

Introduction

The magnificent Ellora caves are now part of UNESCO's World Heritage list. It is locally known as „Verul Leni“.¹ It is located on the Aurangabad-Chalisgaon road at a distance of 30 km north-northwest of Aurangabad, in Maharashtra. Ellora represents the epitome of Indian rock-cut architecture and group of varied rock-cut designs. The Buddhist caves of Ajanta are 60 K. M. North and the Pitalkhora, also in North, is around 40 K.M. from Ellora.² The caves are excavated in the scarp of a large plateau, running in a north-south direction for nearly 2 K. M., the scarp being in the form of a semi-circle, the Buddhist group at the right arc on the south, while the Jaina group at the left side on the north and the Brahmanical group at the centre.

In terms of simple geography, Ellora and its surroundings falls in a relatively flatter region of the mountain ranges called the Western Ghats. Geologists called this basalt scarp as “Deccan Trap”, Deccan being a term to refer south India in general and Trap often refers to the step like formations of rock.³ Nature had prepared the region right for rock-cut architecture by the way of ancient volcanic activities. The intense volcanic activity that went on for many millions years in this part of the south Indian plains brought out the mineral rich rocky crust on to the surface. There are many horizontal and tentatively parallel lines postulating the fact that molten lava once flowed and solidified.⁴ One can also notice the alternating shades of grey strips on the walls and carvings at Ellora on a close up view.

¹ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2009). *Monumental Legacy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 6-7.

² *Ibid* 8.

³ Gazetteer of Aurangabad. (1884). Bombay: The Times of India Steam Press. p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 18-19.

Geological formations:

Geological formations of the Ellora, beginning with the lowest, are as follows:⁵

1. Middle Traps of the Deccan Tertiary.
2. Older Alluvial Deposits of the Godavari. \ Post-Tertiary
3. Modern Alluvial Deposits of the Godavari and other rivers.

The lowest rocks belong to the great trappean region of the Deccan trap, which covers an area of approximately 2, 00,000 square miles.⁶ They consist of a series of basaltic flows, nearly horizontal or presenting the appearance of having been so originally. In some parts of the Western Ghats, their vertical thickness is from 4,000 to 5,000 feet, and probably, thickest may amount to 6,000 feet and more.⁷ But this is the thick end of the formation, and the flows thin out towards the extremities in a series of broad ledges or steps. The rocks are believed to have been formed between the highest Mesozoic⁸ and the lowest Cainozoic⁹ periods¹⁰, or between the Upper Cretaceous¹¹ and the Lower Eocene¹² formations.¹³

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 16

⁶ Gazetteer of Aurangabad, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 17.

⁸ Mesozoic: The Mesozoic Era is an interval of geological time from about 250 million years ago to about 65 million years ago. It is often referred to as the Age of Reptiles because reptiles, namely non-avian dinosaurs, were the dominant terrestrial and marine vertebrates of the time.

⁹ Cenozoic: The Cenozoic era, meaning "new life" is also known as the Age of Mammals, just as the Mesozoic era was the Age of Reptiles. The Cenozoic spans the time period covered from the final extinction at the end of the Cretaceous, approximately 65 million years ago, to the present. The Cenozoic era is divided into three periods, and seven systems

¹⁰ Gazetteer of Aurangabad, *op. cit.*, pp. 16.

¹¹ Upper Cretaceous: The Upper Cretaceous was a period in Earth history, from 100 to 65 million years ago. The Cretaceous is traditionally divided into Lower Cretaceous (early), and Upper Cretaceous (late), because of the different rocks.

The rocks reflect the conditions in which they were formed as sediment.

The Upper Cretaceous is the chalk. It is composed of countless millions of calcareous (CaCO₃) plates called coccoliths. They are so small they can only just be seen with a light microscope; details require an electron microscope. The plates are formed by single-celled planktonic algae called coccolithophores, and were laid down in the off-shore seas.

¹² Lower Eocene: The Eocene epoch, lasting from about 56 to 34 million years ago is a major division of the geologic timescale and the second epoch of the Paleogene Period in the Cenozoic Era. The Eocene spans the time from the end of the Palaeocene Epoch to the beginning of the Oligocene Epoch. The start of the

The compact and amorphous rock, with semi-vitreous texture known as basalt, occurs on the highest summits of the hills. It is dark in the interior, containing small cavities coated generally with a reddish or black vitreous glaze, while the exterior is of a yellowish-brown colour.¹⁴

There are some magnificent groups of monuments in India which are famous for their aesthetic appeal and enormous size. Ellora caves are one of them. Even in the array of the monolithic architecture, it touches a new peak of grandeur in terms of architectural techniques. The 34 excavations on the vertical face of the



Figure 1: A View of Kailash Temple

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
New Delhi

Charanandri hills – being Buddhist, Hindu and Jain cave temples and monasteries are supposed to have been built between the 5th century and 10th century¹⁵. The 12 Buddhist (caves 1-12), 17 Hindu (caves 13-29) and 5 Jain caves (caves 30-34), built in vicinity¹⁶, demonstrate the religious harmony prevalent during this period of Indian history.

Without a doubt, the most ambitious and impressive of these indeed, perhaps in all of South Asia is Cave 16, the Kailāśa temple. The proud patronage which created the magnificent Kailāśa has been ascribed to Raṣṭrakutas of Ellora.¹⁷ It

Eocene is marked by the emergence of the first modern mammals. The end is set at a major extinction event called the Grande Coupure (the "Great Break" in continuity) or the Eocene–Oligocene extinction event, which may be related to the impact of one or more large bolides in Siberia and in what is now Chesapeake Bay. As with other geologic periods, the strata that define the start and end of the epoch are well identified,[2] though their exact dates are slightly uncertain.

¹³ Gazetteer of Aurangabad, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Gazetteer of Aurangabad, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁵ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 9-12.

¹⁷ Havell, E. B. (2000). *Encyclopaedia of Architecture in the Indian Subcontinent Vo.1. Ancient and Early Medieval*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International. p. 203.

became an immortal monolith which enshrines the ages of faith and skills of the artisans. One of the last important Hindu excavations, it represents not only the most striking cave temple at the site, but also the culmination of the rock architecture in South Asia.¹⁸ It is a complex with all the essential elements of contemporaneous free-standing southern type temple units. It includes a main building, *Nandi* shrine, gateway, surrounding cloisters, and subsidiary shrines.¹⁹ Architectural details seem to be inspired from the narratives of Hindu mythology. It is believed that abode of lord Śiva is in mount Kailāśa, so great care has been taken in carving the temple as a unique and apparently divine in beauty and grandeur.²⁰ The Kailāśa temple as name suggests is dedicated to Śiva as the Lord of mount Kailāśa. The temple has a *Śivalinga* in its sanctum sanctorum. The Vaishnava images were given prominent position and complementary to that of Śaiva images.²¹ On the other hand Śiva-Śakti Āgama, sees in every manifestation of universe a product and outflow of the dynamic life power inherent in the God.²²

Kailāśa is situated near Ghriśnesvar Jyotirlinga, now a temple of *nāgar* style made in late Maratha phase.²³ According to legends, the word Ghriśnesvar means Śiva whose abode is in a meticulously carved out magnificent monolithic temple. The Elāpur or Ellora is one of the eight *Jyotirlinga* and it is mentioned in the Dvādaś jyotirlingastrotam.²⁴

Elāpure ramyavisālake sminsamullasmtam cha jagatvatvareṇyam /
Vaṁde mahodārataravabhāvam ghriṣṇeśvarākhyam sāranam prapadye //

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 204

¹⁹ Dhavalikar, M. K. (1988). "Kailasa: A Structural Analysis" in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 351-52.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 353

²¹ Berkson, Carmel. (2000). *The Life of Form in Indian Sculpture*, Delhi: Abhinav Publications. p. 17.

²² Boner, Alice. (1990). *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture, Cave Temple Period*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd. and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. pp. 40-41.

²³ Gazetteer of Aurangabad, *op. cit.*, 355.

²⁴ Deshpande, M. N. (1988). „Kailāśa: A Study in its symbolism in the Light of Contemporary Philosophical Concepts and Tradition“, in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 250-51.

The above mentioned verse gives the description of the Kailāśa temple“ „it is delightful, extensive resplendent and pre-eminent.“²⁵ The word *Ghriṣṇeśvara* itself mean to rub or to chisel or polish which can be further elaborated as to carve out of rock and polished to become magnificent.²⁶

It seems that Rāṣṭrakutas had faith on Brahmanical tradition and they were trying to create the loftiest and loveliest monuments to demonstrate the devotion towards Śiva. Narratives from myths and epics of Brahmanical traditions were taken as a subject for representation. Narratives from *Puranas*²⁷ were conceptualised as a theme for the depiction of sculptures²⁸. The well-sculpted panels around the temple enhance the sacredness of temple complex.

The tradition of rock-cut dwellings in India is supposed to have been developed during the Mauryan period in Barabar hills.²⁹ This in the succeeding centuries spread widely and resulted in the blooming of a large number of cave temples across the country. These rock-cut version of the architecture were predominantly wooden prototypes which were copied into stone.³⁰ In the beginning, the rock-cut enterprise was nurtured by the votaries of Buddhist faith and later by the Jaina and Brahmanic faith as well. The Guptas were the first to patronise Brahmanical cave excavations as evidenced at Udaigiri caves near Vidiśā.³¹ Scholars have unanimously agreed that under Guptas the resurgence of Brahmanic faith took place on a national level.³² Udaigiri caves are the first site for the Brahmanical cave temples in India. The cave no. 7, locally known as Tawa cave, is a monolith with well finished chamber. A medallion is carved out on the ceiling.³³ It is basically a Śaiva temple as shown by the Śaiva guardian on

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 252

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 252

²⁷ Boner, Alice *op. cit.*, p. 40.

²⁸ Bhattacharya, Ashok K.(1988). „Ellora Sculpture: A Stylistic Analysis“ in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. pp.272-73.

²⁹ Dhavalikar, M. K. *op. cit.*, p.1.

³⁰ Srinivasan, K.R. (1998). *Temple of South India*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India. pp. 23-24.

³¹ Dayalan, D. (1995). *Monolithic Temples of Madhya Pradesh*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. p. 2.

³² *Ibid*, p.3

³³ *Ibid*, p. 4

the doorway. The germs of monolithic architecture, however, lies in the *stūpas* and *chaityas* of Western Ghats.

Rock-cut shrines of the early fifth century C.E. present two imperative metaphors for the temple: the sanctum as womb (*garbha*), in which the seed of divinity can be made manifest, and the temple as mountain.³⁴ As the cave opens up the earth, so the sanctum opens up the temple. It is the concept of divinity made manifest and the practice of devotional worship (*bhakti*) that make the temple possible. The cosmic mountain and its cave ultimately shelter a divinity in the form of an image. It gives shelter to the worshipper, who approaches the central point of cosmic manifestation along a longitudinal axis.³⁵

Ellora's multidimensional aspect of architectural heritage transcended during the three major phases of different patronages. These phases were contemporary with the age of Ajanta and Badami for the first. The second phase was associated with the Raṣtrakutas. The third phase was associated with the closing stages of the Raṣtrakuta Empire before it was superseded by Vajrayana Buddhism together with rising Brahmanical religions were preoccupations of the first stage.³⁶ In the second stage, the focus shifted to Digambara Jainism.³⁷ Ellora began where Ajanta of Vakataka ended. The decline of Ajanta's Buddhist art is very crucial after the end of Hrisena's branch dynasty in the late fifth or early sixth century.³⁸ It transformed the shift of patronage from Buddhism to Brahmanism. A segment of this picture was enacted further east in Vidarbha, extended the period of transition of Ajanta and Ellora.³⁹

³⁴ Narjary, Janak Jhankar. (1988). "A Hindu View of Unity: Its Impact on the Styles of Hindu Sculpture of Mahabalipuram, Ellora and Elephanta" in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 124-25.

³⁵ Meister, Michael W. (1982). "The Hindu Temple: Axis of Access" in *The Art of Gupta India*, ed. Joanna Gottfried Williams. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 271.

³⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara. (1998). *Rock-cut Temple Styles*. Bombay: Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd. p. 156.

³⁷ Cort, John E. (1991). "Murtipuja in Svetambar Jain Temples" in *Religion in India*, ed. T.N. Madan. Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 213.

³⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 136



Figure 2: A Panoramic View of Ajanta

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The difference between Buddhistcaves Ellora is much greater than the latest Buddhist caves compared with Ajanta. Hence, studying changes in conventional features, like pillars or Buddha images can be fruitful at Ellora.⁴⁰ The distinctions with assessments of situation generally found in other western caves, where changes in suchconventionalized elements create confusion for chronology.⁴¹

Comparisons of sculpture and architecture of the other regions in India show that general trends in art of the period are reflected at Ellora. It also confirms the proposed seventh to early eighth century dates.⁴² The Ellora caves were destined to be a new political power centre which by the time moved into the next stage of Krishna I. Apart from influences from the Chalukya"s Pattadkal a similarity to Ganga and Pallava sculptural style, progressively tinged with the early Chola as well as time progressed from the eighth into the ninth and the early part of the tenth century CE.⁴³

⁴⁰ Malandra, Geri H. (1993). *Unfolding a Mandala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 23-24.

⁴¹ Mahajan, Malti. (2004). *A Gate to Ancient Indian Architecture*. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. pp. 92-94.

⁴² Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 146.

The cross current of the Badami Chalukyas carried forward the same composition in essentially two dimensional relief sculpture.⁴⁴ At Ajanta, mural painting was often than its stone sculpture. Even at Badami, in cave no. 3 mural painting was a shade superior to its glorious sculpture. But when we come to the second stage of Ellora, painting receded to a secondary position, produced by a technique different from the tempera of Ajanta.⁴⁵ Sculptural art, at Ellora carved in nearly three-dimensional relief is a vibrant compositions.⁴⁶ It denotes a pervasive sensualism of the earth. The third stage was the end of an era but tediously it repeated its Rastrakuta heritage. From this perspective, both the first and last stages were derivative, carrying forward antecedent traditions.⁴⁷ Only the middle stage achieved a level in tone, technique and culture. Its great visual power is central element of the grandeur of Ellora.

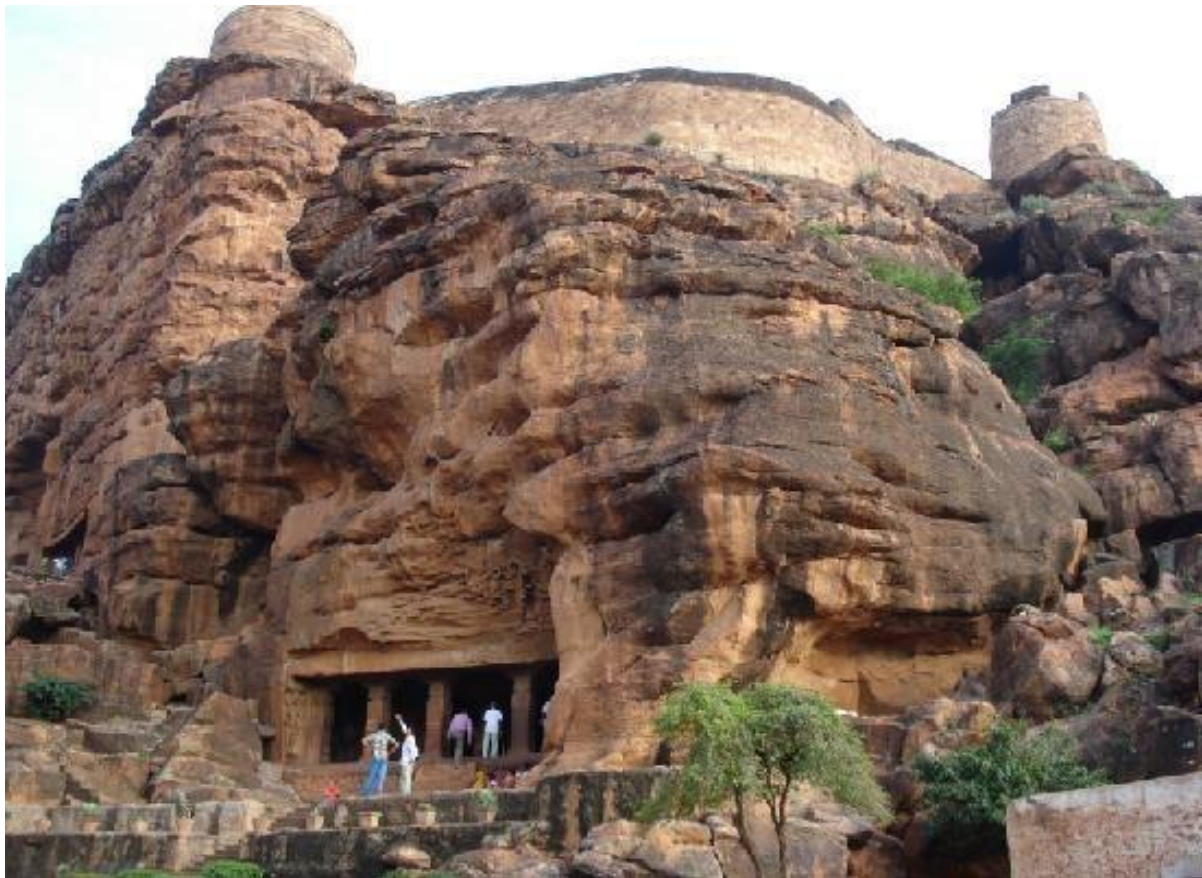


Figure 3: A View of Badami

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

⁴⁴ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 132.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 140.

⁴⁷ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-15.

The sculptural programme of Ellora became remarkable as they were trend setting. Monoliths were already designed by the time of Dantidurga, as visible in the Mandapa unit in front of his Dasavatara Cave no. 15.⁴⁸ In some cases as in the upper story of cave 15, Brahmanical images were carved in deep relief to replace existing Buddhist panel.⁴⁹ Here was the origin of relief sculpture in three dimensional form. It gave rise to a new urgency for regular monolithic architecture. And it was, no doubt, inspired from the *rathas* of Mamallapuram.⁵⁰

The early stage both Buddhist and Brahmanical, continued Gupta-Vakataka and early Chalukyas forms of mellowness and technique.⁵¹ The style of execution into the second stage was thus abrupt, charismatic and vibrant. There was true insight into modelling. Soft fleshy contours of the first stage are shed in favour of slender figures contributing to the portrayal of the body in flexibility.⁵² Multiple movements in group compositions within the same panel show a trend toward the release of physical energy. The *mithunas* of cave 16 are among the most sensitive renderings of responsive, intertwining couples.⁵³ Limbs are portrayed in realistic manner. This style of execution has been ascribed to the Rastrakutas. They have been criticized as medieval by some scholars, but Soundra Rajan⁵⁴ has the view that “*in the south it had not started until the beginning of the tenth century and surely does not mark early Rastrakuta art at Ellora. Here it is evident from the style of execution that this sight might had nourished South Indian sculptures.*”

⁴⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *Rock Cut Temple Styles*, op. cit., p. 138.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 141.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 160.

⁵¹ Tadgell, Christopher. (1990). *The History of Architecture in India*, New Delhi: Penguin Books (India) Ltd. pp. 43-45.

⁵² Kannal, Deepak H. (1996). *Ellora- An Enigma in Sculptural Styles*. New Delhi: Books & Books, 1996. pp. 76-78.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 79

⁵⁴ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, op. cit., p. 115.

An unbroken series of rock-cut art at Ellora for nearly five hundred years is in itself an unrivalled phenomenon. This suggests that guilds of sculptors were permanently stationed in the area.⁵⁵ There seems a planning, both necessary for major presentations of sculptural art. When it subsequently became the capital of the Rastrakutas, Ellora benefited from this multi-faceted background. It had the prolific and intense tradition of rock-cut art that developed there. Its guilds had not only a continuous tradition of artisanship but also knowledge of their rituals and tradition.⁵⁶

Throughout its history, from a little earlier than CE 600 up to the end of the 9th century, its artisans had consistently assimilated a variety of art and architectural forms and ad skilfully and sensitively transformed them to serve the aims of *Mahesvara Shaivism*.⁵⁷ It can be said as a perfect blend of Agmic Brahmanical religion like Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism, as well as the sublime Jaina faith.⁵⁸ There is no doubt that it was Ellora's location in the golden triangle that supplied the initiative, stimulated by political transformations, which brought under the control of imperial circumstances more favourable to the Brahmanical faith.

The presence which originates in the cliff is communicated through the spaces made within it, both from the point of view of the architect and the worshipper. The divinity which is embedded in the cliff is expressed through and experienced within the caves themselves, especially since caves are understood to be the ancient residences of the gods.⁵⁹ Kramrisch refers to the *Vayu Purana* when she writes "*on the Visakha Mountain there is a great dwelling belonging to Guha, the secret one...the god who is very fond of living in*

⁵⁵ Havell, E. B., *op. cit.*, p.190.

⁵⁶ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.* pp. 4-5.

⁵⁷ Boner, Alice, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 48

⁵⁹ Kramrisch, Stella. (1976). *The Hindu Temple*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 169.

caves."⁶⁰ Then cave is basically the middle of the earth, a place of formation, conception and generation.

The presence of Ellora was conspicuous before any excavation began there, the combination of cliff and waterfall serving as a dramatic backdrop and inspiration for construction.⁶¹ This presence is literally expressed in the act of making the caves, for in that process human activity and natural effect become inextricably linked. What is felt in presence is made visible in form, and the form then affords the means and inspiration for the activities which allow access to that presence again. The cave temples at Ellora might be considered first as a site. As already mentioned, Ellora is a village located Northwest of Aurangabad in the Western Deccan, and the thirty four carved temples line one of its rocky cliffs for a mile. A waterfall interrupts the linear progression of the caves as they stretch just underneath the crest of the cliff. Given Ellora's place in history as a *tirtha*, or center of worship and ritual, the element of water is almost expected as a purifying, fertilizing element.⁶² Quite visibly, the caves are at once a subtle and dramatic addition to the dry, rugged landscape. Because of their location in the cliff, they are not visible from above, on the side of the cliff where the waterfall originates. This might explain their use as a place of refuge after their status as a *tirtha* began to fade in the thirteenth century.⁶³ They are located on a well-travelled, ancient route which once connected Paithan on the Godavari River with Aurangabad, Maheshwar and Ujjain.⁶⁴

Inscriptions in Buddhist cave sites throughout the Western Deccan indicate that monks, nuns and lay devotees travelled this route.⁶⁵ There was a strategic

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 170

⁶¹ Havell, E. B., *op. cit.*, pp. 189-190.

⁶² Kramrisch, Stella, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17. (Kramrisch points out that the word "tirtha" refers to a ford or passage, and water is clearly related to both).

⁶³ Malandra, Geri H. *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*. (Malandra notes that a famous Maharashtrian Saint, Cakradhara, used the Ellora caves for protection in the early thirteenth century).

⁶⁵ Geri H. Malandra, *op. cit.*, p.2.

connection between Ellora's role as a religious center and its position on a commercial path. During that time, Ellora might have served the immediate recognizable as the juncture of spiritual and physical paths.

The making of the caves involves a complex series of preparations similar to those engaged by the worshipper in many Indian rituals. The earth and the architect must be readied before construction is to begin, since the architect's work is to be an image and reconstitution of the universe.⁶⁶ The ground is purified, the soil is judged for smell, sound, taste, shape etc., and any extraneous matter in the soil is removed. According to Kramrisch, "*magic is active and divinatory science establishes the correspondence between the soil to be built on and the body of the builder.*"⁶⁷ This correspondence is later extended to the worshipper as well, who prepares his body and mind to meet the spirit of the architecture and the character of its foundation. The presence which is originally recognized in the natural site is preserved in the architect's sense of wonder about the architectural operations at hand. The architect is guided by a priest, and when the work is done the architect must be able to say "*Oh, how was it that I built it.*"⁶⁸ While the architect is recognized as a master, he cannot claim mastery of his work for it is dependent on the spirit of the site as much as on his own spiritual state. Here, it seems that architecture is, like enlightenment, something to be attained. As Kramrisch has written, "*a settlement...takes place in the intellect itself at the moment when its work is being given concrete form. The substance is its support and form is the nature of its activity. The form of the concrete work is the final seal of the process which leads to it.*"⁶⁹ This can be said appropriately in case of Kailaśa Temple.

