a range of eternal shows, this temple represents an architectural expressiveness of the highest order, and forms the supreme model of a style to which a great number of later temples subscribed. It also signifies a departure from the Buddhist influence and the acceptance of the Brahmanical creed by the people, for instead of the Buddhist assembly hall, where congregational worship was held, the central structure here is a sanctuary for the divine symbol. The shrine stands within an immense courtyard surrounded by a pillared arcade and a series of cells. Certain features in the surface decoration of the Martand temple are of unique interest. The regularly spaced medallions, the frequent use of pilasters and the pediment motif—all recall the architecture of the antique classical West. The capitals of the fluted pillars supporting cornices have something Doric about them, and their moulded bases are of the Attic type. The encircling colonnade is also reminiscent of the Greek style. However, experts are of the view that these influences are not deep rooted and that the main composition is of indigenous inspiration, the product of the genius of Kashmir.

The mural sculpture on the walls displays unmistakably the influence of the art movement fostered by the Pala rulers of Bengal, which was apparently of such intensity that it made itself felt in regions far beyond its geographical boundaries. As further evidence of the source of this influence, Percy Brown points out that the copper gilt image of the sun-god installed in the cella of the Martand temple must have been wrought in the very same foundry where expert Pala metal-workers shaped that famous copper image of the Buddha which was discovered at Sultanganj in Bengal and is now in the Birmingham Art Gallery.

Avantivarman, who ascended the throne of Kashmir in the latter half of the 9th century, ushered in another memorable era of architecture. He built a group of temples at Avantipur, a township 18 miles from Srinagar, of which that of Avantiswami, dedicated to Vishnu, still survives in part. It has been said that whereas the Martand temple is the expression of a "sudden glory", the Avantiswami temple shows greater maturity of experience and has therefore more sophistication and elegance. Graceful colonnades of pillars form an arcaded portico round the shrine and a monolithic pillar before the entrance bears a metal figure of Garuda, the emblem of Vishnu.

Motifs borrowed from many sources, both foreign and indigenous, appear in the decorative carving, but these have been tastefully integrated into an ordered system with a recognisable unity. Designs reminiscent of the Buddhist stone carvers of the Asokan age and of the craftsmen of the Pala school are frequent and symbols traceable to Byzantium, ancient Persia and Syria are also found.

The conspicuously angular aspect of this temple is derived from the wooden houses of the valley where the accumulation of heavy snow on the roofs is prevented by their sloping character.

Two Siva temples built at Pattan in the 10th century during the reign of Sankaravarman reveal that though the traditional mode established at Martand was still being followed two centuries later, the masonry tended to become more monolithic. The precision and skill with which the mouldings are chiselled out of huge blocks of stone are amazing.

Built in the 12th century, the small, well-preserved temple at Pandrethan, near Srinagar, gives a clear idea of the general plan of the temples in Kashmir at this time. The pyramidal structure of the roof, which is still intact, in this case, is a prominent characteristic of this style. The ceiling consists of beams, laid on the angles, a technique obviously derived from wooden constructions. Whereas a tank is provided for ablutions in most temples in Kashmir, this small shrine itself stands in a tank of water.

The group of buildings distributed among the forest glades at Wangath was erected about the 8th century

and probably served as a halting place for pilgrims undertaking the arduous journey to Gangabal high up in the mountains. One of these structures has been identified as the Jyeshthesa temple of Lalitaditya. A solid plinth of masonry, about 120′ long, standing apart is evidently the remains of a building of a special type, while the last group consists of temples and shrines typical of Kashmir. All these structures are now rugged ruins, and appear to be more a part of the rocky environment than the handiwork of man.

Poised on the summit of a hill in Srinagar and overlooking the great loop of the Jhelum and the waters of the Dal Lake a thousand feet below is the shrine of Sankaracharya. This building is probably contemporaneous with Sankara, if not later, and appears to be of unusual design, for here the temple plan is reduced to its most elementary form. The exterior is austere and devoid of all decoration, while the interior is a simple circular sanctuary, where the sacred symbol of the Sivalinga is kept.

The vast Himalayan region extending from Kashmir to Nepal has a great number of temples of varying dates, which are generally constructed of deodar wood and are therefore more richly carved and more picturesque than those where more intractable materials like rock, brick, or stone are used.