⁶⁶ Chandra, Lokesh. (1988). Ellora as Sunyata and Rupam" in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 131-32.

⁶⁷ Kramrisch, Stella, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 17.

The difficult part in the study of Ellora is in asserting its time lines and the patrons behind its execution. That's mainly because the historic evidences available in the form of inscriptions. And what little is available is sketchy leaving it open for challenging interpretations. Things get complicated by the fact that Ellora was active as a centre for cave architecture for many centuries, even before the intensified cave excavations began during the latter part of the 6th century CE.⁷⁰ On top of it separate groups of caves were built by the three religious sects – Hindus, Jains and Buddhists have overlapping chronology.

However, Ellora was yet to come to limelight, rather the caves were still to be made at Ellora, at least in a significant way. Those days the important spiritual centres were Pitalkhora, Nasik, Ajanta and so on.⁷¹ All with its own cave complexes. Once those sites along with prime locations suitable for cave cutting got saturated Ellora was the natural choice for building newer cave complexes. This can be compare with to modern day situation where a city expands into suburbs and satellite locations for its growth. The Ellora was too tempting from a rock cut architectural point of view.

So for the first time the focus was shifted to Ellora. Historians put this around the period 475-575 CE.⁷² That's when the activities at the Ajanta Caves started declining. This theory of coincidence was one of the assumptions made with respect to the beginning of Ellora's history.

The interesting thing about Ellora is from its origin till present it was in the constant know of people. That stands in stark contrast with the case of Ajanta caves that was lost into oblivion by around 500 CE and later „discovered“ some 1200 years later when a hunting team of colonial officers ran into one of the caves.⁷³

⁷⁰ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7.

⁷¹ Mahajan, Malti *op. cit.* pp. 59-61.

⁷² Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁷³ Jamkhedkar, Arwind P. (2009). *Ajanta: Monumental Legacy*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p.3.

For the sake of simplicity historians classified the cave making at Ellora into following phases-early Hindu, Buddhist, later Hindu and Jain. However, Ellora is notable for smooth, apparently peaceful artistic transitions from period to period. So, while we see a distinct shift around 600 CE.⁷⁴ It may be inferred that the architectural style is shifted from Hindu to Buddhist activities. The similar style of the late sixth century Hindu and early seventh century Buddhist cave temples suggest that the same artisans shifted from one end of the site to the other. They were also set at work by a new set of patrons.⁷⁵ This physical continuity illustrates the power of the *tirtha* to attract patrons, resources and artisans.⁷⁶ This further resulted in creation of a cultural and economic momentum that carried over into a Buddhist phase not connected in any doctrinal way to the Hindu basis of the *tirtha*.

There was a parallel and inter-related growth of temple architecture in the cities of the Chalukyas and the Pallavas. The developments of style and the Dravidian idiom stems from the same school of craftsmanship. It draws the same point of origin illustration of migration of design across vast distances reaching the Deccan ruled by the Rastrakuta dynasty. The Rastrakuta consisting of several closely related but individual clans ruled large parts of southern, central and northern India between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries. The earliest known Rashtrakuta inscription is a seventh century copper plate grant that mentions their rule from the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.⁷⁷ Several conflicting claims exist regarding the origin of early Rashtrakutas, their native place and their language. The clan that ruled from Elichpur was a feudatory of the Badami Chalukyas and during the rule of Dantidurga, it overthrew Chalukya Kirtivarman II⁷⁸ and went on to build an impressive empire with the Gulbarga

⁷⁴ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁶ Soar, Micaela. (1988). "The Tirtha at Ellora" in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 103.

⁷⁷ Dawne, S. G. (1966). *Ellora and Environs*, Aurangabad: Mukund Prakashan. p. 6.

⁷⁸ Prasad, B. Rajendra. (1983). *Chlukyan Temples of Andhradesa*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications. pp. 6-7.

region in modern Karnataka as its base.⁷⁹ This clan came to be known as the Raṣṭrakutas of Mayakheta, rising to power in South India in 753. During their peak reign, the Raṣṭrakutas of Manyakheta ruled a vast empire stretching from Ganga and Yamuna doab in the north to Cape Comorin in the South.⁸⁰ Their political expansion corresponded to an impressive period of architectural achievements.⁸¹ The gigantic monolithic Kailāsa temple at Ellora is one of the most spectacular and awesome accomplishments of the multifaceted Raṣṭrakuta kings in India.⁸²



Figure 4: A View of Shore Temple of Mahabalipuram
Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The Raṣṭrakuta ruler who numbered 23 in succession ruled Maharashtra and the adjoining territories from 570 to 974 CE. Some of them are in followings.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ramesh, K. V. (1984). *Chalukyas of Vatapi*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan. pp. 12-13.

⁸⁰ Altaker, A. S. (1934). *Rastrakuta and their Times*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency. p. iii.

⁸¹ Meister, Michael W. & Dhaky, M. A. & Deva, Krishna. (1986). *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India, Upper Dravidadesa*. New Delhi: America Institute of Indian Studies. pp. 104-107.

⁸² *Ibid*, 108

⁸³ Dawne, S. G., *op. cit.*, p. 6

1. Nannarja Yudhasu (630-650)
2. Govindraja (690-730)
3. Karaka I (710-730)
4. Dantidurga Khadgavaloka (745-56)
5. Shubhatunga Krishnaraja or Krishna I (756-775)
6. Dhruva Dharvarsha (780-793)
7. Amoghvarsha I (814-880)
8. Karka II (972-974)

The Aurangabad District Gazetteer asserts that they were the Rajputs.⁸⁴ The Raṣtrakuta ruler were tolerant in the religious matters. The opening verse in the Raṣtrakuta copperplates pays homage to both Śiva and Vishnu. Also at the site of Ellora, caves related to Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina are carved in the vicinity. Their seal is sometimes the eagle (*garuda*) the vehicle of Vishnu and sometimes in the posture of a seated *Mahayogi* in contemplation. The Raṣtrakutas were originally the natives of Latur in the present Osmanabad District in the Maharashtra State. Govindaraja was a staunch Shaivite while his successor Karka I was a Vaishnavite.⁸⁵ A Sanskrit rock cut inscriptions in cave No. 15 at Ellora testifies that Dantidurga, a Śaiva, had visited this cave. Krishna I was mainly responsible for getting excavated the famous Kailaśa cave at Ellora and it was again he who had adorned the great *Śivalinga* enshrined therein with gold and jewel ornaments. Amoghavrsha I ruled for about 66 years.⁸⁶ He was a great patron of Digambara Jainism. It can be said that the Rshtrakuta period was the most flourishing in the history of Jainism. Therefore, *Digambara* Jain caves at Ellora can be attributed to later Raṣtrakuta ruler.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Gazetteer of Aurangabad, *op. cit.*, p.294.

⁸⁵ Altaker, A. S., *op. cit.*, pp. 8-12.

⁸⁶ Meister, Michael W. & Dhaky, M. A. & Deva, Krishna, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-107.

⁸⁷ Altaker, A. S. *op. cit.*, 76-77.



Figure 5: A View of Kailash Temple from South West

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

Review of Literature:

In the study of the Ellora most scholars have confined their approach to the study of chronology, pillar and other design elements, iconography and the spirit of the art. While all these are legitimate concerns, they seem to sideline the scheme of genesis of monolithic architecture at Ellora.

The holistic vision of the artists encompassed the idea that the place was not only built as a sacred spot but also was deemed a sacred place of royalty. Especially in Rastrakutas times, multiple models in the caves and monolithic styles were introduced from stage to stage, in caves of Western India which resulted in the natural grouping of the various creations.⁸⁸

Most of the western caves including Ellora, have been studied by several western scholars Indian and European. However, researches on Ellora are limited to research articles and few books. The first exhaustive work on Ellora was done by Dr. R. S. Gupte who wrote his thesis on the iconography of the

⁸⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

Buddhist sculptures at Ellora and an earlier book on Buddhist, Jain and Hindu iconography at Ellora. There were several scholars worked on Ellora, including Charles Mallet, Thomas Daniell, John Seely, James Fergusson, James Burgess and R.G. Bhandarkar, Herman Getoz, Sengupta, M.K. Dhavlikar, K.V. Soundra Rajan, Walter Spink, Ratan Parimoo and Geri H. Malandara.

Ellora is the one of the most complex group of caves with a profusion of sculptures and architecture. An attempt had been made to study these caves exhaustively through a seminar in 1985 at Ellora with wide range of themes and different perspectives it came in a book form in 1988.⁸⁹

Because of multi-faceted aspect of the seminar no attempt was made for its systematic integration. Scholars to this day have been trying to achieve intellectual ownership of Ellora in different aspects of the art and architecture. The most exhaustive work on Ellora has been by K. V. Soundra Rajan. He has covered various aspects of the Ellora caves and even written a book on typology of Ellora monoliths. The book has inspired the present research work to bring out further work in the direction of tracing the genesis of the monolithic architecture at Ellora.⁹⁰ The Kailaśa temple has been chosen as a reference point in this regard. Even writing Soundra Rajan has said about the Kailaśa temple, “*How was it actually achieved? Much have been said about this, but it merits fresh scrutiny.*”⁹¹

The way the work Spink has done for Ajanta, there is no such work on Ellora done by a single scholar, though attempts have been made but lack of consistency kept the work incomplete.

⁸⁹ The proceeding of the seminar on Ellora was published in book form in 1988. Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal and Shivaji Panikkar edited the papers of many scholars like M.N. Deshpande, Geri H. Malandra and others.

⁹⁰ The book „The Ellora monoliths“ by K. V. Soundra Rajan has ample evidences of monoliths at Ellora and their architectural designs. The book talks about different aspects of cave temple architecture.

⁹¹ Soundra Rajan, K. V., *Rock-cut Temple Styles, op. cit.*, p. 159.

A progress on the studies of Ellora had started with the first full length descriptive work by Burgess and Fergusson. During the 1960's proceeds a step further to Dr. Ramesh Gupte first full length work devoted completely to Ellora as an Iconographical study. The later work started including the study of social and political picture in those days. Michela Soar has gone to study the spiritual context of caves and writes on the *puranic* accounts and in the *mahatmaya* of Ellora does suggest the social/religious context of the tirtha.⁹² M. K. Dhavalikar in an article written during a seminar on Ellora, Kailāśa- A structural analysis also mention the *tirtha* and a Medieval Marathi story about the queen Manikavati and the king of Elāpura.⁹³

The previous work has been limited to the different aspects of monuments either it is structural or artistic, in this investigation I have tried to investigate the **Genesis of Monolithic Architecture** at Ellora. Its methodology is driven by a primary question and its content by a series of related queries of the evolutionary process.

Regarding the evolution of Kailāśa temple, the indigenous origin of technique and methodology cannot be ignored. The ritual and formal importance of that culture which will be discussed in the following chapters. Instead, it acknowledges biases and usages to gain access to an aspect of Ellora which has not often been clarified in the scholarship about it.

The texts are devoted specifically to Ellora are less in numbers. It is normally considered in the general context of Indian temples. The works mentioning Ellora or which take the cave temples as their primary subject still lack the comprehensive theory. The aim of this study is not filling the gaps of this history by providing a theoretical base. In order to extend ideas about genesis of

⁹² Soar, Micaela *op. cit.*, pp. 102-03.

⁹³ Dhavalikar, M. K. (1988). Kailāśa: A Structural Analysis" in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar et. al, (New Delhi: Books & Books, 1988), p. 218.

monolithic architecture at Ellora the current theme has been selected to work on the available sources.

The objects which constitute Ellora's physical existence are not only the supports for ritual or the frames for culture but also they exist individually. The artisans at Ellora made use of its picturesque setting for symbolic purposes. Most of the rock-cut cave shrines of Buddhist as well as Brahmanical religions are found in secluded and naturally stimulating environments. Interestingly, Ellora stands out with its major water fall and cascade to the south of the Dhumar Lena (cave 29)⁹⁴ rising from and running over an upper slope of the hill. At present there is a running stream at the foot of the hill. This stream helps other streamlets in other parts of the hill slope to flow and enhances the natural appeal of the Ellora caves.



⁹⁴ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

Development of Rock-cut Architecture

Architecture is the art and science of enclosing and decorating the space created by nature. In terms of built heritage, it has been the most dominating art in Indian history and all the other modes of art are sometimes considered as accessories to it. Especially, temples constitute the most significant architectural forms in India are found almost everywhere- on mountains and hilltops, in the plains, by the riversides, in deep ravines and inside the dark and uninhabited caves, amidst thick jungles, on the seashore, in deserts, on the frontiers as well as in the centres of the villages and towns. These can be tiny or huge, ordinary or magnificent, simple or gorgeous and sometimes very powerful.

The temple architecture is simply not a representation of the skill of the architect or a craftsman, but it is the realization and culmination of the religious concept. It is an embodiment of devotion which inspire their existence in a visible form. In ancient times, religious considerations were not only behind the forms and structure of temple, but also the aesthetic idioms at particular point of time when they were commissioned. T. V. Sairam has aptly said “They are the symbols of art and religion”¹.

The architecture of any region has influences of its geographical position, climate, social-political conditions and other related factors. In ancient India, the water bodies were the hubs for the settlements of human civilization. For example, the Indus Civilization had its maximum settlements alongside the rivers or other water bodies.² The water bodies were source of varieties of building materials for construction. Even after the decline of Indus civilization

¹ Sairam, T. V. (1982). *Indian Temple forms and Foundations*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan. p. 12.

² Qureshi, Dulari. (2010). *Rock-cut Temple of Western India*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. p.9.

water bodies have been mentioned as an important component of town planning in the *Vastushastras*³ text of India, and also been mentioned in the *Arthashastra*⁴ of Kautilya and *Samaranganasutradhara*⁵ of King Bhoja.

Being situated near the water bodies, clay was the easily available material in Gangetic plains⁶. Also along with the clay, in forested region, wood played an important role of useful construction material. Here, not only the wood but sometimes different species of grass, reed bamboo were also frequently used⁷.

The availability of local building material was the obvious choice to be used for construction. For instance, trap in Deccan and granite were used in the region of south around Halebid⁸. Besides, the topographical features such as mountains, hills, ravines provided opportunities to experiment different artistic skills. Certainly, due to these experimentation, we find rock-cut activities in region naturally blessed with hills⁹.

The setting up of sacred spaces such as tumuli, hut, temples, groves and enclosures has been a characteristic feature in the religious movements throughout history of the world. All such temple structures have remained the expressions of deeply ingrained religious sentiments and spiritual values. In India various types are known as *Devagriham*, *Devagra*, *Devayatnam*, *Devalaya*, *Devakulam*, *Mandiram*, *Bhavanam*, *Mandir*¹⁰ etc.

³ Shukla, D. N. (1998). *Vastu Shastra, vol. 1, Hindu Science of Architecture*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal. pp.37-41.

⁴ Otter, Felix. (2010). *Residential Architecture in Bhoja's Samaranganasutradhara*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. pp. 46-47.

⁵ Acharya, P.K. (1979). *An Encyclopaedia of Hindu Architecture: Manasara Series Vol. VII*. New Delhi: Oriental Reprint. p. XVIII.

⁶ Sairam, T.V., *op. cit.*, p.22.

⁷ Sundaram, K. (1974). *Monumental Art and Architecture of India*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala. p.22.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 26

⁹ Shukla, D. N. *op. cit.*, pp. 486-87.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 488

Etymologically, the term *temple* is derived from the Latin word, *templum*, which, in its original sense would mean a square or a rectangular place marked out by the augur for the purpose of his observations. In extended sense it gave the meaning of a consecrated place or building inaugurated by an augur. Though, in its primitive sense, this word corresponds to a place marked off as sacred to a god, in which the house for god may be erected.¹¹

Indian architecture is essentially an architecture laid on principles of *vastushastra* and it has given space to the imagination while crafting the various decorative elements. Stone or brick is articulated in terms of forms derived from timber construction to create an expressive language architecture.¹²

In terms of structure, it is a matter of heavy, piled up masonry, beams and corbelling rather than arches and true domes. Imagination and expression are chiefly utilized in the sculpted exterior. Expression of structure of load and support seems no issue in this universe of weightlessness, inter-penetrating heavenly structures.¹³

With the beginning of the second phase of urbanization (6th Century B.C.) sixteen *Mahājanapadas* came into existence. The substantial archaeological relics provide ample evidences about the circumstances of that period. The growth of Jainism and Buddhism were two popular sects which were briskly taking over the Brahmanism during that period.¹⁴

Due to popularity of these two sects, Brahmanical lineage had to struggle for some time when these sects were prominently patronized by the royal court. There was a gradual change in mode of worship. Transformations in the

¹¹ Srinivasan, K. R. (1985). *Temples of South India*. New Delhi: National Book Trust. pp. 1-3.

¹² Srinivasan, P. R. (1982). *Indian Temple Art and Architecture*. Mysore: University of Mysore. p. 85.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 86

¹⁴ Mahajan, Malti. (2004). *A gate to Ancient Indian Architecture*. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. pp. 92-93.

Religious order were also accepted by the masses due to the over-burdened rituals and the rigid low-caste status.¹⁵

The kingdom itself protected the Buddhist monasteries, where trader got shelter and sometimes, probably deposited their money. Gradually, it created a vast network among the traders of India and outside. The *chaityas* and *vihāras* began to flourish along with the ancient trade routes also known as „Silk Route“.¹⁶

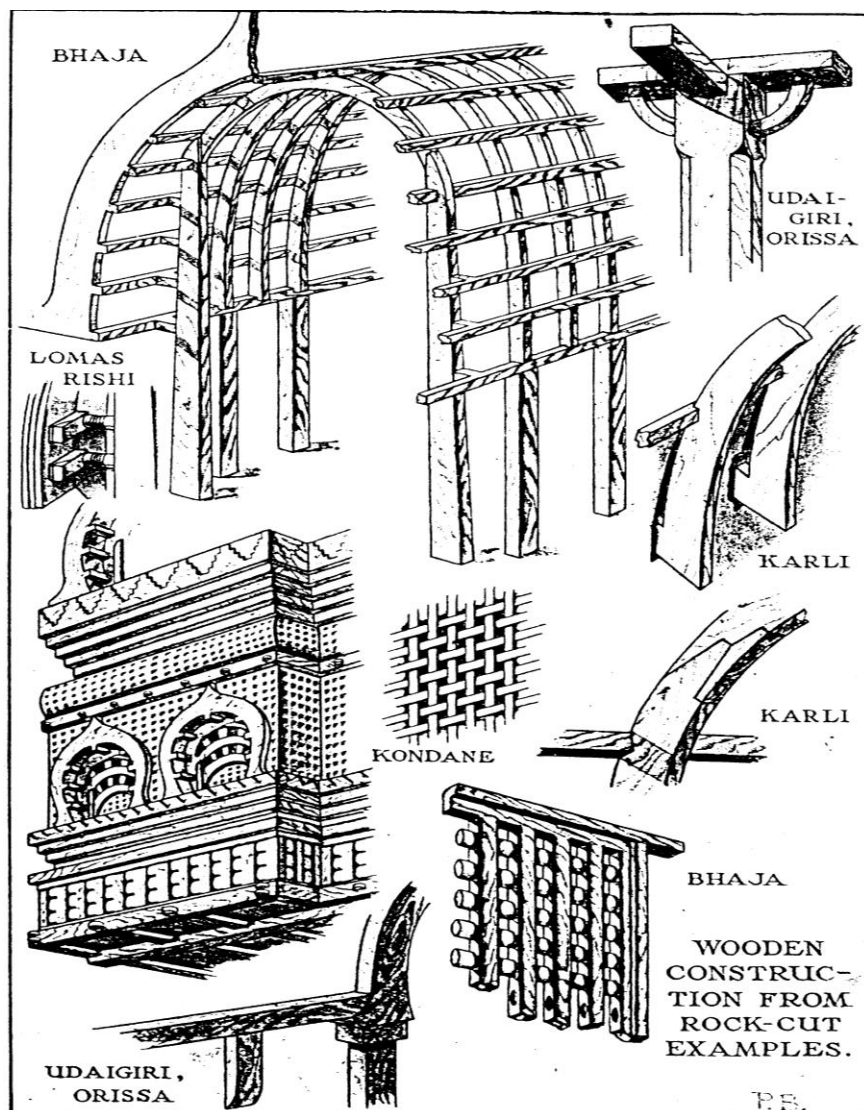


Figure 6: Wooden Construction from Rock-Cut Examples

Courtesy: Brown, Percy. (1971), *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period*, Bombay

¹⁵ Tadgell, Christopher. (1990). *The History of Architecture in India from the Dawn of Civilization to the End of Raj*. London: Phaiden Press. p. 73.

¹⁶ Owen C. Kail. (1975). *Buddhist Cave Temples of India*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala. pp. 22-23.

In addition to the natural factors, contemporary socio-political, economic and most importantly religious conditions also played pivotal role. It is evident in history that in politically unstable society the importance was given to security than artistic embellishments. Similarly, when the society or state was prosperous, it provided a conducive environment for the development of sophisticated arts¹⁷.

Before the advent of Buddha (6th century B. C.) the perishable and less durable materials such as wood, bamboo, brick, reed, cloth and clay were used. As per the Hindu traditions wood was considered as the best suited medium for making sacred objects¹⁸. Also, the wood was easy to transform in any shape; for instance bamboo could be easily bent to obtain curvature, architraves etc.

The solidarity of the rock carved down by the artisans who were professional. The arduous job of creating dwellings inside the stone by chiselling was not an easy task though the carving of the rock was based on the earlier wooden prototypes of the contemporary region.¹⁹ It seems that the sound of chisel was alike the sound of tinkling of bells for the artisans. The continuous flow of frequency of sound created the music of mysticism and bound them to the prolonged work without tiring. The chiselling of stone started a new phase of experiments. The motto was to create stylistic edifice from a living rock for the deity and the followers.

It is to the Buddhism that we owe the earliest monumental architecture still more or less intact in South Asia, consisting of mounded reliquaries or *stupas*, monasteries and rock-cut sanctuaries²⁰. As per Tadgell²¹, „the great

¹⁷ Mahajan, Malti, p.19.

¹⁸ Shukla, D. N., *op. cit.*, p. 329.

¹⁹ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, p. 4-5.

²⁰ Srinivasan, P. R. *op. cit.*, p.85.

²¹ Tadgell, Christopher *op. cit.*, p. 12.

transformation in Buddhism was accelerated from the 3rd century B.C. The beginning of earlier rock-cut cave architecture goes back to the Mauryan period.

During the Mauryan rule the stone was used as medium for column and statues. The Mauryan emperor Ashoka (268 BCE-232 BCE) used stone as a medium of proclamation for the message of law and tolerance known as „Dhamma“ through the rock edicts and pillar edicts. The rock edicts were carved on the living rock which later became as a source of encouragement for the architectural activities in the rock. The architectural remains from Mauryan dynasty onwards are overwhelmingly Buddhist but Vedic traditions of Brahmins also flourished, as did the Jainism.²²

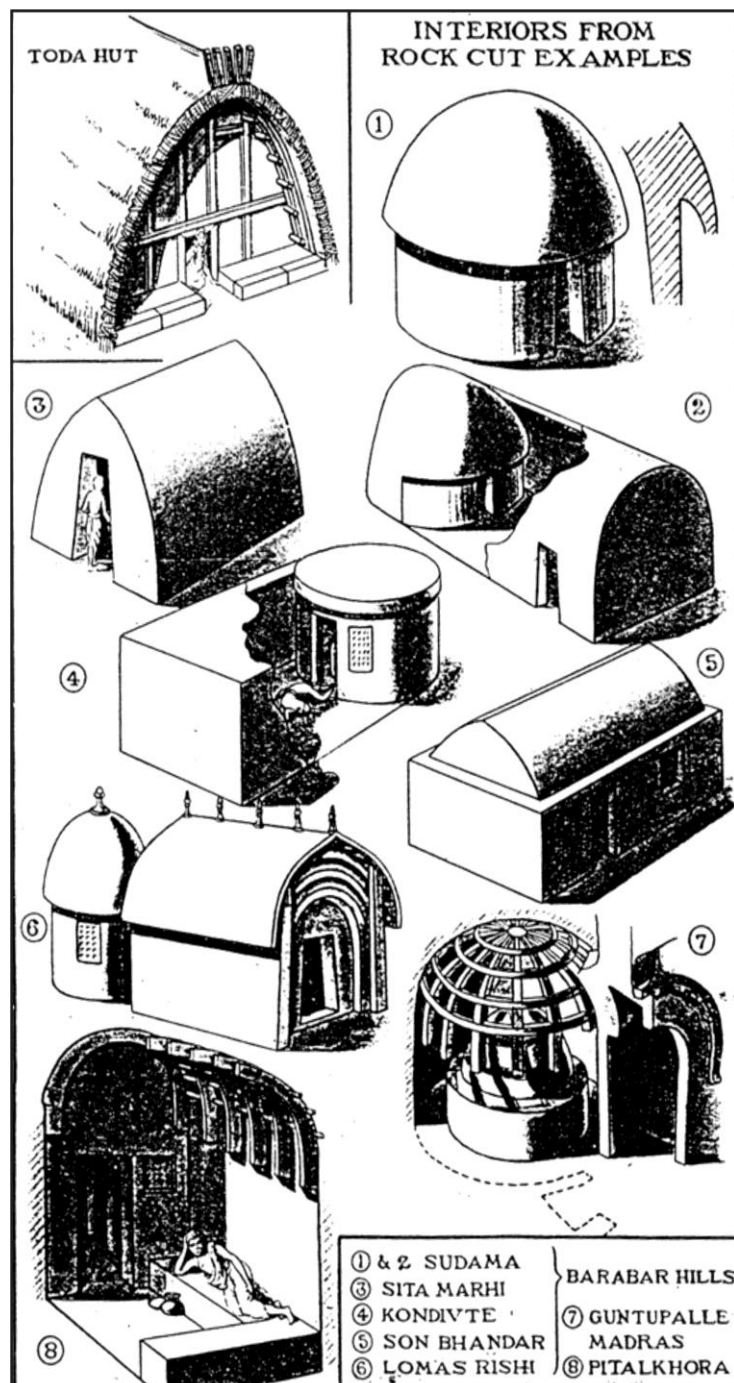


Figure 7: Stages of development in cave architecture

Courtesy: Brown, Percy. (1971), *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period*, Bombay

²² Beck, Elisabeth. (2006). *Pallava Rock Architecture and Sculpture*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurbindo Society. p.5-7.

Later on, devotional worship through sculpted images increased in popularity among various cults which grew and merged into later forms of Hinduism, becoming the dominant form of religion under the Gupta dynasty (320-550 CE). This required monumental temples in which to enshrine the divine embodiment.²³

The inner sanctum of a temple the idol of main deity, most often Vishnu or Shiva, was established. As pantheon grew, the entourage or as the manifestations of the central god, was encased in the temple walls, especially outside, requiring niche to frame their images, or to evoke their presence. Buddhist practices, by the Gupta period, also entailed the use of images.²⁴

Though originally atheistic, by this time Buddhism in India had developed into forms known as the *Mahayana* (greater vehicle). It became more pantheistic, more accessible to the congregation and more devotional in attitude. Images of the Buddha were enshrined, along with those of past and future incarnations of the Buddha.²⁵

The *bodhisattavas* got prominent position in Buddhist pantheon. To serve this purpose, Buddhist architecture was tending towards aedicular²⁶ structure even though the Hindu temple architecture was its preliminary stages of development. Analogous trends can also be seen in Jainism, having begun like Buddhism, as an atheistic philosophy, Jainism developed a pantheon of its great teachers (*Tirthankaras*).²⁷

²³ *Ibid*, p. 8

²⁴ Huntington, Susan L. (1985). *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York and Tokyo: Weather Hill. pp. 124-25.

²⁵ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 126

²⁶ An opening such as a door or a window, framed by columns on either side, and a pediment above

²⁷ Preira, Jose, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

These *Tirthankaras* populated its heavens alongside some of the Hindu gods and throngs of celestial beings. Jain temples, therefore came to require a profusion of images installed in aedicular architecture and for a given region and period, Jain temple architecture is still distinguishable from Hindu temple architecture mainly by its iconography and to some extent its layout.²⁸

The architecture of Indian temples, with its aedicular components, grows from an earlier tradition of timber construction, known to us through early Buddhist stone structures dating from 1st century B.C. Monastic remains and worship halls, built of masonry or carved in solid rock, reserve the shapes and details of structures made of wood and roofed in thatch. A greater variety of such structures is depicted in relief carvings. Certain building types with distinctive roof forms stand out, which were clearly in common use for both secular and sacred purposes. These types, transformed into masonry, are the basis for the simpler forms of image housing shrines, which in turn are reflected in the early range of aedicules from which more complex temples are composed.²⁹

There are seven rock-cut chambers, four on Barabar hills and three on Nagarjuni hills in Bihar (Gaya). Archaeologically, these chambers are important as they are the earliest example of rock-cut technique copied from wood and thatch architecture. On the Barabar hills, Sudama and Lomas rishi caves are most significant

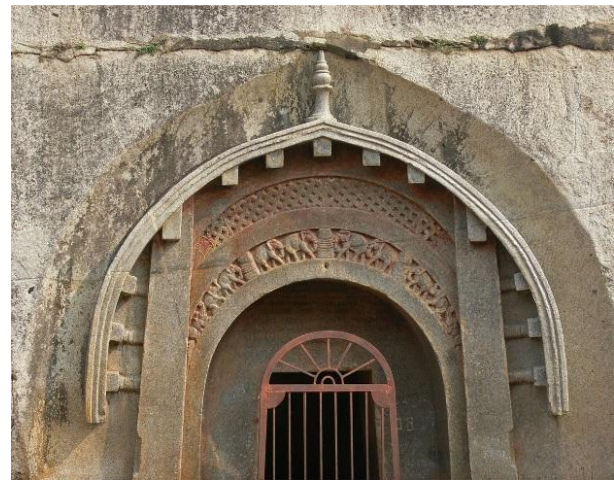


Figure 8: Facade of Lomas Rishi cave evidently displaying the wooden curvature into the rock supported by two upright beams © Archaeological Survey of India

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 24

²⁹ Hardy, Adam. (2007). *Temple Architecture of India*. Chichester: John Wiley. p. 15.

example. The doorways of both these chambers have been carved in the fashion of wooden arch.³⁰

As far the ground plan concerned, they are not different from one another. Both of these consist two parts-hall with barrel vaulted roof and separate circular cell with domical roof interior doorway in the centre at the end of hall. The exterior wall of Sudama cave has perpendicular grooves and it has an enamel like polish which is evidently a feature of Mauryan artistic excellent. The facade of Lomas Rishi cave appears to be the exact copy of wooden doorways.³¹

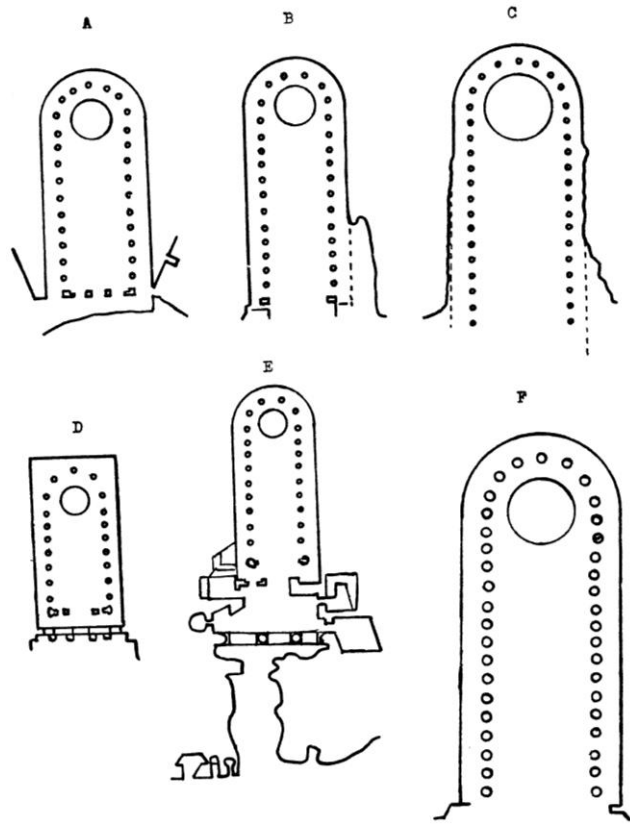


Figure 9: Floor Plans of Hinayana Chaityas
(A) Bhaja; (B) Kondane; (C) Pitalkhora No. 3; (D) Ajanta No. 9; (E) Bedsa; (F) Ajanta No. 10

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

These stone monuments imitate beam and rafter constructions and their reliefs depict houses and other buildings completely constructed in wood. The *toranas* (gateways) of the Buddhist stupa has its origin in a portal consisting of two wooden or bamboo uprights super-imposed by single wooden plaque which later on developed into three super imposed cross bar, made by banana stems for creating sacred space. Historically, the existence of palaces are mentioned by Megasthene (4th century B. C.) completely made of wood not of stone³².

³⁰ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2003). *Monumental Legacy: Ellora*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 1.

³¹ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, p. 46

³² Bakshi, S. R. (2008). *Architecture in Indian Sub-Continent*. Delhi: Vista International Publishing. p.2.

It has been generally accepted that the germs of monolithic carvings lay in the rock-cut Buddhist stupas³³. The genesis of monolithic architecture may be assumed from the dwelling units of monks, which later on developed as a centre of religion, trade and other cultural festivities. The pre-historic man also used the caves as a residential complex. The rock-cut architectural term may be introduced as manipulation of natural rock for the purpose of utility.³⁴

During the early phase of developments of the monolithic architecture, there are several sub-regional developments, which cover the activities under the rock-cut cave architecture in Indian sub-continent. Here need to be mentioned those activities of cave architecture as they can be regarded as **Genesis of monolithic architecture**.

Development process in rock-cut caves

As one can notice in many rock-cut caves, the carving technique was in developmental process throughout the phases of rock-cut architecture in the country³⁵. The rock-cut activities are mostly associated with Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu sects. The association of Buddhist monasteries along with the trade routes shows that these rock-cut caves were not only the place for meditation but were also exploited as trade centres by the traders. The chiselling out of resting places demonstrated the skill of artisans.³⁶

It seems that these artisans were deliberately associated with the religious system. It may be proposed that the philosophy working behind the excavation of caves was inspired from the *Vedic* philosophy which mentions „the deep

³³ Pathy, T.V. (1988). „Architectural Interaction among the Buddhist, the Jain, the Hindu Cave Temples at Ellora“ in the *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all). New Delhi: Books & Books. p. 369.

³⁴ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³⁵ Sundaram, K., *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46.

³⁶ Shukla, D. N., *op. cit.*, p. 483.

knowledge resides in caves". In the Atharva Veda³⁷, cave (*guha*) assumes the mystical meaning of the „secret, mysterious, concealed place“.

Arvaganyah paro anyo divaspristhad guha nidhi nihito brahmanasya I

*Tau rakshti tapasa brahmchari tat kevala krinute brahma vidvan II*³⁸

Bettina Baumer³⁹ has opined that „expressions like *guhachara, nihito guhayam* and the like the Agni in the Rig Veda (e.g. RV III: 11, 9) and they are transferred to the Atman in the Upanishads. Agni is born in secret and is hidden in the secret place (*guha*): Though you are hidden (*guha*), you are visible everywhere (*vishvadarshitam*), O auspicious One" (RV V:8, 3)".

During the Mauryan rule, the use of stone had become common for column and statues, the sort employed being sandstone, which was to survive for centuries. Buddhist stone relief of 1st century B.C. fortunately make an attempt to depict more ancient building which had been existed.⁴⁰ The apartments are cut along the face of the rocks and doorway of the latter carries at the top of arched shape framework imitating the pattern of the curved roof in wood. This series of caves indicate that the simplest form of such temples consisted of a circular cell or shrine alone. T. V. Sairam⁴¹ has pointed out – „with such simple beginnings, the cave-architecture in India attained great skill and impressiveness as in Ellora.

The narratives carved on the reliefs of the gateways and railings of the stupas such as Sanchi and Bharhut provide details about the wooden architecture of that period. City gates, huts, shrines, palaces have been depicted in detail. We can have a better idea about the wooden architecture into rock-cut

³⁷ Chand, Devi. (1982). *The Atharvaveda*. Delhi: Munshiram, Manoharlal. pp. 27,

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 506

³⁹ Baumer, Bettina. (1988). „From Guha to Akasa: The Mystical Cave in the Vedic and Shaiva Traditions, in the *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all). New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 62-63.

⁴⁰ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴¹ Sairam, T. V., *op. cit.*, p. 41.

architecture.⁴² These gateways are profusely carved, illustrating the Jataka stories and various episodes from the life of Buddha. The wooden buildings are shown as multi-storey shrines, pavilions, palaces with master strokes of the carpentry. The inhabitants of these wooden buildings are depicted peeping out of the balconies⁴³.

K. R. Srinivasan⁴⁴ has opined that “*With the predominantly brick and timber architecture of early times there arose movement at the time of Ashoka which resulted in series of temples and other religious resorts being excavated into living rock. Being made of more permanent material, these have survived to the present day*”. By the orders of the king, the carver imitated the contemporary thatch and brick structures to give an immortal expression of integrity in the living rock. All the architectural details of the period in their frontal and interior aspects were produced. This enables us to form an idea about the front and interiors of contemporary temples which were cut into rock and created partial or total imitations of structural examples. T. V. Sairam⁴⁵ also testifies the notion- „*the style with which the stone media has been treated so as to erect pillars, carve out friezes and architraves and built up facades and toranas reflect the translation of wood carving techniques on the stone medium.*” The Buddhist stupas, monasteries and *chaitya* halls grew up from 3rd century onwards along the ancient trade routes of India. It is well-known fact that Ashoka himself built stupas made of brick which were later encased by the stone during Śunga and Sātvāhanas period⁴⁶. The phase of rock architecture extended approximately over a period of more than a thousand years from the time of Ashoka, and is found scattered over different parts of India.

⁴² Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 74

⁴⁴ Srinivasan, K.R., pp.23-24.

⁴⁵ Sairam, T. V., *op. cit.*, p.23.

⁴⁶ Bakshi, S. R., *op. cit.*, p.4.

The well preserved stone railings of Bharhut stupa in Indian Museum Kolkata provide a pictorial representation of the contemporary wooden building. The narratives from Jatakas have been evidently depicted with perfection and continuation. The episodes in stone are so well carved that give a pictorial details of everyday life of the society. The flora and fauna, human figurines, rituals, shrines are well represented in the bas-relief of the railings. More interestingly, the images of Yakshas, Nagas etc. represent the synthesis between the Buddhist and Hindu religion⁴⁷.

The rock-cut *viharas* also transform timber detailing into stone but there is a limitation of copying the whole due to the inside out nature of the carving technique. These rock-cut shrines increasingly shared the tradition of the structural one⁴⁸.

The rock-cut architecture consists of pillars and pilasters representing the various wooden prototype such as erecting a wooden post into a *kalasha* full of water, serving both the purpose symbolic and utilitarian. The early *chaitya* halls are almost a replica in rock of wooden prototype is evident from their design and execution which are peculiar wooden architecture.⁴⁹

The rock architecture seems to appealing to different sects. It was not only a permanent/posterior material but was also immovable being a part of living rock. It provided a permanent shelter and impressed the people who were accustomed to reside in the houses made of wood, brick, reed, wattle and daub.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.82.

⁴⁹ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁵⁰ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p.10.

As there was not any previous example existed in rock-cut architecture, the only alternative was probably the wooden architecture to be copied. In earlier rock-cut examples, several forms and fitments were directly copied. The artisans reproduced arches, ribs to strengthen curved roof, pillar to support, lattice windows for light and ventilation and railings for the protection of the edifice. The wooden constructions had been a long part of architecture due to abundance of forests. The people developed skill in working on wood. The carpenter held a place of honour among the villagers as they were depended on his handiwork for routine goods. In Ellora there is a cave known as „Vishwakarma“ or carpenter“s cave⁵¹. It is well known fact that Vishwakarma is regarded as the God of carpenter community in India which also celebrated every year as Vishwakarma Day.

Architectural forms

The architectural forms varied across India due to the availability of the raw materials. It is quite possible and evident that the vernacular wooden architecture influenced the later rock-cut architecture throughout the Indian sub-continent. Especially, the Buddhist monuments were predominantly decorated by the wooden impression in the rock. In early reliefs of stupa at Sanchi, square, circular and rectangular huts have been depicted altogether.⁵²

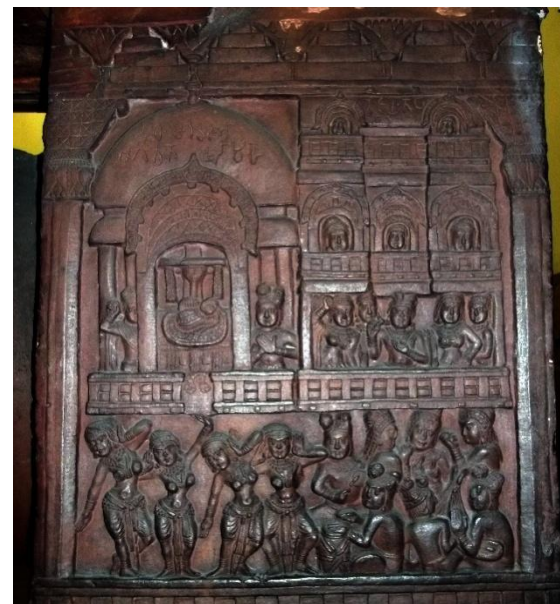


Figure 10: A bas-relief from Bharhut showing multi –storey prasada the open pavilions © Archaeological Survey of India
Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

⁵¹ Jauhari, Manorama. (1969). *South India and its Architecture*. Varanasi: Bhartiya Vidya Prakashn. p.37.

⁵² Tadmell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

On the frame of bowed bamboo conical roof takes shape in centre as pot-shaped finial. Some of them are gable ended apsidal and semi-cylindrical. In Vedic literature the most commonly used material was wattle and daub. The reliefs also depicts the work in brick and tile. Buddhism, however, frequently used the sacred enclosure *vedika* (railing) as mentioned in Vedic literature⁵³.

These sacred railings were used for the uninterrupted Vedic rituals which later developed as protection palisade for the village. Actually, it symbolizes traditional ritual of circumambulation which is still followed in case of Hindu temples as *pradakshina*⁵⁴ (circumambulation) of sanctum. The evolution of rock-cut architecture was based on the munificent grants by the king as evident in case of Lomas rishi and Sudma rishi caves along with caves at Nagarjuni hills. On establishing *chaityas* and *viharas* Tadgell⁵⁵ says, „*Beyond the everyday sustenance provided by laity, rich patrons endowed the Sangha with estates for sanctuary during the rainy season.*“ A relief from Bharhut, the „Palace of the Gods“⁵⁶, shows the *vihara* as a multi-storey *prasada* (palace) and the attached shrine as a canopy like *chhattri* (umbrella), the three jewels of Buddhism viz., 1. Buddha 2. Dharma and 3. Sangha. It was the need of the Buddhist sect to distinguish lay followers and monks. To demarcate line, they developed congregational halls inside and outside the *viharas*. The relief shown in the picture show open pillared pavilions (*mandapa*) in adjacent to a *chaitya*.⁵⁷

During the Satvahanas reign, the Sangha flourished with the support of traders. The monasteries building and chaityas proliferated to a larger extent. Apart from the stupa, monasteries are the most impressive remains in the living rock. The Western Ghats became the centre of rock-cut activities due to the routes for

⁵³ Kail, Owen C. *op. cit.* p.17.

⁵⁴ Sairam, T. V., *op. cit.* p.57.

⁵⁵ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p.12

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 13

⁵⁷ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-7.

the potential followers and patrons linked with Sopara and Arabian seaports.⁵⁸ As a result of this, more than a thousand excavations came into being. Among these most famous are: Bhaja, Nasik, Junnar, Bedsa, Karle, Kanheri, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Aurangabad, Ellora and Ajanta. Each of these site has at least one *chaitya-griha* and several *viharas*. These are situated with each other in consistency⁵⁹. These caves represent the finest skill of the craftsmen chiseling from top to bottom till finishing of each section before starting new⁶⁰. The multi-storey structures, railings, terraces, balconies, lattice windows etc. ones which were predominantly produced in the timber work were literally translated into the living rock.



Figure 11: Chaitya Hall at Bedsa

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The transition can be seen in case of *chaitya* hall at Kondane is somewhat like Sudama Rishi in plan but its *chaitya* hall is domical and its hall is flat roofed. Lomas Rishi and Sudama Rishi *chaitya-griha* have barrel vaulted halls.⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 8

⁵⁹ Shukla, D. N., *op. cit.*, p. 486.

⁶⁰ Dayalan, D. (1995). *Monolithic Temples of Madhya Pradesh*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. pp. 96-97.

⁶¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3.

Rock-cut counterparts of wooden circular shrines are also seen in the Tulaja Lena group of Junnar and in a cave at Guntupalli⁶². The rock-cut *chaitya* at Guntupalli has the small circular chamber which explains the kind of shelter that was first erected over the stupa- the beginning of the *chaitya* hall.⁶³

It is circular hut imitated in rock with a domed roof of thatch resting on framework resembling an inverted wooden basket and a monolithic stupa in the centre for worship.⁶⁴ A passage for circumambulation and a porch in front of its doorway have been carved nicely. Similar imitation of timber including the *torana* (arch/gateway) above the lintel has been carved as a porch.⁶⁵

The Tulaja Lena cave at Junnar is also an excavation after the model of a circular *chaitya*. This mode of rock architecture shifted in the next century mainly to the softer trap formations of the hills of western India. Between 200 BCE and 200 CE, a number of Buddhist excavations were made in this region⁶⁶



Figure 12: Facade for Bhaja caves
Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

⁶² Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

⁶³ Brown, Percy. (1956). *Indian Architecture* (Buddhist and Hindu Periods). Bombay: D.B Taraporewala Sons and Company. *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period*, p. 36.

⁶⁴ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 25

⁶⁶ Chopra, P. N. (1976). *India: Art and Architecture in Ancient and Medieval Period*. Delhi: Mcmillan. pp. 7-8.

Rock-cut *chaitya* shrines of Western India may be divided into two groups representing two phases of development, *Hinyana* and *Mahayana*. Among these two kinds of structure, the *chaitya* hall and the *vihara* that were copied in the rock-cut manner, the more importance was given to the *chaitya* hall.⁶⁷ There are eight of these belonging to the *Hinayana* period as follows: Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Ajanta (no. 10), Bedsa, Ajanta (no. 9), Nasik and Karle, most probably executed in the order named⁶⁸. The two at Ajanta are part of that long series of both *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* monasteries all on one site comprising altogether as many as four *chaitya* halls and over twenty *viharas*.⁶⁹

All these seems to be excavated just previous to the Christian era, the first four in the second century BCE, and the remainder in the first century BCE. Two *chaitya* halls from Junnar, one of which is small but complete while the other is unfinished, may be added into this group. The *chaitya* hall at Kanheri executed towards the middle of the second century CE on the island of Salsette adjacent to Bombay seemingly marks the end of the *Hinayana* movement as far as its rock-architecture is concerned⁷⁰.