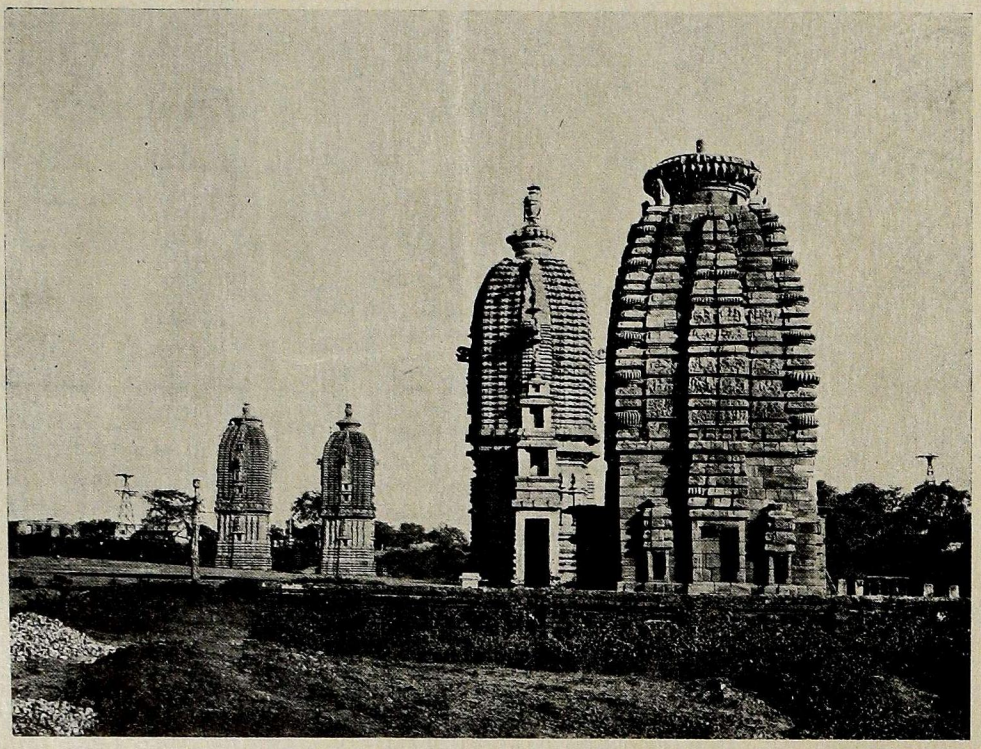
Two temples at Kiragrama or Baijnath in the Kangra Valley, one dedicated to Siva and the other to Jamadagni, are notable examples of Himalayan architecture in the early 13th century. Chamba, Kumaon, and Kulu also have numerous temples of the same type. The famous Doongri temple, dedicated to Hirimba, in Manali in the Kulu Valley, is constructed of wood and is a striking example.

Bengal

Bengal has been the home of several great civilisations, but the structural records of these, considering the extent of the country, are extremely scanty, largely on account of the nature of the soil and the climate, both of which encourage the rapid growth of thick jungle vegetation so destructive to deserted buildings. This is not to say, however, that the hand of man has played no part in demolishing ancient cities and temples.

Of the ruined temples in the districts of Bankura and Burdwan, enough remains to establish their kinship with the virile architectural movement in Orissa which produced the temples at Bhubaneswar. The dilapidated temples built by the Bhanja rulers at the ancient site of Khiching in Mayurbhanj provide a connecting link between Orissan architecture of the 11th and 12th centuries and its provincial phase in the south of Bengal. A distinctive feature of the latter, as of the structures at Khiching, is the absence of a *mukhamandapa* or portico.

A group of temples at Barakar in Burdwan are believed to have been built in the 10th and 11th centuries



General view of the Begunia group of temples, Burdwan

by the Pala kings. These are locally known as the Begunia group on account of their fancied resemblance to the fruit of egg plant. The Siddheswara temple at Behulara in the Bankura district dates from the 10th century and is the most ornate of this group. Terracotta reliefs adorn its entire brick surface, but the lavish decoration merely emphasises the elegance of its lines.

Along with the building movement described above, there was an indigenous style of building, approaching a kind of folk architecture, which was widely prevalent in southern Bengal. Characterised by a freshness and spontaneity, this type of structure was clearly derived from the thatched bamboo hut so common in most parts of Bengal. The curved cornice and eave, which are a special feature of these temples, are directly descended from the bamboo framework of the huts of the people, originally bent into this shape in order to throw off the frequent heavy rain.

Vishnupur in the Bankura district has a group of such temples, undoubtedly built during the days of the Malla Rajas, who are known to have encouraged temple-building. The Lalgiri temple is built in laterite, has a single tower, and probably

dates from 1658. The Madan Mohan temple is in brick and was erected in 1694. The Shyam Rai (1643 A.D.) and the Madan Gopal (1665 A.D.), built in brick and laterite, respectively, have five towers and are of the *panchayatana* type.