It may be noticed that *chaitya* hall of Bhaja represents the initial effort more convincingly. The entrance has an open archway, bringing the entire interior of the hall into view owing to the action of time and the climate. It seems that the open spaces were filled in with a highly finished and appropriate wooden construction, which completely screened the lower portion.⁷¹ It also affected to a little extent the appearance of the upper parts of the facade. It is possible to reconstruct the scheme of wooden frontage from the shape and position of the

⁶⁷ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁶⁸ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 22-23.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 24.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.115.

⁷¹ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

mortice⁷² holes. The two uprights fitting into each side of the rock-cut archway the cross piece being a horizontal beam connecting them and holding them into position. The lower half was filled in by a screen containing one central and two side doorways, while above the cross-beam was projected a hanging balcony on four pillars.⁷³

The replication of woodwork was done profusely in the interior of the hall of Bhaja. It is evident by the roof ribs as well as the finial of stupa its umbrella being originally of wood. But even with these have an austere appearance, although its proportions are good.⁷⁴ As to the *stupa* this central feature in its present condition is a plain conception in two simple parts consisting of a cylindrical base supporting a tall domical body with a railing finial. It seems that the stupa along with most of the parts of the hall were freely decorated with paintings, plasters and wooden embellishments.⁷⁵

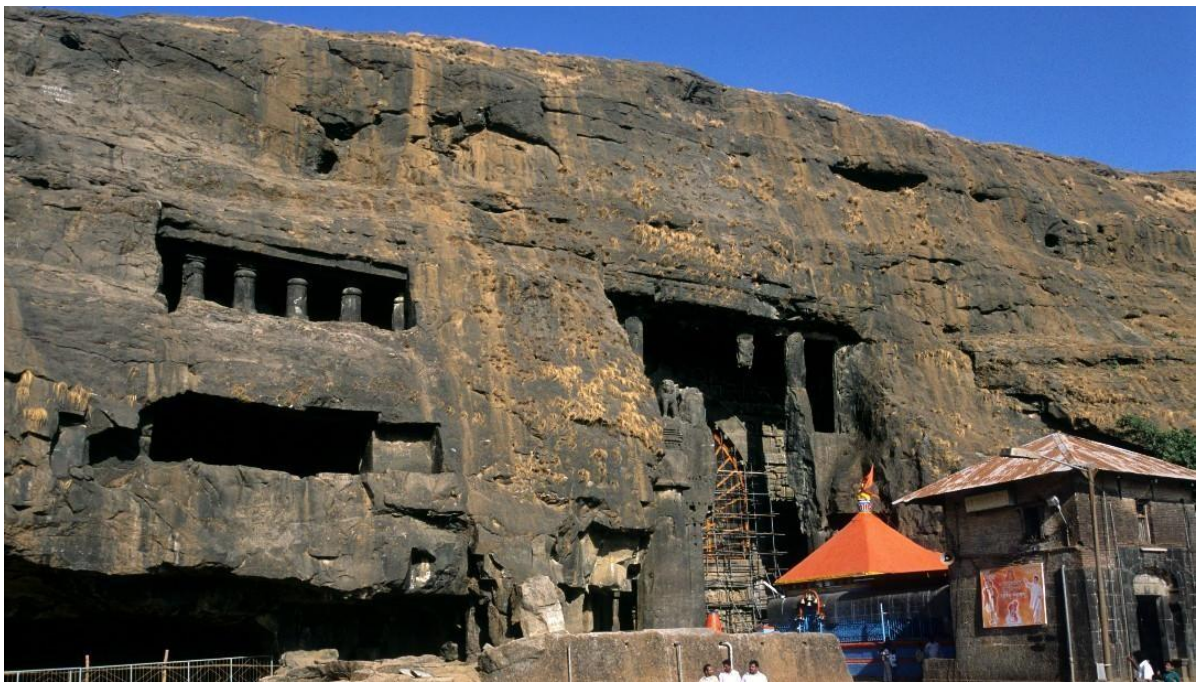


Figure 13: Frontal view of Karle caves

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

⁷² A square hole made to receive a tenon and to form a joint.

⁷³ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, pp. 72-74.

⁷⁴ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵ Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

An identical design of a Buddhist shrine of two apartments is evident by a cave at Kondane where the semi-circular chamber at the back has been carved out to contain a votive *chaitya*⁷⁶. The design of the circular sanctuary preceded by a hall seems to be a transitional stage in the evolution of the *chaitya* shrine of apsidal form. This is a noticeable bold move in driving apsidal halt axially into the depth of the rock.⁷⁷

In the case of the Pitalkhora, another advance in the development may be seen in roof-ribs in the side-aisles. These are carved out of the rock, evidently a further attempt to reduce the wooden attachment⁷⁸.



Figure 14: Chaitya Hall at Junnar

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The next class of *chaitya* halls, judging mainly by the design and treatment of the facade, Ajanta (no.9) and Pandulena at Nasik are the two principal

⁷⁶ Dulari, Qureshi, *op. cit.*, p.10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 11

⁷⁸ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

examples, as both have no wooden additions to their frontage, the whole having been carved out of the rock⁷⁹.

The Ajanta facade is a well- balanced design. It has a doorway in the centre and a window on either side. These windows are carved above by an elegant cornice thrown out on brackets like a shallow portico. Over this is the rood-loft⁸⁰, a sill or ledge used as minstrel gallery, and rising above the whole is the sun window within a *chaitya* arch of graceful curves⁸¹.

On the flat surface around the archway are carved as objects of decoration several small lattice windows, conventional renderings of the projecting casements copied so realistically from wooden originals as seen on the previous type at Bhaja and Kondane⁸².

As already mentioned the plan of this hall is a rectangle and the ceiling on the side aisles. The other example of this class, the Pandulena cave at Nasik can also be added with the unfinished Manmoda⁸³ *chaitya* hall at Junnar, although both differ considerably in

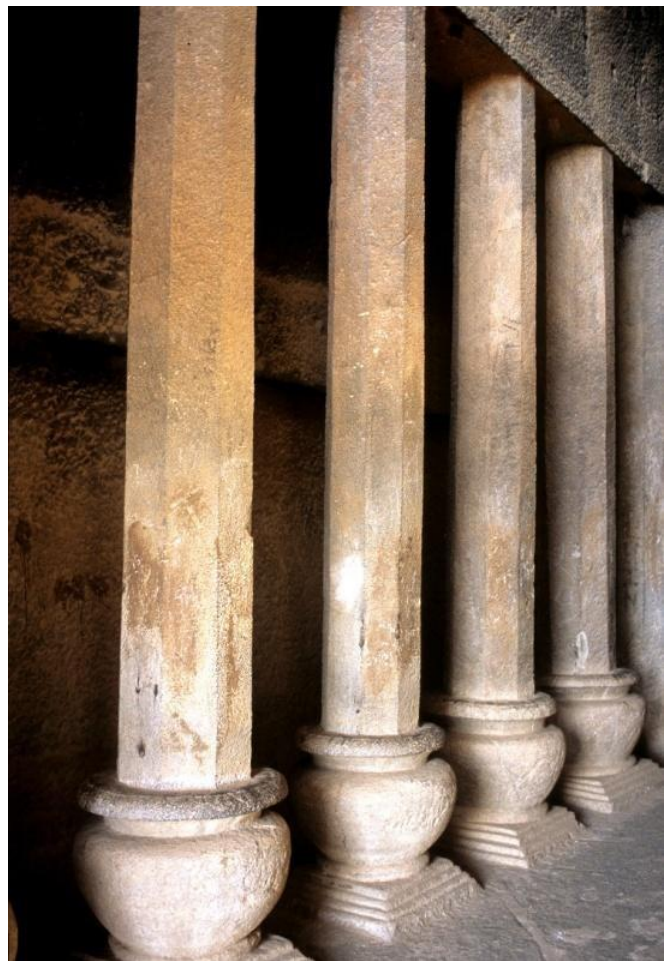


Figure 15: Ghatpallav pillars in Nasik caves
Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

⁷⁹ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

⁸⁰ A cross on a beam or screen at the entrance

⁸¹ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

⁸² Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, pp.10-11.

⁸³ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, pp. 102-03.

their details. In both instances a lunette carved with symbolic design, in the Pandulena this is above the doorway, but in the Manmoda it fills the upper space of the archway over the sun window. In both frontages the decoration, the rock edifices at Pandulene, Nasik and the *chaitya* hall at Junnar have the similarity of being carved out of the rock and they bear no portico or vestibules.⁸⁴



Figure 16: Wooden attachments depicted in stone at Kondane

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

At Pandulene sculptures are in relief then in an arcade containing pilasters. The caves at Nasik decorate the pillar to separate them from the conventional impression of posts. They introduced in some of the rudimentary capital in the form of a square abacus.⁸⁵ In this phase the attention was paid to the base of the pillars than to the capital, as it can be postulated by the evidence of pot shaped

⁸⁴ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.* p. 23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 24.

base. It is a replication of embedding a post in a pot to protect its lower part from insects or the damp. The pillars of this *chaitya* hall are not rudimentary in shape instead they are tall and slender covering diameter of one eighth of their height.⁸⁶

The next group, Bedsa and Karle, there are two very good examples mentioned by Percy Brown,⁸⁷ one of the very fine examples of the maturity of the earlier phase. The basic difference is in facade. In both instances, the exterior takes the form of a massive part carved out of the rock face and serving as a kind of vestibule to the arcaded screen in its rear. One of Bedsa, that is probably the earlier one, is composed of two columns between pilasters and it is guarded by the masses of rock left in the rough on either side⁸⁸.

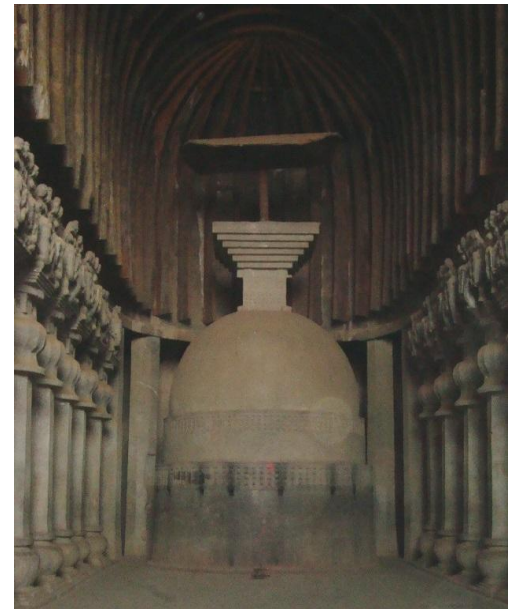


Figure 17: A chaitya hall at Karle, showing the wooden roof imprint and ghatpallava motif courtesy Archaeological Survey of India

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The design and execution of the pillars and pilasters of the portico make the facade a remarkable structure. They act as supports to the main beam of the roof. The peculiarity is that all in one solid piece as the entire frontage is carved out of the natural rock. The monolithic pillar of Maurayan period transformed in terms of their style. The earlier was plain but now in octagonal shape. The identical features like vase-shaped base (*ghatpallav*) the symbols of Buddhism denotes the architectural innovations and indigenous attribute⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 25

⁸⁷ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-24.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 26

⁸⁹ Sundaram, K., *op. cit.*, p.44.

Though the hall is small in size, being 45.5 feet long and 21 feet wide but having traces of painting on *stupa* and pillars. This work of craftsmanship in rock is exceptionally vivid in terms of beams, binding joist and imitation of wood work in stone.⁹⁰

In comparison to the Buddhist rock-cut temples the rock shrines belonging to Jainas are not on a large scale⁹¹. A group of caves in the hills of the Khandagiri and Udayagiri in Puri district of Odisha represent the earliest



Figure 18: Ranigumpha Cave

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
New Delhi

examples of the rock-cut building. These sandstone hills are situated on the either side of a narrow gorge. According to the inscription in the cave known as Ranigumpha on the Udayagiri hill is about 160 B.C⁹². The difference from the Buddhist rock-cut dwellings can easily be noticed here. These cells are having the *varanda* (courtyard) in front and does not have central hall with cells like their Buddhist counterpart. It seems that these cells are excavated at convenient spots at different heights and connected with the rock-cut staircases⁹³. A few sites like Badami, Aihole and Ellora may also be named.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 45

⁹¹ Shukla, D. N., *op. cit.*, p.485.

⁹² Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-02.

⁹³ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p.29.



Figure 19: Elephanta Cave

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The Gupta Vakataka rock-cut architecture

As we have already noticed, the oldest stone temples of India belong to a period when Buddhism was at its zenith. The Hindu temple took a more durable shape only at a later date with the re-emergence of the Hindu religion due to the rich patronage of the Gupta dynasty. Construction pattern and technique of these Hindu temples show a great deal of Buddhist influence. Buddhism was not, however, free from the Hindu impact. At the same time or even earlier the Hindu concepts had started making tremendous inroads into the Buddhism which resulted in the emergence of a new Buddhist order, the *Mahayana* Buddhism. The Buddhist structural influence is surprisingly more intense as one could see it on the South Indian super-structure.

The difference from the Buddhist rock-cut dwellings can easily be noticed here. These cells are having the *varandah* (courtyard) in front and does not have

central hall with cells like their Buddhist counterpart. Even the height and width of these cells are not sufficient as the latter having in any example elsewhere. It seems that these cells are excavated at convenient spots at different heights and connected with the rock-cut staircases.

In the fifth century the art was augmented at the early Hindu temples of Deogarh, Bhitargaon and those erected under Vakataka influences as exemplified by sculptures preserved at Paun Ashram of Shri Vinoba Bhave near Nagpur and at the Hindu rock excavations at Udayagiri⁹⁴. Many of the caves at Kanheri have elaborate reliefs. Caves 17 and 26 at Ajanta mark a definite shift away from the art of painting in the direction of sculptural panels.

Gupta dynasty progressively marks the beginnings of the new phase of the rock-cut architecture. It is most important to note here that the architecture of the period represents the skill of the artisans in terms of composition of architectural elements. Gupta temples between 4th to 6th centuries CE are marvellous in the history of Indian architecture. The rock cut chambers at Udayagiri seem to be the earliest rock-cut temples belonging to the Hindu lineage. These may also be taken as an early example of initiation of rock cut activities for a Hindu temple. The nine cells, though not completely carved out, have been assigned to reign of King Chandragupta II (382-401 CE)⁹⁵.

According to N. L. Mathur, “*The Gupta age saw the revival of Brahmanism which found full expression in the carving of Brahmanical divinities*”⁹⁶. Cave groups of Bagh, Kolvi, Dhamner and Udayagiri need to be mentioned here in the Central India. Though first three are of Buddhist group and fourth one is of Hindu in nature. Cave temples at Udayagiri hills, one of which bears

⁹⁴ Berkson, Carmel. (1983). *Elephanta: The Cave of Shiva*. Delhi: Oxford University. p. 5.

⁹⁵ Mahajan, Malti, *A Gate to Ancient Indian Architecture*, pp. 80-82.

⁹⁶ Mathur, N.L., *Sculpture in India: its History & Art*, pp. 20-21.

inscriptions of 401 CE, has some sculptures representing the incarnation of Vishnu as *Varaha* (boar) and also river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna. The massive rock-cut relief is simple and monumental thronged with gods, men and celestial beings. It is one of the fine representations of the *bhudevi uddhar* (rescuing the earth goddess) scene in which earth is rescued from the waters by the *Varaha* God. This depiction of Boar God is an example of the mastery of the artisan who not only personified him well but also the size and proportions of the other characters are contrasted well to the deity. The earth goddess raised from the depths of the primeval sea is depicted on the right side of the God. On two sides are carved Ganga and Yamuna descending from the heaven and then flowing in to the sea. The two rivers join together and enter the sea where they are received by the God of sea personified as a male figure.

After the decline of Vakatakas and their allies the Guptas, the Deccan was captured by early Kalchuris of Maharashtra and Early Chalukyas of Badami by the middle of 6th century A.D.⁹⁷. They were responsible for the flowering of Hindu architectural traditions beyond Gupta domain. The Pallavas of Kanchipuram subdued Cholas by 4th Century CE, and later defeated the Ikshvakus of Andhradesha.

Elephanta Caves

The other magnificent cave temple is Elephanta. For centuries. It had been a commercial, military, and religious centre, and it still has traces of the early Buddhist culture. With the resurgence of the Brahmanical religion the great cave, dedicated solely to Shiva, came into existence. In this regard Walter Spink has opined that this cave edifice was constructed by the Kalchuris in the mid sixth century⁹⁸. There is so much made of Kalachuri Kings particularly

⁹⁷ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-77.

⁹⁸ Berkson, Carmel, *op. cit.*, p.5.

Sankaragana and Krishnaraja being devout worshippers of Maheshvara „from the very birth“ as seen in the inscriptions⁹⁹.

The plan of cave is much similar like a Buddhist monastery with its cells for living aligned along three walls of a square court. As the worship of the figure of Buddha began to be encouraged with the development of Mahayana Buddhism, a shrine was introduced to house this image, replacing cells at the center of the back wall. All the later monasteries at Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad are built in this way. These more elaborate monasteries lead us directly toward Elephanta. The halls, columns, varying in number, are positioned in a square which permits circumambulation between the columns and the cell walls. It seems that same family of craftsmen and sculptors were employed in the construction of Brahmanical and Buddhist shrines.¹⁰⁰

At Jogeshwari near Bombay, the idea of square shrine is linked to an earlier structure, the fifth century temple at Deogarh. This temple is a square structure situated atop a square terrace. Three doors are provided for entrance. Even today, within the *chaturmukha* (four-doored) shrine, the priest at Jogeshwari still moves ritually from door to door chanting and ringing his bell. But the walls at Jogeshwari are solid.¹⁰¹

It was the architect of Elephanta who first conceived the idea of opening the temple to the outside on three sides. It permitted and encouraged subtle transitions from light to dark and vice versa. Sunlight entering from so many directions and changing from moment to moment and season to season defines the nature of the experience here and later at Dumarlena at Ellora.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Rajan, K. V. Soundara. (1980). *Art of South India-Deccan*. Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan. pp. 144.

¹⁰⁰ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 281.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 282

¹⁰² Burgess, James. (1972). *Elura Cave Temples*. Varanasi: Indological Books. p. 47-48.

The profuse alterations in the shadings of light are more integrally involved with the space and mass of the cave. Keeping the idea of the Buddha shrine in the back wall and the original front veranda, the architect replaced the side cells and walls of the monastery with verandas. No doubt, the cave was the creation of an unknown genius, a master architect.¹⁰³

He must have mastery over traditions of the carving of independent freestanding sculpture and rock-cut architecture. The continuation from the past can be traced in composition, iconography, *puranic* narratives, spatial arrangement, style and use of mathematically precise measurements for figures and architecture.¹⁰⁴

The achievements of the Elephanta artists represent an abrupt departure from the past. Its ultimate synthesis of infinitely diversified and mobile forms with new modes of expressions and metaphysical conceptions of deity are a step ahead from the previous architectural traditions.¹⁰⁵

The Pallava and Chalukyas rock-cut Architecture

During the sixth century CE, the two Great empires- Chalukyas of Badami and the Pallavas of Kanchi in Deccan and Southern India respectively had ushered in an era of vigorous temple activities, reflecting in its mores the mingling of forms and ideals.¹⁰⁶

The dominant period of Pallava started with the reign of Mahendravarmana I (580-630 CE). He was a Jaina, but his conversion to Shaivism proved to be a disaster for Jainism. He was the one who initiated the Hindu rock –cut tradition in Southern peninsula. Mahendravarman lost Andhradesha after defeated by the

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 49

¹⁰⁴ Shukla, D.N., *op. cit.*, p. 242.

¹⁰⁵ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 291-294.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 295

great Chalukyan King Pulakesin II (610-642 CE). But later on, Narsimhavarman I Mamalla (630-668 CE) regained some of their lost territories and occupied Badami in 642 CE.¹⁰⁷

Adam Hardy has conducted a deep study on Indian architecture which refers to various architectural developments in the subcontinent. He has categorized the architectural traditions broadly in the two great classical language of Indian temple architecture, the northern Nagara and southern Dravida, draw on this common legacy. They were formed and differentiated during the 6th and 7th century CE Nagara and Dravida may be called as styles, but they cover vast area and time spans.¹⁰⁸

Two relatively example simple example can be used as an illustration at this point. First, the Bhutanatha temple stands on a promontory built out into the tank at Badami, the early Chalukya capital. It is a Dravida temple of modest dimensions. The shrine itself has the Dravida pyramidal outline –here with three *talas* (levels) and contains the dark, cubical sanctum to house the principle image of the deity.¹⁰⁹

The spires of the shore temples at Mahabalipuram (mid-seventh century) actually form the precursor to the later versions of *vimana*. It seems to be inspired from the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya. The latter seems to be only example survived in Gangetic plain dates back to the Mauryan regime. It was built around *vajrasana* constituting of seven storeys which used to accommodate monks and scholars. Its aesthetic sense was copied in regional architecture by the Pallavas who ignored its utility. This shore temple depicts a *vimana* which is having seven storeys not for utility but for beauty.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28.

¹⁰⁸ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 17

¹¹⁰ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 20

In Dravidian shrine (vimana) the lower tiers support horizontal bands or cloisters (*haras*) of pavilions based on timber prototypes. The pavilions at the corners being square, domed ones (*kutas*), the central pavilions being rectangular and barrel roofed (*shalas*). The crowning element is at the top in isolation-would be described as large *kuta*. The pairing of pilasters under the *kutas* and *shalas* are integral parts.¹¹¹



Figure 20: A view of Shore Temple of Mahabalipuram

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi

The elements of the Chalukyan and other southern cave temples, primarily depicting the *sala*, *kuta* and *panjara*, are again presented in the Brahmanical caves around Bombay. These caves, however generally vary in Buddhist examples at Ajanta and Ellora. The internal unity of *mandapesvar*, Elephanta,

¹¹¹ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

Jogesvari of Bombay, Ramesvara (Ellora) and Dhumarlena (Ellora) are well known.¹¹²

They are totally different from the Buddhist groups which, however, have an internal commonness among themselves. It shows the several stages of development. It has to be inferred from this that pillar and layout details changed quickly within even one decade, as is sometimes being proclaimed in successive stages of Ajanta and Elephanta-Jogesvari.¹¹³

Moreover, it can be said that the same sculptors had actually been commissioned. Although it could be true that craftsman for Vidarbaha may have been involved at Kanheri, the same cannot be automatically predicated to the Brahmanical monuments. It can be inferred that craftsmen were easily switching over from Buddhist to Brahmanical carvings around Bombay.¹¹⁴ In this case, Brahmanical cave-architecture is not a finite evolutionary stage in temple arts but a prestigious departure from structural erections, for which the environment around Bombay or around Ellora was into yet found conducive. It was only given to the Rashtrakutas to visualize and concretize the temple models such as Ellora monoliths even in the trap mass.¹¹⁵

The caves at Elephanta, Jogesvari and Ellora (early phase) were styled for Brahmanical gods and on Brahmanical temple models. It may be presumed that prototypes were existing in brick or stone. The architecture of Elephanta shows development, integration and elaboration over a fairly long and mutually related period and cannot be the command of the single king. Nor is *pasupatism* the overwhelming keynote of the cave temples under reference.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 72

¹¹⁴ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *The art of South India*, p. 139.

¹¹⁵ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p.

¹¹⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara. (1980). *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40.

They bring Shiva, Karttikeya, Ganesa, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Kalyanasundara and Saptamatrikas in an integrated framework which was part of a prevailing hieratic temple formula. They are the resonant, creative articulations of kings who had a plan and a purpose to propagate Agamic Brahmanical religious art at its best, of Vaishnava and Shaiva.¹¹⁷

The Chalukyas of Vatapi erected the multitudinous edifices and structural excavations in that age and simultaneously Elephanta and Ellora cave can be attributed. Jogesvari, on the other hand, implies a long period of excavations and virtually should have got completed only by the time of the Chalukya-Rashtrakuta transition.

The main cave at Dharasiva¹¹⁸ particularly so clearly patterned after the Mahayana shrine cave of Ajanta has its much later use for Jainism. From an art historical point of view, Mandapeshwar, Elephanta and Jogesvari seem to be from one cohesive group in that order. And it would be artificial and unsound to isolate Elephanta without the study of Mandapeshwar or Jogeshvari. It would also be difficult to sustain the assumption that Ajanta or Jogesvari layout has something in common with both the religions concerned.¹¹⁹

Further, sculptural forms of Deccan were strongly influenced by the artistic style of the Pallavas. It is characterised by tall and slender figures which could be distinguished easily from their Orissan or Vindhayan counterparts. Female forms are slim, with narrow waists and small shoulders. The breasts are well-rounded but smaller.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 141.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 142.

¹¹⁹ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, p. 65-70.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 71



Figure 21: Division of the facade of cave in double storey style

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

They wear fewer ornaments and garments. The male figures are somewhat heavier with broad shoulders, supported on elongated torso. Less attention is paid to the expression of emotions through facial movements, pose and gestures. These descriptions apply both to human and divine forms. In fact, this trait has been carried over for several centuries down South as evident in the various bronze figures of later dates.¹²¹

Development Dravidian monolithic temple

Temples built all over India may not be classified at some points of overlapping of certain characteristics due to interaction of different cultures and intermingling of artisans belonging to different regions. Places of worship consecrated to various religions, their sects and sub-sects in different parts of

¹²¹ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 1-5.

the country exhibit a variety which is again a highly typical feature of this land.¹²²

Monolithic temples at Mahabalipuram

The same way the religious thoughts could evolve with permutations and considerations of old concepts and the fresh ones. So was here a discernible line of evolution in the temple structures, which, while adopting certain basic traits also started incorporating several new feature. Fortunately, the possibility of synthesis of cultural and regional diversities among the shifting populations which alone could bring about an enlargement of scope for innovations, within the bounds of traditions which are no doubt, powerful and greatly influential.

T. V. Sairam¹²³ has done a wonderful work on the literary tradition of architecture he says “Manasara and the Kashyapa, the treatises on architecture, profusely describe the construction principles and forms of Vimana. Manasara recognizes *vimanas* up to twelve storeys, Kasyapa describe sixteen storeys to the extent. A *vimana* may be round or contain four, six or eight sides. The form of the edifice may be uniformly the same from the basement up to the spire. There are three types distinguishable on the basis of the construction medium:¹²⁴

1. Sudha-constituting of a single material
2. Mishra- consisting of two materials and
3. Sanchirana- of three or more material

There are again three sorts of *vimana*, distinguishable on the basis of the dominance of height, breadth and *sayana* length. It can be seen that these shapes are generally in accordance with posture of the idol installed in *vimana*.¹²⁵

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 7

¹²³ Sairam, T. V., *op. cit.*, pp. 22-46.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 48

¹²⁵ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 74-79.

The archaeological evidences postulates that the Southern *vimana* development must have originated from a more primitive *kuta vimana* (vimana with a prominent spire carrying a single stupid or finial). Leading to *sabha* type *vimana* (superstructure) having vault like or inverted bat-shaped spire carrying a series of *stupies* (pinnacle).¹²⁶

The simplest possible *Dravidavimana*¹²⁷ (shrine) is a prototype of primitive hut with just a base, a wall and a roof, even today, many village shrines are of this type. In case of group of *Rathas*¹²⁸, the only one known in monumentalized form is Draupadi's *ratha* at Mahabalipuram. The basic class of Dravida temple comprises of a sanctum crowned by a pavilion in one form or another of domed *kuta* or barrel roofed known as *shala*. The lower tiers support horizontal bands or cloisters (*haras*) of pavilions based on timber prototypes¹²⁹. The pavilions at the corners being square, domed ones (*kutas*), the central pavilions being rectangular and barrel roofed (*shalas*). The crowning element is at the top in isolation-would be described as large *kuta*. The pairing of pilasters under the *kutas* and *shalas* are integral parts¹³⁰. Such shrines, as mentioned earlier, representation in stone of contemporary perishable material¹³¹. Probably the earliest surviving full-size square *alpa-vimana*¹³² is a small, sandstone shrine in front of the Ravana Phadi cave at Aihole (early 7th century)¹³³. This tradition later on developed into highly stylized edifices both structural and rock-cut.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 80

¹²⁷ Hardy, Adam *op. cit.*, p.126.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 127

¹²⁹ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, p.77.

¹³⁰ Hardy, Adam *op. cit.*, p. 206-7.

¹³¹ Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, p. 96.

¹³² Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.* p.206-07

¹³³ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, p. 76

Ratha Group of Temples

N. L. Mathur elaborates on the development “*Gradually, in Tamil Nadu, by the time of Pallavas, during 7th century CE, the layout of a temple had been settled. This is known from the vast body of the literature known as Tevaram and Nalayiradivya prabandham. These are basically outpouring of saints of Shaivism and Vaishnavism, surcharged with spirituality who visited the various shrines and sang about them. The references to the terms like mata, malikai, kuta, kopuram in Tevaram portray the layout of the temples. Accordingly, mata was the sanctum; malikai was the hall in front of the sanctum and kopuram, the entrance structure. Matm meant a raised dwelling and hence matakkoil was a temple with high platform*”¹³⁴.

Narsimhavarman 1 (630-668 CE), known as Mahamalla of the Pallava dynasty was a great patron of architecture and further in his lineage Narsimhavarman II (680-720) who had a peaceful reign several temples were built during his time. One of striking example is Kailashnath Temple at Mahabalipuram. In terms of creating monumental wealth, Pallavas in Southern India created a landmark in the history of architecture. It seems that the artistic style was inspired by the art of Amravati¹³⁵.

The accentuated tubular form of the limbs has given the impression on the temple architecture of Pallava domain. Further Stella Kramrich¹³⁶ observes, “Into their South Indian sculptures went something of floating impetuosity of long limbed figures of Amravati”. The rock-cut cave temples at Mahabalipuram are an expression of artistic genuine at creating monolithic temple from the living rock. Due to style and experimentation of Dharamraja mandapa is thought to be the earliest among the others. As given earlier example of

¹³⁴ Mathur, N.L. (1972). *Sculpture in India: its History & Art*. New Delhi: Caxton Press. p. 31.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 32

¹³⁶ Kramrisch, Stella. (1954). *The Art of India*. London: Phaidon Press. p. 38.

Udayagiri caves, the Varah mandapa is an outstanding representation of asymmetrical arrangement of carved figures where Vishnu is shown lifting the earth from the cosmic ocean. In *Mahisha mandapa*, the fury and ferocity of the Mahishsura is beautifully represented. Another impressive panel depicts Vishnu as resting on *Sheshanaga*. Dr. N. L. Mathur¹³⁷ observes “*The tranquillity and repose as shown in Vishnu’s sleep is a marvel of plastic art*”.



Figure 22: Ratha Temples of Mahabalipuram
Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The panel of Krishna in Panch Pandva cave proportionally depicts the Goverdhana lifted by Krishna. In another panel, the scene of milking cows in Brindavana has been carved aesthetically. It may, however, be taken as representation of the Hindu epics in living rocks. The structural edifices seem to be inspired by the Buddhist example of the Jatakas representation variously found at Ajanta and other cave temples in India.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Mathur, N. L., *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 32

The craftsmen further took a step experimenting to create monolithic temples or these may be treated as prototype of creating monolithic marvel at Ellora as an antecedent. The eight rock-cut Rathas- Dharamraja, Arjuna, Bhima, Sahadeva, Draupadi, Ganesha, Valiyan-Kuttai, Pidari, however, may not be created in same order stands side by side.¹³⁹

The Rathas are beautifully carved and the sculptures on them represent the Hindu mythology. The reference may be given of carved images of bull, lion and elephant, the vehicle of Shiva, Durga and Indra respectively. The influence of Amravati art can easily be noticed here in terms of the movements and expressiveness of poses and gestures. The tubular exaggeration of the thinness of the arms and legs, heart shaped faces and high cheekbones represents a new dimension in the plasticity of the art as a precursor of forthcoming developments in monolithic architecture.¹⁴⁰



Figure 23: Lion cave at Mahabalipuram

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

¹³⁹ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁰ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 304-06

The Dharamrja Ratha is the tallest among all. On its base, there are four corner blocks each with the two niches carved with the images of *Harihara*, *Brahma* and *Skanda*. One niche portrays King Narsimhavarman with a conical crown. The upper balcony of *Ratha* having a series of relief figures of Shiva. The Ardhnarishwara image of the Rudra is very impressive.¹⁴¹

Draupadi Ratha seems to be more elegant in this group. The dwar-kanyakas figures are lively depicted on the panels on each side of the doorjambs. The open air carving in relief on the rock surface is like an artistic expression of a canvas.

The decent of Ganges does not look like a work of novice, but a masterly realism. The 90 x 23 feet granite boulder was chosen to mark the skill of the artisan. The grandeur of the expression imbibed into the carving of relief is remarkably satisfies the thirst of the lover of art. Bhagirath is depicted on his one leg for the descent of the River Ganges. Here, Shiva is shown bestowing boon.¹⁴²



Figure 24: Rock-cut panel bears the various narratives from Hindu Mythology

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 307

¹⁴² Huntington, Susan, L. *op. cit.*, pp. 296-304.

Thus, these representations of densely populated containing various life-size figures are marked by natural expressions. The whole scene of overflowing water genuinely transformed into the living scene of Himalyas. The depiction of Naga couple cuddling in the middle of the stream is a natural representation. A Brahman is shown going back to home with a pot of water on one of his shoulders. A deer approaches the stream to appease its thirst. Above are two swans" plunges into the water. Such a realistic picture of the nature imagined and carved at this rock is an example of highly skilled artisans.¹⁴³

One remarkable scene which attracts is performing the penance of numerous ascetics around a small shrine of Vishnu. Similarly, on the other side of the stream, a cat is depicted imitating the same postures of penance by lifting the whole body in its hind legs and raising front paws above its head, and the nearby, the mice of the forest, on seeing their enemy in such an ascetic posture, run about fearlessly. One of them even seem daring enough to worship him as their god.¹⁴⁴

The open air panel of Arjuna"s penance is an example of the skill of the Pallava artists cutting stone directly. The representation of faunal world shows the artists" consummate skill in depicting the habits and manners of animals very realistically. The sculptures of animals reached its apex, the deer, the elephant, the monkey, the bull and the cat at Mahabalipuram are skilfully chiselled out and an example of outstanding mastery in monolithic rock.¹⁴⁵

The concept of unity is obviously expressed in the relief sculptures of Mahabalipuram in two ways. Firstly, the unconscious stone emerges as the conscious form of animals, men and gods, who are engaged in various

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 305

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 308

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 310

activities. Secondly, sculptures like the Gangavatrana of Mahabalipuram narrate allegorically the unity of the three worlds¹⁴⁶.

In this series, the Kailasanath temple at Kanchipuram was built by Rajasimha shortly after the Shore temple in the 8th century CE, and compared to the latter, is larger in dimensions and more majestic in appearance. The Kailashnath temple is situated in a rectangular courtyard surrounded by a peristyle¹⁴⁷ composed of a continuous series of cells resembling *rathas*. But there the Pallava style is further evolved and more elaborate. It consists of the sanctum (*garbha griha*), a pillared hall (*mandapa*), the ambulatory, the vestibule in the shape of a hall. The flat roofed pillared *mandapa*, which was a separate building originally, was connected.¹⁴⁸

Impact of religious domain

During the time of Ikshvakus in Andradesa, the Brahmanical faith was revived and made a great impact on art as well. The worship of Kartikeya, Vishnu-ashtabhujaswami and Shiva was prevalent during 3rd-4th century CE. The growth of Shaivite cult can be witnessed in the sculptural art during 6th century CE in the following iconic forms-Shiva as Lingdharin and Shiva as Ardhanarishvara (androgyny), Nataraja and Uma-Maheshwara at Undavalli and Mogarajpuram caves. The Kalchuris favoured the Lakulisha images during 6th century CE in Western India and during the time of Renandu rulers in Andhradesa the Lakulisha was so favoured that inscription were written with the invocatory verses to Shiva –Lakulisha.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Narzary, Janak Jhankar, "A Hindu view of Unity: its impact on the style of Hindu sculpture of Mahabalipuram, Ellora and Elephanta" in the *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all), New Delhi: Books & Books. p. 119-127.

¹⁴⁷ A colonnade surrounding a building or enclosing a court.

¹⁴⁸ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 313-17.

¹⁴⁹ Prasad, B. Rajendra. (1983). *Chalukyan Temples of Andhradesa*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publication. pp. 7-8.

Andhradesa which came under the control of Chalukyas, witnessed the growth of Alampur as a great art centre of seminal importance. Following the innovative trends initiated at Alampur and perhaps under the guidance of the Alampur guild temples were raised at Kuaveli, Mahanandi, Panyam Satyavolu and Kadamarkalava¹⁵⁰. The unique feature of the architectural form is its kinship with Nagara temple form the temple of Dravidian style is exception. This moment for the first time in the history of architecture created a landmark and envisaged a new era.

Political Influence

The Chalukyas ruled the entire Deccan comprising Karnataka and Andhra from sixth century to the middle of eighth century CE.¹⁵¹ Being a principal power in Deccan its confrontations with the northern and southern powers created extensive contacts with different cultural zones. And later it became a supplement for evolution of a variety of architectural styles to Karnataka. At Aihole, the Nagara style of temple appeared during the reign of Pulakesin II and it was adopted subsequently. The Chalukyas were true patron of art and architecture. The extension of their kingdom to Andhradesa made a great cultural impact on the region and also on the western region. The comingling of several religious embellishments resulted out in form of temples that Chalukyan raised. They, as at Aihole, too favoured the latina¹⁵² temple form which was fundamentally of Nagara style architecture.¹⁵³

The Chalukya of Badami especially the king Pulakesin I (543 CE) was the real founder of the dynasty. The hills at Badami were fortified during his time. His

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵¹ Rajshekhar, S. (*Early Chalukya Art at Aihole*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵² The term latina is from lata, meaning creeper and refers to the central spire of the tower (shikhar), so called because of the plant like patterns of horseshoe arches (gavakshas) climbing up it.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*

successor Kirtivarma I (566-598 CE) not only preserved the monarchy but also led campaign against Kadambas, the Nalas, the region between Bellary and Kurnool came under the control of Chalukyas. During the reign of Mangalesha the uncle of the King Pulakesin II succeeded Kirtivarmana as latter as a minor.¹⁵⁴

Pulakesin II became the monarch in 609-10 CE. His victorious campaign against the Kadamba of Vanvasi, Alupas, the Western Gangas, the Mauryas of Konkan, the Latas, the Malwas and the Gurjaras proved his intention of conquest of all then region and expansion of his reign. The battle with Harsha demarcated his empire as Narmada its frontier and the region between Narmada and Tapti came under the Chalukyan control. Again, he led his army against Kalinga, Kosala and Andhra which brought the whole region between the east and the west coasts under Chalukyan control.¹⁵⁵

Due to expansion of Chalukyan empire, a branch of came into existence in 624 CE, known as Chalukyas of Vengi. The command of this branch was in the hands of Kubja Vishnuvardhana, the brother of Pulakesin II. The Chalukyas of Vengi were a collateral line that had independently started ruling the Andhra coast from the commencement of the seventh century under Kubja Vishnuvardhana, the intrepid brother of Pulakesin II, and continued throughout the period.¹⁵⁶

The cave-temples are to be found at Badami, Aihole, Ellora, Bhokardan, Elephanta, Jogeshvari, Poona, Arvelam (Goa), Mahur, Advi Somanpalli, Vijayawada, Mogulrajapuram, Undavalli, Sitaramapuram, Penamaga and Bhairavakonda are product of this branch.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 283.

¹⁵⁵ Taddell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79.

¹⁵⁶ J. Ramanaiah, *The Chalukya and the Kakatiya Temples*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 4

Pulkesin II's copper plate grants found in the western Andhra, especially the Tummayamuru ¹⁵⁸ grant refer to Chalukya vishya and also to lord Sangameshvara at the confluence of the river Tungabhadra and Krishna. Hence, the control of Andhra region had been effective since Pulkesin II's time. With the conquest of Bana and Renandu Chola territories including the districts of Anantapur, Cuddpah and Chittor. Pulkesin was victorious over the Pallava Monarch Mahendravarmana I. ¹⁵⁹

In subsequent battle against Banas and Telugu Cholas, Pulkesin met the Pallava Narshimavarman that resulted in the death of Pulkesin sometime in 642 CE. After the death of Pulkesin II the Chalukyan empire began to stumble. After some time Vikramaditya ascended the throne in 654AD. ¹⁶⁰

Aityavarmana, brother of Vikramaditya governed the principality of Chalukya *vishyas*. The epigraphical records mention about their region over Alampur region. The inscription that predate 670 CE and the Nausari plates postulate that Vikramaditya was pre-occupied with the southern region of the kingdom. And the invasions into the Pallava kingdom which began quite early seemingly achieved complete success by about 671 CE, a fact recorded in Nausari plates ¹⁶¹.

Vikramaditya was succeeded by Vinayaditya in 681-696 CE. He played a pivotal role in administration. He gave munificent gifts to the cause of religion by royalty, particularly in the name of his queen, as mentioned in the inscription of Alampur. It records that the Svarga-Brahma temple was built in honour of his queen. ¹⁶² Vijayaditya, son and successor of Vinayaditya in 696 CE marked

¹⁵⁸ Prasad, B. Rajendra, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 8

¹⁶⁰ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p.

¹⁶¹ B. Rajendra Prasad, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 8

another long reign and prosperity. This encouraged the activities of art. Vijayaditya's inscriptional records testify his stay at Elapura (Ellora) in 706 CE, Hatampura (Alampura) in 718 CE, Raktpura (Lakshmeswra) in 730 CE. Pattadakal became a centre of religious activities during his time. The temple built by the king were Vijayeshvara now known as Sangameshvara.¹⁶³

After Vijayaditya, Vikramaditya ascended the throne in 733-34 CE and repelled the Arab invasion on the northern frontiers. After him, Kirtivarman led three expeditions subsequently against Pallava which all were won by him.¹⁶⁴ His inscriptions in the Rajasimheswara temple at Kanchi and Pattadakal testify the victory of Chalukyas over Pallava. The temples namely Lokeshvara and Trailokeshvara at Pattadakal were built by queens Lokamahadevi and Trailokya Mahadevi, have been identified as Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna respectively.¹⁶⁵

Kirtivarman was last Chalukya ruler who ascended in 744-45. He ruled almost for a decade and was defeated by the Rastrakuta King Dantidurga by 753 CE.

The Chalukyas were mostly of Hindu persuasion but they encouraged the Jain creed. As such one could perceive a congruity of purpose, technique and the raw material chosen to stabilise Hinduism and foster Jainism and perpetuate their traditions at the cost of Buddhism which was having till then a greater hold on the rich, lay, agricultural and mercantile sections of the people.¹⁶⁶

The choice of all these dynasties was the local soft-stone formations, viz. sandstone, as in Badami and Aihole and in most other places, lateritic, as at Arvelam on the extreme west coast, schist as at Bhairavakonda, and trap on the north-west Deccan and western India around Aurangabad, Poona and Bombay.

¹⁶³ Deglurkar, G. B. (1974). *Temple Architecture and Sculpture of Maharashtra*. Nagpur: Nagpur University. pp.35-38.

¹⁶⁴ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 285.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 286

¹⁶⁶ Deglurkar, G. B. *op. cit.*, p. 54

The Western Gangas alone despite their Chalukyan affinities were votaries of Jainism. They made a deviation in that they excavated into the hard local granite as at Melkote (Mysore).¹⁶⁷

As inscription proclaim Chalukyas as *parambhagvata* and ardent devotees of Lord Vishnu, Kartikeya and *smartkeyas* and were tolerance to Shaivism and Jainism. It was after the succession of Vikramaditya I to the throne, the munificence of the royalty underwent towards a certain change, the Shiva religious sect. Here need to mention of Amudalapadu epigraph recording *shaivcharyas*.¹⁶⁸

Another grant from Nausari dated 671 CE refers Vikramaditya as *Paramaheshvara* and meditating at the feet of Sri Nagavardhana. This influential evidence denotes the importance of Pashupati cult. The predominance of Pashupati cult is also reflected in the iconography by placing Lakulisha in the niche along with the temples of Shiva, Vishnu, Sakta, Kaumara, Soma and Ganapati images.¹⁶⁹

It seems that a *matha* (monastery) was established at Alampur with growth of temples related to Shiva. A reference to *matha* of Alampur is recorded in CE 781. The cult of mother goddess was also prevalent in this area which also successively evident at Ellora in various caves as Satamatrakas panels. Several images of Lajjagauri (the nude headless goddess) emphasize the long tradition of primitive cult. Later also emerged as Shaktipeetha during 10th Century CE. K. V. Soundara Rajan has opined that “*It is observable that the Chalukyan structural style well preceded the Rashtrakuta monolithic enterprise at Ellora*”¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 55

¹⁶⁸ Prasad, B. Rajendra, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 8

¹⁷⁰ K. V. Soundara Rajan, *The Ellora Monoliths*, p. 15.

The early Chalukyan interaction with the caves of Badami and Aihole are represented in four at Badami and five at Aihole respectively. Among them two are Vaishnava, one Shaiva and one Jaina at cave at Badami. At Aihole, two are Shaiva, one Jaina, one Buddhist and one Jaina. One cave (III) is dated at Badami. It was excavated by Mangalesha in 578 A. D.¹⁷¹.

The temples belonging to the Chalukyan style were either square or rectangular from within. The important movements in the history of the *Nagara* temple style, they represent the early group. As it is well known, the Chalukyan style is the result of the blending of the elements and characteristics of the *Nagara* and Dravida style. In its origin, thus it is hybrid, but later on constituted a well-defined and separated style of decorative significance. The mandapas of those temples are of cruciform plan as it is in the Kailash at Ellora¹⁷².

The Chalukyas of Badami from the middle of the sixth century CE and the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta who supplanted them effectively in the middle of the eighth century, together with the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi have left a number of cave-temples in the region between the Tapti and the north Pennar rivers, extending from coast to coast.¹⁷³

The Chalukya-Rashtrakuta dominion of the area to the west resulted in the upper Deccan affiliations becoming quite distinct from what obtained in the lower Deccan, thus exhibiting two regional idioms. This was because the northern zone lay nearer the sites of the earlier Buddhist cave art and rock architecture. The skills and traditions that had prevailed for more than eight centuries among the local guilds of craftsmen thus continued in the generations that took up Hindu and Jain rock architecture and cave art.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Bakshi, S. R., *Architecture in Indian Subcontinent*, p.68.

¹⁷² Deglurkar, G. B. *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁷³ Srinivasan, K.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 45-50.

¹⁷⁴ Deglurkar, G. B. *op. cit.* pp. 35-40.