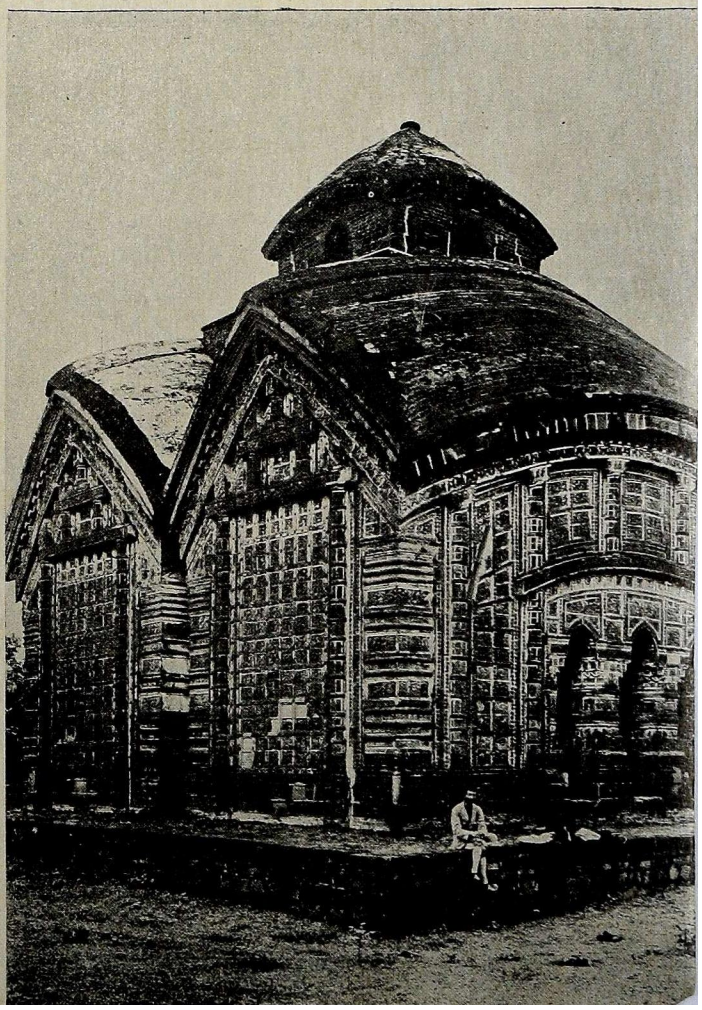
The external decoration of these temples, particularly of those constructed in brick, consists of square panels of terracotta reliefs, the subject-matter of which is often secular and thus of considerable sociological interest.

The *jor-bangla* or double temple is a structural variation of the same type and resembles two thatched huts joined together and surmounted by a single tower. The Krishnaraya temple built at Vishnupur in 1726 A.D. and the Chaitanya temple at Guhapara in the Hooghly district are typical examples.

A single hall or *thakurbari,* on one side of which is the *vedi* or altar, is the main feature of the interior of these buildings. Above this is an upper gallery running round the circuit of the *thakurbari.*

Lakhnauti, now an obscure ruin near Malda, was once the head and cornerstone of an important school of architecture which came into prominence with the Pala and Sena dynasties. The temples at Lakhnauti, which was the capital of the Sena rulers, were built of black basalt obtained from the neighbouring Rajmahal hills. These ornate structures were despoiled by the Muslims in 1197 and their remains used to build a Muslim capital at Gaur. From the sculptured stones incorporated in mosques it is inferred that the temples of Varendra (Northern Bengal) were similar in many respects to the Mahabodhi temple at Bodh Gaya. From the carved stones built into the masonry of the mosque at Gaur and Pandua, it is clear that under the Sena kings there flourished a school of plastic art which had few equals for excellence of design and execution. The Adina mosque at Gaur also reveals that the masons of the Vishnu temples of the

The Jor-Bangla temple, Bengal



11th and 12th centuries joined the courses of their stones by means of molten metal.

In what is now the Mazar of Zafar Khan Ghazi at Tribeni in the Hooghly district, two compartments have been identified as the *antarala* and *mandapa* of a Vishnu temple of the Lakhnauti style, and therefore of the Pala-Sena period.

Of comparatively recent temples near Calcutta, that of the goddess Kali in the Kalighat area, the Dakshineswar temple of Kali, where Sri Ramakrishna was once the *pujari*, the Belur temple, four miles north of Howrah, and the Vishnu temple at Bansberia (1679) are noteworthy. There are four Jain temples built in the late 19th century in Badridas Temple Street in Calcutta. The most important of these is dedicated to Shree Sheetalnathji, the 10th of the 24 Jain deities.

The Dakshineswar temple Calcutta

1. Bhubaneswar
2. Puri
3. Konarak
4. Calcutta
5. Vishnupur
6. Bodh Gaya
7. Banaras
8. Brindaban
9. Mathura
10. Jaipur
11. Baijnath
12. Manali
13. Martand
14. Amritsar
15. Jodhpur
16. Mt. Abu
17. Siddhapur
18. Modhera
19. Girnar
20. Junagadh
21. Veraval
22. Palitana
23. Ranakpur
24. Udaipur (Madhya Pradesh)
25. Chittorgarh
26. Deogarh
27. Gwalior
28. Khajuraho
29. Udaipur
30. Hanamkonda