Rock architecture was also sustained longer as mode in the northern zone. It developed more vigorously particularly under the Rashtrakutas as could be seen from their enormous output and such large scale compositions as the caves at Elephanta, Dhumarlena and Jogeshvari, not to speak of the monolithic carvings of the Kailash temple, and the Jain Chota Kailash and the Jain *chaumukh* in the Indra Sabha complex. But rock architecture soon became a mere second to structural stone constructions in the southern zone of the Chalukyas as would be seen in the sequel.¹⁷⁵

K. V. Soundra Rajan¹⁷⁶ has a firm view that “*it is of no small significance that the Chalukyas should have chosen Elephanata and Ellora for their marathon innings, largely because they were the political panorama of the erstwhile Vakatakas and Kalachuris which latter unmistakably laid low politically, culturally and logistically and did not stop this chase until Harshvardhana of Kannauj also had been stemmed across the banks of Narmada to show how authentically they were the lord of Dakshinapatha. The ring of the Mahakuta pillar record and the Aihole prashasti (eulogy) of Pulkesin and the glow of the resurgent art of the Chalukyas do not befit nor admit of a borrowed art legacy for themselves after the fall of the Vakatakas, through the Kalachuris who claimed Konkan by proxy and the area around Ajanta and Ellora by sheer strategy*”.¹⁷⁷

If we see from the architectural point of view, the cave art at Ellora has many sidelights. Its ritual framework is reasonably elaborate and well sustains an integrated god-consort pattern. It presents purely Shaiva contexts as well as mixed Shaiva and Vaishnava nexus, often predicated in context to a basic Shiva shrine. The one example prior to it is presented only at Badami, the parent zone,

¹⁷⁵ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 335-346.

¹⁷⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.* p. 141.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 142

a purely Vaishnava situation in cave no.3. Rashtrakutas also initially continued the Shaiva-Vaishnav nexus in its creation at Ellora.

In monolithic stage, this becomes less and an exultant Shaiva domain is revealed. But one element which spotlights the monolithic mode of the Rashtrakutas is the provision not only for both extra-Vindhyan and south Indian usages in layout, but also in a meticulous of a *prakāra* (surrounding wall) wall for the temple complex. Thus it may be stated that the Rashtrakutas, in their monoliths, desired to present the whole temple panorama and transplanted the scene available at Pattadakal in Karnataka region.



Chapter-3

Concept of Kailāsh Temple as a Sacred Complex

Kailāsh Temple is a manifestation of mount Kailāsh in Himalyas as Ellora is a *tīrthā*¹ in Maharashtra. The ancient name of Ellora was Elapura as mentioned in the Chalukyan and Raṣtrakuta copper plate inscriptions.² The Kailāsh temple cave no. 16 is referred to as *Manakeshwar lene* in the *Jnāneshwari*, a thirteenth century Marathi commentary on the Bhagvadgita.³ Formally recognized as a *tīrthā*- a centre of worship and ritual, the site attracted support and activity of key political and religious leaders. As a *tīrthā* it was the appropriate place to locate extraordinary monuments, like the Śaiva Kailāsh temple. It was unprecedented and unrivaled in architecture but also attracted patrons and worshipers of other faiths such as- Buddhist and Jain who responded in similar way to the growing power of the religious complex.⁴ The sacred complex of Ellora preserves a record of these movements as teachers, worshipers, rulers, and artists converged and collaborated in a burst of creativity that accelerated in the late seventh century and peaked in the second half of the eighth century⁵.

The holy scriptures of ancient India contain exhaustive list of '*Tīrthās*' which can be equated with sacred complexes in philosophical sense. The literal meaning of the word *tīrthā* is a place of pilgrimage or a religious centre famous for auspicious performances⁶. The classical Sanskrit writing expounds the significance of pilgrimage and its merits. Places of pilgrimage are also called

¹ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2003). *Monumental Legacy: Ellora*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 7.

² *Ibid*, p. 8

³ *Ibid*, p. 9

⁴ Hardy, Adam. (2007). *Temple Architecture of India*. Chichseter: John Wiley. p. 10.

⁵ Huntington, Susan L. (1985). *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York and Tokyo: Weather Hill. p. 341.

⁶ Kramrisch, Stella, (1976). *The Hindu Temple*. Delhi Delhi, Varanasi, Patna: Motilal Banarsidass. p. 3.

kshetra. According to the perception of the religious thinkers of ancient India pilgrimage brings joy and salvation. The various names given to *tīrthās* and temples give explicit explanation of the idea. In *Brahmpurāna*⁷ the Brahmins are addressed that devotee shall worship any *linga* he sees in the holy centre by doing this he shall go to the world of Śiva. A sacred complex is generally known as a source of active power and above all a place where *moksha* or final release can be obtained. Religious importance of a sacred complex has got very important place even in the early *Vedic* literature. *Nadistuti*⁸ of the *Rīgveda* gives an account of the highly sanctified rivers.

“IMAM MEN GANGEY YAMUNE SARSWATI STUDRI STOMA SACHATA PRUSANYA ASIKNYA
MRUDVIRIDHE VITASTAYASJIRKIE RITUHA SUSHOMYA”

(Rg. 10.75)

The *Smṛiti*⁹ literature is full of the religious importance of auspicious perennial streams which were subjects of veneration for the people. The *Manusmṛiti*¹⁰ is well known for an exhaustive list of *tīrthās*. In this text *tīrthāyatra* has been equated with *aswameghyajana*¹¹. The earliest and the most famous *Smṛiti* written by Manu also contain comprehensive details about the *kshetra* and their auspiciousness. The *Garudapurana*¹² enumerates many sacred cities as: Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kasi, Kanchi, Kedara and Pushkar as givers of *moksha*.

The sacred geography of India recognizes the whole country rather an auspicious land the best for meditation, spiritual realization and emancipation than human activities. The *Brahmpurāna*¹³ has also given a very interesting

⁷ Shastri, J. L., (2004). *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology*, vol. 33. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass. p. 236.

⁸ Muller, F. Max. (1965). *Hymns of the Rigveda in the Samhita and Pada Texts*. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. p. 331.

⁹ Das, Bhagwan. (1993). *Manu's Code of Life*. New Delhi: Radha Publications. pp. 411-12.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 413

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 414

¹² Shastri, J. L., *op. cit.*, pp. 247-49.

¹³ Bhatt, G. P. (2004). *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology* vol. 36. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas. pp. 759-60.

classification of *tīrthās*. It has mentioned that in this world four types of *tīrthās* (sacred complexes) are manifested. These are related to Gods (*Daiva tīrthās*), demons (asuras), sages or monks (rishi) and places sanctified by common men (manav)¹⁴.

- *Daiva Tīrthās*: The best among the four categories are the places which are related to revelation of power of the God -Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Places like 'Mount Kailāsh ' and 'Kāsi' come under this category.¹⁵
- *Asur Tīrthās*: These are the venerated places where demons were defeated or trampled by the Gods or Goddesses. Gaya, where Gayasura, a demon was trampled by lord Vishnu is the most appropriate example.¹⁶
- *Rishi Tīrthās*: *These* associated with the names of great seers. These are holy places where people of saintly attributes stayed or meditated for a long time or where they established their hermitages. *Vyāsgupha*, *Yajanvalkyakup*, *Anavashram*, *Rudraprayag*, *Kapileshwarsthan* etc are some of the well-known examples of this category of *tīrthās*.¹⁷
- *Manav tīrthās*: These *tīrthās* renders to an auspicious place established by common people. Mahabalipuram and Kailāsh temple Ellora are of the famous *tīrthās* which can be termed as *Manavtīrthā*. Nathdwāra, a very famous sacred complex, also falls under the purview of this category.¹⁸

Apart from all these four categories of *tīrthās*, ancient literature enumerates the name of another *tīrthā* which is related with the psychological state of devotion called *manas- tīrthā* or a *tīrthā* of mind¹⁹. This again denotes the spiritual aim

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 761

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 762

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 763

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 764

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 766

¹⁹ Kramrisch, Stella, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

and benefit of a *tīrthā* which is nothing else but complete emancipation from mundane anxieties. Where to establish a *tīrthā* might have been an important subject of Indian scriptures related to the installation of sacred structures. Significant aspect of this vital subject is that ancient propagators of religion have given great emphasis on sacred geography.

The physiographic structures, topographical conditions, natural vegetation availability of perennial stream and components of balanced ecology have been described as integral ingredients of a sacred geography where only, a sacred complex can be developed as mentioned in following verse:

*“VANOPANAT NADI SAIL NIRJHAROPANT BHUMISHV I
RAMATE DEVATA NITYAM PURESU DYANVATSU CHA II”*²⁰

This means: “The gods always play where groves are near rivers, mountains and springs, and in towns with pleasure gardens.”²¹

The *Vishnūdharmōttarapurana*²² an early compendium speaks of the installation of consecrated image 'ārcha'²³ at a place where denizens of heaven are present²⁴. A very comprehensive account of sacred performances is also available in ancient Indian scriptures. There are special chapters on 'Pratimalakshna'²⁵.

²⁰ Srinivasan, P. R. (1982). *The Indian Temple Art Architecture*. Mysore: Prasara University of Mysore. p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 4

²² Gupta, Kusum Kumari. (1994). *A Socio-Religious Study of Vishnūdharmottara Purana*. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House. p. 105.

²³ Shah, Priyabala. (1990). *Vishnūdharmottara Purana (A text on Ancient Indian Arts)*. Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Company. p. 3.

²⁴ Kramrisch, Stella, *op. cit.*, p.5

²⁵ Gupta, Kusum Kumari, *op. cit.*, 105.



Figure 25: Ghrishnewar Temple at Ellora

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi

Interestingly the sacred specialists have also got significant place in sacred literature. Especially craftsmen involved in architectural and artistic works got great literary appreciation for their highly strenuous as well as artistic work. The architect called '*sthapati*'²⁶, was the foremost among the craftsmen of whom there were four classes '*sthapati*' (designing architect), *Sutrugrahin*²⁷ (surveyor), *Takshaka*²⁸ (sculptor) and '*Vardhkin*'²⁹ (builder plasterer-painter). All the junior craftsmen working in assistance to them were supposed to follow the instructions given by him. Sthapati was considered as a great Acharya (teacher) and he was a scholar of Vāstu-Vīdya (architecture).³⁰ He had also knowledge of *Vedas* and *Agamas*. He was also supposed to be a practitioner having work

²⁶ Shukla, D. N. (1998). *Vastu Śāstra, vol.1, Hindu Science of Architecture*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. pp. 47-49.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 48-49.

²⁸ Srinivasan, P. R., *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²⁹ Shukla, D. N., *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 50

experience and a believer in the existence of God.³¹ He himself was not allowed to disobey the classical injunctions of architecture iconography, iconology and iconometry.

Kailāsh temple is Śaivite shrine and in this tradition potency of certain places in India resulting from the fall of the dismembered body of the dead 'Sati' (spouse of Lord Śiva) to earth has been glorified³². Symbolically, the fallen part of the body, the energy of Sati was added to the earth. Later on all places related to this mythological fall of Sati's charred body rose into prominence as scared centers for pilgrimage.³³ Fifty-one places of this kind are scattered all over India. Apart from Śaktipithas, Siddhapithas or places where saints got enlightenment also strengthened the socio-cultural unity of India.

Thus, it may be surmised that theological and mythological ideas of pilgrimage have played a great role in distribution and spread of sacred complexes in different parts of India and eliminate all the geographical, linguistic and ecological obstacles.

The Genesis and Growth Factors

The genesis and growth factors responsible for the growth of sacred complexes can be traced in prehistoric cultures of the country. The rock paintings in the caves and caverns of the mesolithic period depict narrow and wide signs, and their graphic representations hold a thematic and symbolic form to express their religious thoughts. The Raisen³⁴ caves are famous for their rock art, which are full of ritualistic depictions. Various festive and ceremonial performances, which can be described as the central theme of these paintings, are very interesting because it throw light on the religious thinking and practices of pre-

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 52

³² Siddhantastree, Rabindra Kumar. (1975). *Śaivism through the Ages*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. pp. 110-12.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 113

³⁴ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 3-5.

historic man. The conceptual and inception of the sanctum sanctorum of the temple has been related to these dark-dolmens of the caves, by eminent art historian Dr. Krishandeva.³⁵

In giving description about the genesis of sacred complexes in India, scholars have pointed out the cult of the dead as an encouraging factor. The worship of *stupa* and monastical institutions developed near these types of holy mounds justify this view³⁶.

Another tradition, which played important role in the emergence of religious edifices, can be related to the cult of fire. The *Vedic* religion is basically a creed of sacrificial rituals and sacraments in which cult of Agni occupies prominent place³⁷. *Agni* was the most prominent among all the terrestrial deities and was also an intermediary God and who was invoked to carry the ritualistic offerings and oblations to the celestial deities³⁸. After *Indra* the highest number of hymns in *R̥gveda* is dedicated to *Agni*-, *Agneya idam na mama* ”³⁹. In Hinduism fire occupies important place and it was a subject of great veneration. The holy tradition of fire worship is associated with the system



Figure 26: Stupa at Karle

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

³⁵ Deva, Krishna. (1995). *Temples of North India vol.1*. New Delhi: Aryan Book International. p.2.

³⁶ Jauhari, Manorama. (1969). *South India and Its Architecture*. Varanasi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan. p. 9.

³⁷ Vatsyayan, Kapila. (1982). “The Indian Arts: Their Ideational Background and Principles of Form” in *Rupa Pratirupa*, ed. by Bettina Baumer. New Delhi: Biblia Impex Private, Ltd. p. 18.

³⁸ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³⁹ Staal, Frits. (1982). *The Science of Ritual*, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. p. 5.

of idol worship⁴⁰. Apart from tribal mystic rites and practices, the cult of Agni also contributed to the growth of sacred complexes. The theistic as well as polytheistic nature of Indian religion also gave utmost impetus to the development of sacred shrines. Folk traditions, idolatry, and development of various heterodox sects like Jainism and Buddhism also played great role in the establishment of shrines, holy steads, monasteries and temples⁴¹.

Before going in to detail about the genesis and growth of sacred complexes a very brief description of the development of polytheistic concept and cultic devotion is required. Because the structural creation of the sacred complexes received ideological support from the religio-philosophical thoughts of polytheistic Hinduism. *Vedic* religion is primarily a polytheistic creed in which natural powers has been anthropomorphized. It is also highly ritualistic and offerings and oblations have great in various types of its rites and practices⁴². Hindu religion received inspiration from *Vedic* cult that is why multiplicity of Gods and Goddesses and worship of natural powers have become important features of it⁴³. Transmigration of soul, metempsychosis and rebirth theories has been very frequently mentioned in Upanishadic⁴⁴ texts. Speculative and esoteric thinking about the *atman* and the *parmātman* gave birth to the ideas of meditation, concentration and emancipation⁴⁵. *Vedic* religion didn't have elements of idol worship, but idea of making sacrificial altars is explicable in this context because later on it comprised important place in Hindu sacred complexes⁴⁶. According to Dr. Krishandeva⁴⁷ the socle (*Adhisthāna* of the Hindu temple) symbolizes *Vedic* altar.

⁴⁰ Kramrisch, Stella, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-74.

⁴¹ Srinivasan, P. R., *op. cit.* pp.11-13.

⁴² Vatsyayan, Kapila, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴³ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p.28.

⁴⁴ Vatsyayan, Kapila, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp.28-29.

⁴⁷ Deva, Krishna, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

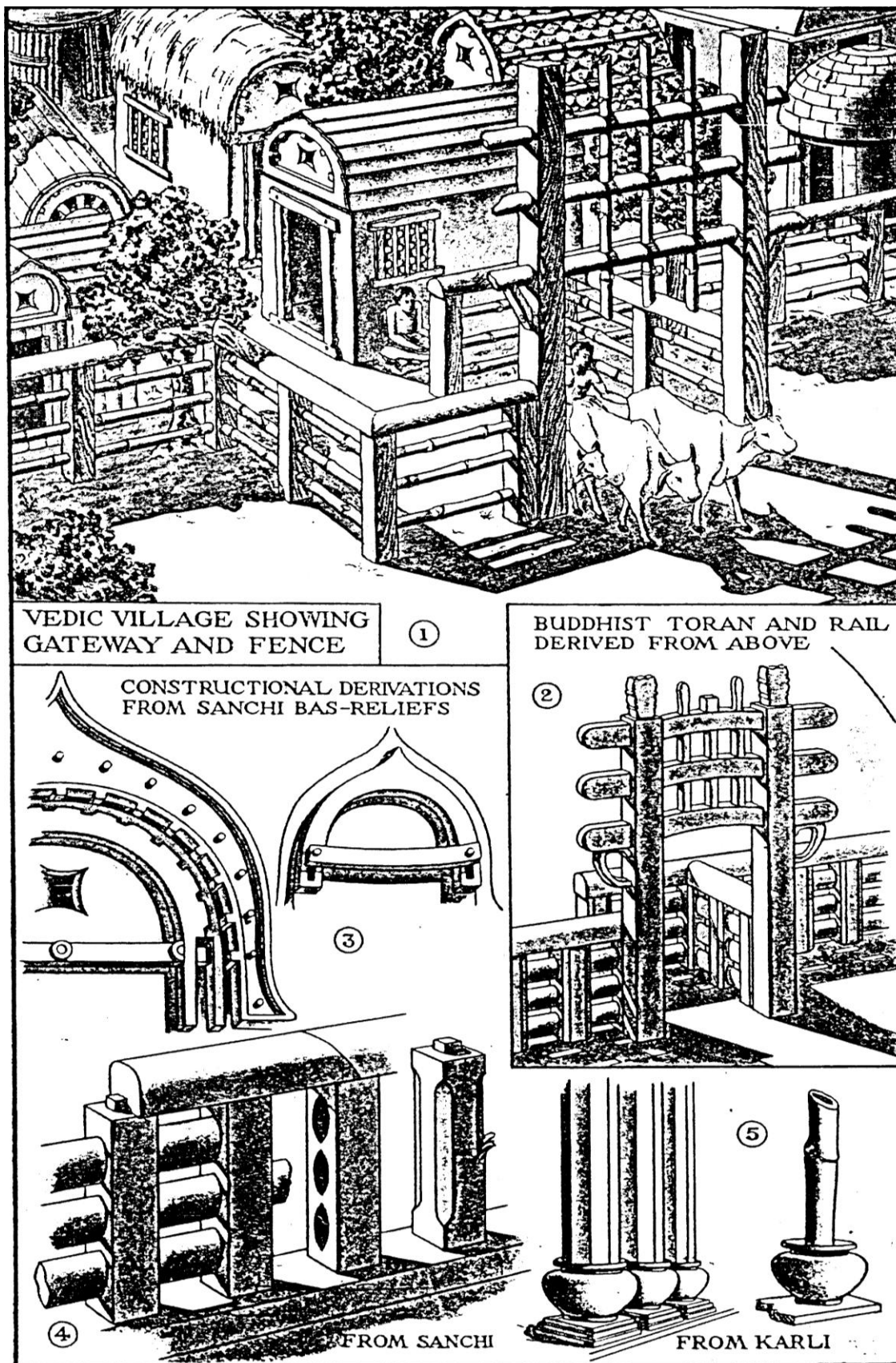


Figure 27: Wooden Prototypes for Rock Cut Architecture

Courtesy: Brown, Percy. (1971), *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period*, Bombay

After 6th century A.D. onward theistic movement became a part of orthodox philosophical and literary works, which had first appeared in the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* is a compendium work on *Upanishadic* philosophy and it has given equal importance to all the ways of salvation.⁴⁸ The theistic devotion is the most significant thinking of *Gītā* which influenced the entire arena of Indian society and religion.⁴⁹

Bhaktī or devotion is defined as disinterested service to God.⁵⁰

Basically, the ideal of the *Gītā* is not negativism, asceticism or escapism.

It is not negation of action, but performance of action with a detached spirit.⁵¹

The object of devotion is the God, the Absolute power Lord *Krishna* says in *Bhagvada Gītā*, "Abandon all *Dharmas* come into me alone for shelter; sorrow not; I will liberate you from all sins".⁵²



Figure 28: Vihnu Image at Grishneswar
Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

⁴⁸ Sharma, Krishna. (1987). *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement A New Perspective*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. p. 110.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 111.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 113.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 113-115.

⁵² Amarnathananda, Swami. (1998). *Sreemadbhagwad Geeta: The divine song of the Lord*, London: Samlall Dwarka. p. 350

Historical analysis of the origin and development of theistic cult makes it clear that after 6th Cent. B.C *Bhaktism* had become prevalent in India. *Pānini*⁵³ has mentioned a sect of *Śaivism* called *Śaiva Bhāgvata*. Basically, *Bhāgvata* is a word, which stands for devotional approach to religion. Pillar of Heliodorus⁵⁴ found at Besnagar in Madhya Pradesh is another epigraphical evidence in which the growing importance of *Bhakti* is explicit. The *Vaiṣṇav Bhakti*, literally called *Bhagvatism* was a syncretic religion in which the Narayan cult and religious ideology of *Vaishnavism* were amalgamated with the creed of *Krishna*.⁵⁵

Though Hīnyana Buddhism was a heterodox school of thought and it didn't believed in anthropomorphic worship of *Buddha*.⁵⁶ But later on in the socio-cultural atmosphere of theism this antagonistic and heterodox religion did not remain relevant. Hīnyana, the orthodox school had started worshipping various signs and symbols signifying the important event related with of *Buddha's* life. *Hīnyanists* gave great respect to *stupa* worship, which was, basically related with the cult of the dead.⁵⁷ It is said that after the death of *Buddha* the skeleton remains and ashes were divided and distributed among eight contemporary rulers.⁵⁸ Later on Ashoka, the greatest patron of Buddhist social ideology erected 84000 *stupas* comprising *Budha's* relics⁵⁹.

After the downfall of the Mauryans, during Sātvahanas art became a pan - Indian movement and various massive structures were made in different part of the country. The remarkable, aspect is that art of this period did not only

⁵³ Siddhantashastree, Rabindra Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁵⁴ D. Dayalan. (1995). *Monolithic Temples of Madhya Pradesh*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. p. 9.

⁵⁵ Sharma, Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁵⁷ Kail, Owen C. (1975). *Buddhist cave Temples of India*, Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala & Sons & Co. Private Ltd. p. 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 17

⁵⁹ Sastri, K. A. Nilakanta. (1988). *Age of Nandas and Mauryas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. p. 241.

develop because of royal patronage, but because of the donation and charities given by merchants.⁶⁰ This epigraphical record clarifies the growing importance of stone as a medium of artistic works because of its durability and also due to the great spurt in artistic activities for massive structures related to sacred complexes.⁶¹ Another noticeable fact is that all the great rock-cut architectures are situated on the trade routes leading to western coast called *Dakshinapath*.⁶² Sānchi a monastical set up embellished with huge and gigantic *stupas* was also situated on the trade route leading to western coast. Bhaja, Kondane, *Pittalkhora*, *Karle* and even the magnificent Ajanta was also situated on the *Dakshinapath*⁶³. Eight-hundred out of 1200 great rock-cut caves are situated in western India which was the hinterland of the west coast also substantiates the idea that spurt in economic activities and international trade played significant role in the growth of sacred centers⁶⁴.

Mathura, a great art school of ancient period occupies special significance in this context. Situated on northern trade route. *Mathura* was also a great commercial center and was very famous for its own distinguished cotton products. The art of Mathura is urban in nature and it depicts the artist's love and appreciation for urban life and culture that we find vibrantly expressed in seductive poses of the *Yakshinies*. It seems that it was inspired by the tremendous commercial advancement of that age. *Buddhists*, *Jainas*, followers of *Brahmanism* and other religions visited this city and the movement of the tourists and traders gave great fillip to artistic activities at this place.⁶⁵ All the 'great sacred complexes like *Karle*, *Bhaja*, *Ajanta*, *Pittalkhora*, etc. have large monastically setups which were asylum on the traders moving to the western

⁶⁰ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

⁶¹ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p.7.

⁶² Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁶³ Mahajan, Malti. (2004). *A gate to Ancient Indian Architecture*. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. pp. 6-10.

⁶⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁵ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 167-75.

coast.⁶⁶ *Ajanta* one of the greatest sacred complexes situated on the bank of river *Baghora* had a cistern, cozy and convenient accommodations for monks and visitors.

The sacred complexes developed their own economic activities and became very rich because of the land grants and revenue assignments given to them by the monarchs. Sātvāhan as gave land grants to the monasteries of Nasik and also to *Brahmanas*⁶⁷. It is a thing of great interest that apart from ritualistic performances, economic activities had great importance in ancient Indian sacred complexes.

Thus, we see that theistic ideas were greatly responsible for spurt in artistic activities and were inspirational in installation of lofty temples. The art schools of Mathura, Gandhara, Amaravati, and Nagarjunikonda etc. reached to their apex because of devotion of the devotees and resulted into the basic credential of art as well.⁶⁸

In this regard it is also important to understand the philosophic view point of pantheism preached by *Shankaracharya*.⁶⁹ Sankaracharya, an ascetic from Kerala expounded Non-dualistic Vedantism based on *Gita* and Bhagvat purana, and Bhakti Sutras of Narada and Shandilya.⁷⁰ The essence of *Sankaradvaita* is that God is infinite and formless. This *vedāntic* perception creates a great query why to give a form to the formless and why to make a sacred complex for that power which in infinite.

Apart from North India, South India also became hub of architectural activities after 6th century A.D. It was primarily due to political consolidation and

⁶⁶ Srinivasan, P. R., *op. cit.*, p.84.

⁶⁷ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-09.

⁶⁹ Sharma, Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 5

economic development of the region. During the Gupta period, North India experienced the development of Nagar style of temples having a sanctum and pavilion with the curvilinear spire⁷¹. The Gupta Emperors also patronized artistic architectural works in stone. Apart from Deogarh temple of *Nagara* style, the rock cut caves of Udaigiri having depiction of Varaha incarnation of Vishnu is an excellent example of sacred architecture hewn out in solid rock.⁷²

The *Vishnudharmottarapurana*⁷³ a classical text on art belonging to post-Gupta period provide details on the largest number of temples in comparison to the other texts. After Gupta rulers, North India was divided into various feudal principalities and they were scrambling for power.⁷⁴ In contrary to it peninsular India was politically consolidated by the four dynasties known as *Chalukya*, *Rastrakuta*, *Pallavas* and *Cholas*. *Chalukyas* were comparatively close to North India; this proved significant in proliferation of the idea of architecture in Deccan region. But a new genus and genre of architecture developed under Pallavas require special reference because it has a distinct style and it developed under the influence of a new religious fervour of *Bhaktism* propagated and popularized by the *Alvār* and the *Naynār*⁷⁵ saints. The *Alvār* and *Naynār* movements in South India had a great impact on the development of architecture as sacred complexes such as Kanchi.⁷⁶ It is also significant aspect of South Indian *Bhakti* movement that pioneers of this movement were generally low caste people. They preached *Bhakti* as the most adequate way of liberation. The ideology of *Bhakti* favoured idol worship and making of temples as the best way to get benediction of the almighty god. Mention can be made of

⁷¹ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 206-07.

⁷² Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 6-10.

⁷³ Gupta, Kusum Kumari, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁷⁴ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop. (2011). *Jaina Art and Aesthetics*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International. p. 12.

⁷⁵ Srinivasan, K. R. (2008). *Temples of South India*, New Delhi: National Book Trust India. p. 33.

⁷⁶ Beck, Elisabeth. (2006). *Pallava Rock Architecture and Sculpture*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurbindo Society. p. 87.

Ramanujacharya who highly emphasized the need to understand the significance of *Bhakti*.⁷⁷ It is said *Ramanujacharya's* philosophy of 'Qualified non-dualism' was developed in response to the Non-dualistic monism of *Sankaracharya*⁷⁸.

These *bhakti* saints composed devotional anthologies, translated great epics in the regional languages revitalized ancient centres of religious fame and established new sacred complexes. Various folk dance and drama traditions and cultural celebrations also received great impetus from *bhakti* movement.

Especially, South Indian temples actuated great spurt in economic activities and this also strengthened their own development.⁷⁹ South Indian temples comprised munificent land grants, collected revenue, domesticated animals, provided justice, allowed weavers in their premises to work, made hostels and provided various types of help to common man during natural calamities.⁸⁰ Due to such economic activities temple became a moulding factor in social integration and fraternization. It also inspired people to move towards temple premises to get employment and good earning⁸¹. Sacred complexes, as academic centres attracted learned Brahmins.⁸² These sacred complexes were greatly benefited by charities.⁸³ Many of the temples had their own granaries and because of their social accountability they worked for agricultural development and irrigational facilities in rural areas. Thus temple economy having a very vibrant character encouraged the process of urbanization, which ultimately caused multidimensional development of the sacred complex itself.

⁷⁷ Sharma, Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Ramaniah, J. (1989). *Temples of South India*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company. pp. 228-29.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 230

⁸¹ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 14

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 15

Genesis and Growth of Ellora as a sacred complex: A Historical Analysis

The first urban civilization of the world known as Harappan civilization, which flourished in Indian sub-continent, is well-known for its highly systematic town planning, drainage system and massive brick structures. The architecture of Harappan civilization is aesthetically less impressive but it is famous for its utilitarian nature. But speculation about religious structures of the Harappan period is difficult, as the Harappan script still remains un-deciphered.

Prevalence of mother goddess cult, belief in fertility cult, tree worship, zoolatry, phallus worship and ritualistic performances seem to be some of the important features of the Harappan religion⁸⁴. Archaeological studies on the basis of remains of Harapan art brings to light that citadel area of Mohenjo-Daro was probably a sacred structure. The Great-bath, as historians have called it is the most prominent and the most impressive structure of that city. The pool surrounded by a paved courtyard, is 12 metres long (north to south), 7 metres wide, and 2.5 metre deep.⁸⁵ Its purpose can only be guessed. It seems that it was associated with bathing ritual.⁸⁶ Thus this structure strongly recalls later Hindu practices and concept of ablution. As per later Hindu tradition such ponds were used for purification bath. Apart from the sacred pond, some fire alters have also been found at *Banawali*,⁸⁷ *Kalibangan*,⁸⁸ *Lothal*⁸⁹ and *Rakhigarhi*⁹⁰ which can be mentioned as sacred structures. After the decline of Indus valley civilization Indian village settlements remained in chalcolithic phase in which primitive fertility cult maintained its own privilege and prevalence.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Agrawala, P. K., (1984). *Goddess in Ancient India*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications. pp. 23-26.

⁸⁵ Bongard-Levin, G. M. (1985). *Ancient Indian Civilization*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers. pp. 32-33.

⁸⁶ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ Gupta, S. P. (1996). *The Indus-Saraswati Civilization: Origins, Problems and Issues*. Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan. pp. 151-154.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 155

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 156

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 157

⁹¹ Agrawal, P. K., *op. cit.*, p.16.

The religion of Vedic Aryans was highly ritualistic and sacramental. The polytheistic religion of the early Aryans later on became highly esoteric and philosophical and in later-Vedic period speculations related to *ātman* and *paramātmā* became the subjects of religious discourses.⁹² This period did not achieve significant material advancements. No any structure except some Vedic alters found at *Atranjikhhera* and *Ahichhatra* can be mentioned in this context. But interestingly Vedic literature, especially literature related to later Vedic period provides some important information regarding wooden structures. *Vedic Sulva Sutra* is the earliest literary source on architecture. The main subject of *Sulva Sutra* is the making of the Vedic altars.⁹³ It is full of information regarding geometrical and concentric designs associated with the construction of Vedic altars.⁹⁴ The *Sathpatha Brahmana* contains information related to a very special kind of architecture made for ceremonial purposes.

The archaeological evidences of the early historical period are not in plenty to support the literary facts. Mauryan period which witnessed the growth of Magadha dynasty transformed the wood cut architectural tradition into the lithic works of exquisite beauty⁹⁵. Mauryan columns culminated of an ancient pre Buddhist- religious tradition in India of the cult of the cosmic pillar or world axis which were erected at sacred places.⁹⁶ This tradition remain in vogue even during the period the *Mauryas*.⁹⁷ The only significant difference was that due to royal patronage and the enthusiasm of the craftsmen caves in this period were excavated. *Lomas Rishi* and *Sudama Rishi* caves hewn out in *Barabar* hill, situated in *Gaya* district are remarkable in context to the growth of rock cut

⁹² Sharma, Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁹³ Stall, Frits, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁹⁴ Gupta, S. P., *op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁹⁵ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁹⁶ Sastri, K. A. Nilakanta, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

⁹⁷ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

caves⁹⁸. These caves have epigraphical records that enumerate these caves as religious structures which were given in charity to the monks of *Ajivika* sect by *Ashoka*⁹⁹. The main gate of the *Lomas Rishi* cave shows antecedent impact of the wood cut architecture. The interiors of all these caves situated in this hilly range have lustrous Mauryan polish, which was a technical advancement, made in that age.¹⁰⁰ Maurya period has given great contribution in the development of new sacred complexes related to the creed of Buddha¹⁰¹. During *Maurya* period many *stupas* containing holy relics were raised by *Ashoka* to mark the sites sacred to the imperial Buddhist faith.¹⁰²

Buddha as a propagator of universal religion was himself credited of the genesis of various sacred complexes. Sarnath, Kapilvastu, Rajgriha, Vaishali, Mathura, Kausambi developed as sacred complexes during *Buddha's* own lifetime because these places were venues of various religious conferences and socio-sacred activities¹⁰³. *Ashoka* himself patronized Buddhism and erected pillars and stupas at highly sacred places associated with *Buddha*. *Sarnath*, *Bodh Gaya*, *Lumbini* and *Kushinagar* the four great sacred complexes became very popular.¹⁰⁴ Kautilya, the learned diplomat and minister of Chandragupta has also written about the holy steads and the shrines of that period.¹⁰⁵

Mauryan art was people's art, which assimilated the rustic ideas, techniques and patterns, and it is the reason that Śunga-Sātvāhana art exhibits certain folk-art

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 47

⁹⁹ Smith, Vincent A. (1990). *Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India*. Delhi: Low Price Publications. p. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50.

¹⁰¹ Deva, Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁰² Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁰³ Sastri, K. A. Nilakanta *op. cit.*, pp. 301-03.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 304.

¹⁰⁵ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

characteristics.¹⁰⁶ The new patrons of art were traders and opulent businessmen. Another significant aspect of sacred art of this period is conceptual uniformity in theme and pattern which is present everywhere in India. Basically in this period art became a pan-Indian movement. Tradition of idol making and carving now became an essential and integral part of architecture and this made the sacred structures of this period highly embellished. In this period mainly two types of sacred structures were made. These were *stupa* and *chaitya*. Before going in extensive detail a succinct description with these two types of structures is required.

Beautiful rock-cut *chaityas* and *stupas* represent the masonic art of the period which are evidences of that during *Sātvāhana* period there was great spurt in artistic activities.¹⁰⁷ Rock-cut shrines of *Bhaja*, *Karle*, *Kondane*, *Pittalkhora*, *Sittanvasal*, *Nasik*, *Bedasa* were made in this period.¹⁰⁸ This stupendous and splendid masonic work was sequel of great advancement gained in international trade. Near the *Śunga* capital *Vidisha* the great *stupa* of *Sānchi* called *mahachaityagiri* was erected and also new schools of art emerged at *Bharhut*, *Bodhgaya*¹⁰⁹ and *Mathura*.

Stupa: The literal meaning of this word is knot or tuft of hair on the upper part of the head. In terms of architecture it is a hemispherical burial mound.¹¹⁰ The chief purpose for which the Buddhists erected stupas was to serve as monuments *enclosing* relics of the Buddha or Buddhist saints. Some of them however contained no relics, but were merely commemorative of the important events of Buddha's life.

¹⁰⁶ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 56-59.

¹⁰⁷ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁰⁸ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 28.



Figure 29: Fronal View of cave at Bhaja

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

These aesthetically imbibing caves have numerous cells and rooms, which were made for the sacred specialists. Like Ajanta there are eight hundred rock-cut caves in Western India, which were monastical setups made for learning religion and also art. Many of these monastical institutions received lavish donations from opulent traders.¹¹¹

Jainism was another unorthodox religion and initially believed in atheistic realism but later on it also conceived the idea of *Bhakti*.¹¹² Like *Hindu* temples and *Buddhist chaityas*, *Jinaytan* also occupy significant place in the history of sacred complexes of India.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Bongard-Levin, G. M., *op. cit.*, p. 179.

¹¹² *Ibid*, pp. 180-81.

¹¹³ Sharma, Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Apart from Buddhist sacred complexes, Jaina monastical settlements were also made. Hathi-gumpha and Rani-gumpha caves of Orissa were carved out during the period of Mahameghvahan Kharvela who was a great patron of Jaina religion.¹¹⁴ The Rānigumpha cave also comprise various monastic cells made for Jaina monks who lived highly austere life.¹¹⁵

After the downfall of Śungas in North India Kushanas rulers extended their political sway on the larger part of the Gangetic valley. *Kushanas* were great patrons of art.¹¹⁶ The *Gandhara* art reached to its pinnacle because of their patronage.¹¹⁷ The Kushana rulers developed Mathura, a complex comprising icons of Kushana rulers and also of various deities.¹¹⁸ Advent of Kushanas in India not only brought a change in political set up of this country. But it also influenced the society to a great extent by giving impetus to the growth of art, culture and above all to the development of Mahayana cult, which accepted Buddha as a divine one and started worshipping his idol.¹¹⁹ The enthusiastic support of the Kushanas and spirit of Buddhist monks expanded the territorial horizon of Buddhism, which became very popular in West-Asia, Central Asia and China.¹²⁰ Kushan's cultural capital Mathura is associated with Lord Krishna. It was a confluence of indigenous and alien cultural streams which was responsible for the rise of this city as a great cultural centre where folk, Brahmanical, Jaina and Buddhist art got opportunity for synchronization as well as development.

Hindu deities became favourite of the artists during Kushan period is very clear from the archaeological findings of Mathura which comprise figures of Vishnu,

¹¹⁴ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-02.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 103

¹¹⁶ Bongard-Levin, G. M., pp. 195-96.

¹¹⁷ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.10.

¹¹⁹ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 122.

¹²⁰ Bongard-Levin, G. M., *op. cit.*, pp. 200-01.

Balrama and other Hindu Gods and Goddesses.¹²¹ The genesis of the Hindu sacred complexes can be related to the sacred figures found from Mathura which were kept in holy steads made for them.

Although during the time of Guptas the activity in this regard was heightened in an attempt to revive the glory of Brahmanism which had eclipsed for some centuries due to the political tutelage given to Buddhism and Jainism¹²².

Since then, the followers of the orthodox Hinduism spared no efforts to make the best use of the medium of temple for the promotion of Brahmanical faith. Their social values and had not only succeeded in re-establishing their religion but also developed complexes magnificent in beauty and grandeur¹²³. The Gupta period marked the beginning of Indian temple architecture in North India which was made in highly durable materials like brick and stone¹²⁴. The monuments of this period show, that it was a formative stage of experimentation in materials as well as in forms and designs out of which two significant temple styles developed in North and South India. The Gupta temples are simple and modest structures, but their bearing upon latter developments is of great significance¹²⁵. Now free from the limitations inherent in wood and bamboo constructions and in cave excavations, Indian builders used stone as a medium efficiently to evoke the admiring observation of people¹²⁶. This also certifies that in Gupta period Brahmanical holy steads became very popular among the devotees and these new sanctuaries became centers of various cultural activities.

Each of them consists of a simple square sanctum cella with an open pillared porch in the front. The sanctum of the temple designed like a cubical cella (*garbha-griha*) with a single entrance and a porch (*mandapa*), appeared for the

¹²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 196-98.

¹²² Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹²³ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹²⁴ Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 11

¹²⁶ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.* pp. 24-25.

first time as an integrated composition in the early Gupta temple of Sānchi.¹²⁷ The second type of Gupta temple is represented by Parvati temple at Nachana Kuthara¹²⁸ and the Siva temple at Bhumara.¹²⁹ Each temple consists of a flat- roofed square sanctum-cella added with a bigger square hall. The bigger hall which provides a covered ambulatory (*pradakshina*) around the inner sanctum is preceded by a slightly smaller rectangular porch of the open type in front. Notable example of the third category of temples are seen in the Dasavatar¹³⁰ temple at Deogarh Jhansi district. Temple consists of a square sanctum cella supported on a high basement and covered by a squat *sikhara*. Though there is the same simplicity of design, as in the first two groups, certain significant developments may be noticed. A high platform as the base and a tower as the superstructure of the sanctum add much to the elevation of the composition.¹³¹ The classical texts written on temple architecture define temple as a consecrated place, which has an inherent divine character, owing to the structure as well as the functions that occur in it.¹³²

The temple is built according to the prescriptions laid down in the agamic literature.¹³³ The temple architecture is not entirely governed by functional needs although this is certainly a consideration but it is essentially symbolic in nature. The Agamic texts ordain that the devotee must look upon the temple as the physical body of the deity for whom the temple is built.¹³⁴

In the late fifth century CE., the idea of super structure had emerged which was to guide the whole development of these super-structures for centuries to

¹²⁷ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 199.

¹²⁸ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 46

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 49

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 47.

¹³¹ Srinivasan, P. R., *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹³² *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

¹³³ Srinivasan, P. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 11

come.¹³⁵ This could be broadly categorized into two types; *shikhara* and *vimana*.¹³⁶ While *shikhara* pattern was adopted in North India, *vimana* was prevalent in South India.

In any case, the temple is symbolic of the physical frame that the divine presence assumes for the sake of devotees. The sanctum, where the icon is installed, is the most important part, of the temple and the icon is the most significant deity in the sanctum. Tirumular was an unequivocal champion of the temple cult. By advising people to follow right conduct he encouraged them to build new temples for worship.¹³⁷ The Śaiva Agamas also contributed to the popularity of the temples. They usually contained a section called Kriyapad, dealing with the construction of temples, installation of images and other related matter. . The popularity of the temples owed much to the munificent patronage of the kings. Land grants and fabulous wealth given to temples caused great spurt in economic activities in the areas where sacred structures were made and these types of areas developed as popular urban centres.¹³⁸ The popularity of the practice of temple-building owed much to the Jaina initiative in this direction since the Jainas lived surrounded by the Śaivas who constructed numerous temples, they also built, temples to compete with Śaivas.¹³⁹

The numerical growth of the temples in Deccan under the patronage of Chalukyas coincided with the development of the Bhakti cult which inspired the erection of temples on large scale.¹⁴⁰ The Chalukyan temples of Aihole had three important limbs-the spire, the hall of reception, and the circumambulation

¹³⁵ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 207

¹³⁷ Sidhantashastree, Rabindra Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹³⁸ Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁰ Ramesh, K. V. (1984). *Chalukyas of Vatapi*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan. p. 68.

path.¹⁴¹ The spire (Sikhara) and its fluted finial (Amalaka sila) were meant to distinguish the temple from secular buildings while the ambulatory (Pradakshina) was intended for ritual circumambulation of the sanctum sanctorum. Most of the important religious complexes belonging to Chalukya period are situated at Pattadakkal, Badami and Aihole.¹⁴²

After the replacement of the imperial Chalukyas, because of the patronage given by the new rulers Pallavas and Rastrakutas temple-building in the region of Maharashtra received tremendous impetus.¹⁴³ Pallavas were great builders and their patronage to artists and artisans resulted in growth stupendous masonic work in Tamil Nadu region.

Feudal conditions leading to decentralization of administrative and economic power helped the spread of temples.¹⁴⁴ Local leaders in provinces, districts, sub- divisions and villages vied with one another in building temples, establishing cults and providing funds for their proper maintenance.

The feudal lords with vast resources at their command gave every possible support to the temples and the attached routine.¹⁴⁵ In port towns and market towns of South India temples received extensive support from the merchants. Organized in to guilds, they were better equipped to support religious institutions.¹⁴⁶

The Pallavas of the south were originally Buddhist but they have converted to Brahmanism in about the fifth century A.D. From the first they seem to have been great traders and to have loved the sea: coins of the Bactrians, Andhras and Romans have been found in the sands of their chief sea port at Mamallapuram.

¹⁴¹ Srinivasan, P. R., *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹⁴² Hardy, Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

¹⁴³ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 340.

¹⁴⁴ Ramnaiah, J., *op. cit.* p. 228.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 229

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 229.

It was during the reign of the great Narsinghavarman that this sea side emporium began to as a great artistic centre¹⁴⁷. Mamallapuram has some beautiful cave temples, structural temples and a gigantic open air reliefs. The open - relief of the sacred complex of Mahabalipuram depicts 'Descent of the Ganges' scene¹⁴⁸. Farther to the left, and in the faces of adjacent boulders, are carved Mandapas, fronted by typical Pallava pillars partly composed of squatting lions, and containing reliefs which illustrate Hindu mythology¹⁴⁹. Among the familiar subjects are Vishnu as Cosmic Boar, Varaha; Vishnu asleep on giant serpent, dreaming the cosmic Night mare (Vishnu Anantsayin); and, perhaps the most beautiful of all, Durga slaying the Buffalo Demon¹⁵⁰.

At the southern edge of Mamallapuram is a group of free-standing temples. These five temples are detailed replicas of ancient wooden structures¹⁵¹. They are called Rathas, which means car or chariot, and indicates that they are vehicles of the gods. The smallest of them, on the north, the Draupadi Rath, reproduces a square, planned, thatched wooden temple. Arjuna Rath¹⁵² emulates a *Vihara*, Bhima the largest is remarkable for its oblong, barreled chaitya cave - type roof and Dharamraja has got the storeys¹⁵³. The fifth one called Sahdeva Rath is abbreviated version of Bhima Rath¹⁵⁴.

Shore temple, so called because it stands by the sea has two shrines, one of Śiva and another of Vishnu Anantsayin¹⁵⁵. The design of the Shore Temple is important because it is the earliest known example of a stone-built temple in the South India. Another very important sacred complex developed during this

¹⁴⁷ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 73

¹⁴⁸ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 92.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 94.

¹⁵¹ Srinivasan, K. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 34

¹⁵³ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 75

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.77.

period was Kanchipuram where exists the well-known Vaikuntha- Perumal¹⁵⁶ temple.

Kanchipuram was a great seat of Vedic learning and also a rich commercial centre.

The Guptas rulers inspired erection of magnificent temples and provided them with munificent land grants. Sacred centres in Deccan like *Pattadkkal*, *Badami* and *Aihole* developed under the patronage of *Chalukyas*. The famous Ellora, a sacred complex of Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanical faith received tutelege of the *Rāṣtrakuta Krishna* I and other rulers of this dynasty. Krishna I was a great builder and has the credit of creating the rock wonder of India, the *Kailāsh* temple.

Kailāsh is situated near *Ghrisnivar jyotirlingh*. Now a temple of nagar style made in late Maratha phase¹⁵⁷. According to legends the word *Ghrisnesvara* mean Śiva whose abode is in a meticulously and magnificently carved out monolithic temples. Ellora in *puranic* literature has been mentioned as Elapura, a *tīrthā*¹⁵⁸. But probably rose into prominence after the making cave no. 16, that is the Kailāsh temple, the logically Śiva's spiritual abode.

The Pallava rulers artistically developed sacred complexes like Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram. They embellished these sacred centres with bas-reliefs having depictions of epic stories and with aesthetically imbedding temples.¹⁵⁹

The Rāṣtrakutas were highly enthusiastic in spreading Maheshvara Śaivism as evident from the figure of Mahāyogi Śiva on the Shukanasa of the Kailāsh temple.¹⁶⁰ M. N. Deshpande has enlightened on the monolithic temple of

¹⁵⁶ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 80

¹⁵⁷ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p.7.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8

¹⁵⁹ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁶⁰ Dayalan, D., *op. cit.* p.28

Kailāsh at Ellora had the impact of Shankara's philosophy of *advaita*¹⁶¹ (monism). The first glimpse of the association of the monolithic temple with the *advaita* philosophy has come from a couplet by Saint Jnaneshvara of Maharashtra in his greatest philosophical work *Amritanubhava* in Marathi.¹⁶² The couplet describes the nature of Advaita-bhakti as follows:

Deva deula parivaru kijekoruni dongaru
Taisa bhaktika vyavaharukana vhava II

-Amritanubhava (9.43)

Professor R. D. Ranade explains the above verse as: “*In the supreme devotion, therefore, the devotee has nothing but God even for his material or worship. Here, it may be impossible, for he tells us that from the same rock are carved the idol of God, the temple and God's attendants, which seem to be different, and are yet one.*”¹⁶³

Temples are bound with the institution of kingship. A king was supposed to be a mediator between the human and divine worlds. Royal temples were a medium of royal giving, bringing prosperity to the community and religious merit to the giver. It may be surmised from the depiction of Śaivite pantheon in Kailāsh temple complex that Raṣtrakuta dynasty was devotee of Śiva when the temple was built.

It would be appropriate to say that Indian temple architecture is the expression of a spiritual and religious culture and should be seen with a vast and profound understanding best in solitude when the soul is at leisure and mind free from worldly affairs.

¹⁶¹ Deshpande, M. N. (1988). „Kailāśa: A Study in its Symbolism in the Light of Contemporary Philosophical Concepts and Tradition” in *Ellora Caves: Sculptures and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all). New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 230-235.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 236

¹⁶³ Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, p.6.

The Buddhist, Hindu and Jain establishments were the main centres to promote learning and fine arts. The construction of divine edifices was considered as a meritorious act of the highest rank. The motives underlying the construction and establishment of temples are mainly religious. The religious motives proved as the biggest incentive for the art and architecture to develop in varied forms in India.



Development of Buddhist Cave Architecture at Ellora

Ellora has most elaborately carved specimens of the Buddhist styles of cave architecture. During the Gupta period, Mahayana Buddhism produced cave excavations at a number of sites. These sites were located in the Western Ghat Mountains of the Deccan. The initial reappearance of the cave *viharas* occurred under the Vakatakas.¹ The period between 580 and 600 A. D. is crucial to an understanding that initiated the Ellora cycle. In terms of architecture and iconography, the caves of Buddhist Ellora would seem to reveal a partial migration from Ajanta to Ellora.² The *vihara* caves at Ajanta (cave no. 6) Badami (cave no.1) became more significant due to the significant development in their architectural mode. It can be deduced that except for the iconic representation on the stupa and the walls and the facade nothing further was left to evolve a finite temple plan.³

Anecdotes of Buddhism

Gautama, the Buddha was the son of the king of Kapilavastu, a small state in the north of Bihar. He at the age of twenty-nine left his palace, his wife, and infant child, and became a mendicant in search of truth of life.⁴ After some six years, while engaged in a long and strict fast under a *pipal* tree near Gaya. After a hard penance, he attained enlightenment.⁵ He is also called Sakya Muni, the

¹ Huntington, Susan L. (1985). *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York and Tokyo: Weather Hill. p. 239.

² Spink, Walter. (1967). *Ajanta to Ellora*. Bombay: Marg Publications. p. 10.

³ Bakshi, S. R. (2008). *Architecture in Indian Sub-Continent*. Delhi: Vista International Publishing. pp. 68-69.

⁴ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

⁵ *Buddhist Shrines in India*, (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1956), p. 6.

Muni or ascetic of the Sakya race. Accompanied by his disciples he wandered about from place to place, principally in Gangetic India. He survived on the offerings placed in his alms-bowl and support given by his wealthier converts. He pointed out paths that led to nirvana while teaching men the emptiness and pride of all practical things. After forty-five years of attaining enlightenment, Sakya Muni died in the north of Gorakhpur district.⁶ His disciples burnt his body and collected his relics. These relics became objects of worship afterwards. As Buddhism sprang from Brahmanism it might, however, be regarded as a modification or one of its many sects or schools. Buddhism did not at first differ from Brahmanism so as to assume a position of hostility to it or disparage its literature. It grew up slowly, and many of its most distinguished converts were Brahmans. Under the great emperor Asoka, about 260 BCE, it received the royal favour and patronage which helped to spread widely. The Buddhist traditions are full of the name of this king as the founder of temples, *viharas* or monasteries, stupas and other edifices. His son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra became devotees, and missions were sent out to all parts of India and other countries of Asia.⁷

The Buddhist religion flourished and spread for centuries. Many Chinese travellers came to India to visit the sites associated with the Buddha, to learn its laws, and carry away the books containing his teachings.⁸ In the seventh century, it had begun to decline, in the eighth it was apparently rapidly disappearing, and shortly after became almost extinct in India. Though it remained in Benares, and perhaps in Bharoch, till the eleventh century.⁹ It has

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁷ Beck, Elisabeth. (2006). *Pallava Rock Architecture and Sculpture*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society. p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁹ Kail, Owen C. (1975). *Buddhist cave Temples of India*, Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala & Sons & Co. Private Ltd. p. 118.

been thought that it was extinguished by Brahmanical oppression but the evidence is not sufficient to establish this.

It were the Buddhists who first carved rock temples and monasteries. The earlier ones were a plain square hall with cells at the back and sides for monks, and an arched or flat-roofed cave, often with a circular apse at the back around a dagoba for worship, were the usual forms. The dagoba is a low thick cylinder supporting a hemi-spherical dome surmounted by a square capital, and was meant to enshrine a relic of Buddha.¹⁰ Relics, however, were probably placed upon the capital of the dagoba, which was almost always covered by a wooden umbrella. Little sculpture was at first employed in any of these works. Buddha did not preach idol- worship, but in course of time his own image came to be worshipped. This practice further repeated in all parts of the caves, and still later other beings were associated with him as objects of worship.¹¹

Ellora as a Buddhist site

In general Buddhism has three major branches-Hinyana, Mahayana and Vajrayana.¹² All the Ajanta caves belong to Buddhist religion and much earlier than caves at Ellora in the history of the Buddhist religion and architecture.¹³ Ajanta's Mahayana phase started probably after five of six centuries CE. The earlier caves were 8, 9, 10, 12, 13. These belonged to Hinyana sect of Buddhism. The caves of Mahayana period were excavated between 465 CE and 500 CE.¹⁴ They were excavated during the Vakataka King Harisena's reign as evident from the cave 17 inscription.¹⁵ The series at Ellora commenced nearly at the time when the excavations at Ajanta ceased. The introduction of temples

¹⁰ Burgess, James. (1972). *Elura Cave Temples*. Varanasi: Indological Books. p. 4.

¹¹ Beck, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹² Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹³ Spink, Walter, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid*. p. 8.

belonging to the Hindu and Jain religions added new dimensions at the site.¹⁶ It varied picture of the mythology of India during the period of its greatest vigour manifested at Ellora is nowhere else to be found.

At Ajanta, the Hinyana Buddhists started excavating a group of monasteries and temples towards the beginning of the Christian era.¹⁷ At Ellora, no earlier excavations had been commenced like Ajanta. The excavation on the site was commenced by the followers of the Mahayana.¹⁸ It finally developed under the Hindus and into a comprehensive range of Indian rock-cut monuments. The Mahayana movement at Ajanta and Ellora seemingly started about the same time, whereas the group at Aurangabad seems to be of a slightly later date and might be a branch from Ellora.¹⁹

According to Owen C. Kail,²⁰ *“the Buddhist were the earliest of the three great religious communities to occupy this site. These caves are in the southern end of the scarp which is the most favourable position. Here, they practiced their religion for nearly two centuries, from about 450 CE to 650 CE. Although contemporary with Ajanta, there are architectural and sculptural differences at Ellora which indicate that each monastic establishments followed its own particular system. There is an unrestrained abundance of sculptured figures on the walls, and the doors of the shrines are invariably flanked by towering Bodhisattavas, often in the company of female deities, Śaktis and Tārās or saviouresses. Bodhisattavas and their female counterparts not only appear independently but the function of the compassionate Avalokitesvara, as the Saviour of the Eight Great perils is given to Tara.”*²¹ The new experimentation let the image of the Buddha in the shrine seems dwarfed by the gigantic

¹⁶ Malandra, Geri H. (1993). *Unfolding a Mandala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora*. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. XVII.

¹⁷ *Buddhist Shrines in India*, (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1956), pp. 71-72.

¹⁸ Brown, Percy. (1971). *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd. p. 57.

¹⁹ Kannal, Deepak H. (1996). *Ellora an Enigma in sculptural Styles*. New Delhi: Books & Books. p. 44.

²⁰ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 118.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 119

representations of *Bodhisattavas* and the familiar figures of the Mahayana pantheon.



Figure 30: A gigantic Bodhisattavas guarding the door

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The ideas of magic and sexual mysticism began to enter into the religions in India from about the fifth century CE.²² Consequently Mahayana Buddhism was also affected by these developments. Although *Vajrayana*, the vehicle of the thunderbolt, as it later came to be known became prominent and flourished in Eastern India during eighth century. Meantime, its roots had already spread to Andhra, the Deccan and to Gujarat.²³ The followers of these doctrines reached Aurangabad late in the sixth or at the beginning of seventh century. They influenced the existing Mahayana communities in the locality. The elements of Vajrayana are quite visible at Ellora. A congregation of divine Bodhisattavas

²² Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 118-19.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 120

with their Śaktis and Tārās and contended iconography in competition with Brahmanical deities represent the Vajrayana characteristics.²⁴

Most of the caves at Ellora were originally painted, traces of which are still available. There is, however, no mural at Ellora which can compare with any at Ajanta. With the exception of Ellora Chaitya and the caves numbered 11 and 12, the monasteries are all single storied excavations, consisting of a verandah, a large central hall and a shrine.²⁵

The Ellora Buddhist caves are quite on large scale like Ajanta but differ in their arrangement. Though the sculptures are abundant but vary in its subjects and details as compare to Ajanta. The ornamentation is much less elaborate but number of deities has been increased. Naga-hooded figures are often represented in the sculptures and paintings at Ajanta, but at Ellora they are missing.²⁶ Buddha is represented at Ajanta without any supporters, or with only two, whereas at Ellora he is most frequently attended by six, eight, or ten of the Bodhisattvas.²⁷

Śakti figures are likewise much more frequent on the walls of these caves, than at Ajanta. The sculptures differ also when compared with the caves in other parts of India. But the variations are probably due to difference of sects or schools into which the Buddhists were very early divided. The excavations run nearly north and south for about a mile and a quarter in the scarp of a large plateau.²⁸

The Buddhist group is located in the south the Jain group is in the north and the Brahmanical group is between them. The oldest Buddhist caves are Nos. 1, 3, and 7 and may date from 450 to 550 CE. Caves 2 and 5 were probably contemporary with the Visvakarma, which with two or three other caves was

²⁴ Ibid, p. 121

²⁵ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, 59-60.

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 58-59.

²⁷ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 118.

²⁸ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 120

excavated during the seventh century CE. Nos. 8, 9 and 11 were perhaps even later than this.²⁹

The Buddhist dedication of Ajanta kept its architectural traits within one very well defined type. But at Ellora one can notice a wider scope for the artist. It was a place of pilgrimage for all three sects viz. Buddhist, Hindu and Jaina.³⁰ As per site the Buddhist group of monasteries and a *Chaitya* house. The *Chaitya* house is known as Vishwakarmaka Jhopra.³¹ Here it is interesting with the nomenclature given to this cave, by name it suggests its association with Hindu, but actually a Buddhist shrine. It is located in the extreme south, which suggests that it was the earliest among this group.

Ellora was not appropriated by any particular sect on contrary with Ajanta. The Vishvakarma *Chaitya* house might have been a chapel for the artisans. This suggests a local tradition maintained by the people for the cave.

The abundant of political support for Buddhism in the early sixth century caused the Mahayana Buddhism became more prominent.³² Buddhist were the first to seek out Ellora, due to its appropriate location on trade route. The commercial peripheral location and political influences also supplanted the Buddhist creed at Ellora. They also set out to rejuvenate the doctrine with contacts seemingly established with Buddhist centres in south Bihar through Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh.³³ K.V. Soundra Rajan has proposed that due to the manifestations of the contacts with north, the Ellora in South India became the

²⁹ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

³⁰ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, 58-59.

³¹ Havell, E. B. (2000). *Encyclopaedia of Architecture in the Indian Subcontinent, Vol-1 Ancient and Early Medieval*. New Delhi, Aryan Books International. p. 189.

³² Rajan, K. V. Soundra. (1998). *Rock-cut Temple Styles: Early Pandyan Art and the Ellora Shrines*. Mumbai: Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1998), p. 116.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 116-17.

first site of the Vajrayana Buddhism.³⁴ The site consequently resulted in flourished Vajrayana Buddhist art in the late seventh and early eighth centuries for the first time in Deccan.³⁵ The Buddhist carvings at Ellora suggests that the skill of artists were probably different to skill of artisans worked at Ajanta.³⁶ Certainly, it cannot be a vague idea; if comparison can be made between two the difference would be easily noticeable. The carving and layout provides ample examples. However, it is also true that the artisans were capable of breaking new grounds either it is Buddhist or Brahmanical architecture by carving heterogeneous subjects in art.³⁷ The new combinations and improvisations in the art of Ellora influenced the art of Ellora on stylistic grounds.³⁸

While discussing about the stupa, *chaitya* and *viharas* of Buddhist sect, it is important to know the reason behind establishment of *viharas*. The reason goes thus as, ‘*the monks said to Buddha that during the four months of rainy season they could not leave the place of temporary stay, they were expected to, and cross the flooded rivers to reach the next village the next day. Buddha, it is said, saw the point and allowed them to live at one place during this period. It was called varsavasa. The vihara was thus meant to be only a temporary abode, strictly for four months in a year belonging to the rainy season.*’³⁹ However, this kind of *vihara* living became permanent on round the year basis with the passage of time, particularly for old monks.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 118

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 119

³⁶ Brown, Percy *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³⁷ Kannal, Deepak H., *op cit.*, p. 53.

³⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

³⁹ Gupta, S. P. & Vijayakumar, S. (2010). *Temples in India-Origin and Developmental Stages*. New Delhi: Centre for Research and Training in History, Archaeology and Paleo-Environment and D. K. Printworld (p) Ltd. p. 31.

The Buddhist Caves at Ellora

At the site of Ellora, Buddhist were first to occupy that is why their monasteries are located in the most favourable side of the scarp.⁴⁰ Here an attempt has been made to analyze architectural details of the Buddhist cave. The detailed plan of the caves have been discussed in this chapter to know the innovations and experiments occurred at different levels in Buddhist caves.

Cave No.1



Figure 31: Inner Veranda of Cave - I
Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

Dhedwada



Figure 32: Facade of Cave-I
Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The first few Buddhist caves are popularly known as the Dhedavada, or low castes' quarter.⁴¹ This might have originated as a nickname given in sarcasm by the Brahmans, and from the quarter of the Theros or Buddhist priests or similarity of sound to Theravada. It is probably the oldest cave at Ellora, and appears to have been attached to the next cave. As probably majority of caves the Buddha converts were made from Dhedas and other partially aboriginal low-caste tribes the name of Dheda.⁴² It is a *vihara*, 41 feet 6 inches by 42 feet, and has eight cells, four in the back and four in the south side. The front has fallen, and but one pillar remains. There is also another cell outside, in the south of the verandah.⁴³

⁴⁰ Brown, Percy *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 59

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 59.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 60

Cave No. 2

It is significantly different from the other excavations. It is a little different from the usual cells leading out from the hall. Two side galleries have been added which are screened by an additional row of four



Figure 33: Facade of Cave - 2 The door is flanked of Bodhisattavas

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

pillars. It was evidently a *vihara* and its front was divided into compartments. The roof of the verandah was supported by four pillars with pilasters at the ends. The front having fat dwarf figures in grotesque attitudes. The northern side has a fat squatting figure with a high and elaborate head-dress, a jewelled cord over the breast, and attended by a chauri-bearer.⁴⁴

Probably a similar figure was on the south side, but only the female attendant is left. A *gandharva* holding a garland over her head. Two tall *dvārapalas*, with lofty head-dresses and aureoles, stand by the door. They have *Gandharvas* over their shoulders. A female figure with a nimbus behind her head is shown standing between the *dvārapāla* and the door.⁴⁵ The front wall has a door and two windows and the doorjambs are covered with sculptures of Buddha. The cave measures 48 feet square, excluding the lateral galleries on each side. The verandah is decorated with panels of seated Buddha and the entrance to the hall is guarded by Avlokitesvara and Vajrapani.⁴⁶ An aisle has been formed by twelve massive pillars all-round the hall which is 14 meters square. The front

⁴⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2003). *Monumental Legacy: Ellora*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 13.

⁴⁵ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 13.

wall of the hall is carved with images of the Buddha and with Tara with female attendants, all standing on a lotus.⁴⁷ The main pillars of the hall are highly ornamental. The upper members resembling a succession of diminishing petals. These are surmounted by an *amalaka* or melon-shaped capital, usually referred to as a compressed cushion.⁴⁸

On both side of the hall pillared vestibules or galleries leading to the subsidiary shrines are located. The galleries contain life-size images of the Buddha with Bodhisattavas as attendant. The entrance to the main shrine is flanked by Avalokitesvara and Manjusri. On the rear wall a figure of the Buddha seated on a lion throne with Padmapani (Avalokitesvara) and Manjusri depicted has been depicted.⁴⁹



Figure 34: Mahatama Buddha with Chauri-bearer

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

⁴⁷ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

⁴⁸ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁴⁹ Dhavlikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

The roof is supported by twelve massive columns arranged in a square. These pillars have stylish cushion capitals and high square bases. The pillars stand on a platform about 18 inches above the front of the side aisles. With the exception of four pillars in the back row, the other columns have little dwarf figures on the upper corners of the square portions of the shafts.⁵⁰ The spaces between the dwarf figures and a belt below them, are covered with rich and varied arabesques.⁵¹ Each side gallery has four pillars of different designs. The front portion is carved with florid work and contains figures of musicians. In each of the five compartments at the back of the galleries. A figure of seated Buddha like the colossal has been carved in the shrine. The figure is flanked by *chauri-bearers*, the one on the right holding a lotus-bud.⁵²



Figure 35: Seated Budha in the Shrine

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

⁵⁰ Burgess, James *op. cit.*, pp. 14-17.

⁵¹ The arabesque is a form of artistic decoration consisting of surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or plain lines, often combined with other elements.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 9.

Some of the figures in the side galleries are unfinished. The *dvārapālas* of the shrine are 13 to 14 feet high. On the left side is Padmapani is holding a rosary in the right hand and a lotus stalk in the left.⁵³ His robe is fastened round the waist by a string. His head-dress is depicted in the *jata* style of ascetics, ornamented in front with a small image of Amitabha Buddha has been carved. The other figure, perhaps Indra, has a very richly jewelled head-dress. A small dagobahas been carved in the front of it. He is ornamented with bracelets, armlets, and a thick jewelled Brahmanical cord, while a small bouquet of flowers is in his right hand. They are attended by two pairs of *Gandharvas* above and midway up the wall are other figures bearing garlands.⁵⁴

A female worshipper with a flower in her right hand has been deoicted between each dvārapāla. The shrine contains a colossal image of Buddha seated on a lion throne in the teaching attitude. His feet are shown resting on a nearly circular plinth. His head is surrounded with the nimbus and flanked by a *gandharva* on either side. The chauri-bearers are also depicted. On each sidewall there is a colossal standing figure of Buddha. There are four worshipping figures in position of one above another in the corners.⁵⁵

A double cell in line with the side aisles is located on each side of the shrine. Over the front wall in the outer cell the figures of Buddha with attendants have been carved. The largest figure is of a female, probably *Pandara*, the mother of Padmapani or some other form of the Tārās. She is attended by two smaller figures with lotus flowers, and has six *vidyadhara*s over her head. In her right hand, she probably held a rosary. The aureole is nicely carved behind her head.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁵⁴ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 37

⁵⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 13.

On the front of the head-dress is the *dagoba*, and large earrings of different forms are in her ears. There are two small *dagobas* in relief over an image of Buddha, in the cell on the south of the shrine. A third *dagoba* is on the end of the south gallery. ⁵⁷ The style of the dagoba is plain, but the type is not an early one. This suggests a late date for the cave which has not even the arched roof of the chaitya. It may have been begun in the 5th or 6th century CE, and the carvings may have been carried down to the 7th century CE.⁵⁸ Next to the cave is a deep water cistern, now filled up with earth

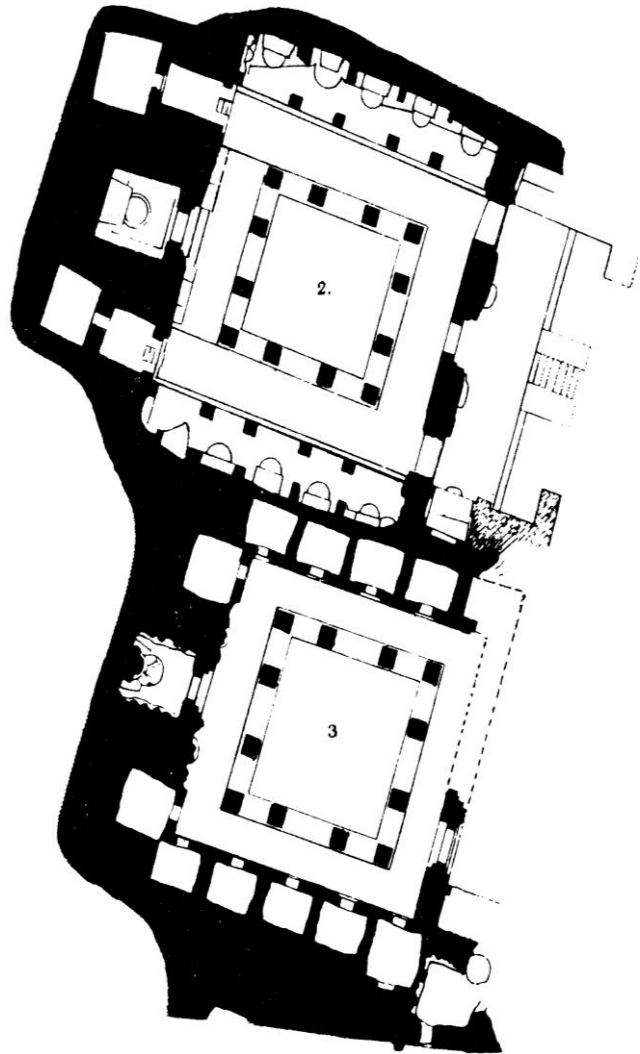


Figure 36: Plans of Caves 2 and 3
 Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

Cave No. 3

The adjacent cave no. 3 is about the same size. It is an unfinished *vihara*, probably a little older than Cave 2. There are twelve cells in the side walls including the two on either side of the shrine. The litany of Avalokitesvara in the verandah and the Bodhisattavas Padmapani and Vajrapani as *dwarपालas* have been depicted.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁵⁸ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

The verandah and the south half of the front wall are gone. The cave is 46 feet square and the roof is supported by twelve columns. These pillars are decorated with the vase foliage motif form an aisle around the hall. Three of the columns on each side are only blocked out and have octagonal necks. There are four mendicants in the corners of the shrine but the uppermost have no attendants as in Cave 2.⁶⁰

The shrine itself is smaller, although otherwise similar to the cave 2. On the north wall are two small sculptures of Buddha flanked by *chauri-bearers*. A window in the front wall north of the door has been divided by two colonnades. It has been bordered outside by a beautiful florid pattern. In the north end of the verandah, there is a chapel containing a Buddha, with his legs crossed in front. His hands are moulded in the teaching attitude. He is seated on the lotus throne, supported by small figures having snake-hoods over their heads.⁶¹

The male figures have been decorated with three, five, or seven hoods, and the females with one or three. Buddha is attended by two *chauri-bearers*, with *gandharvas* above their heads. The left *chauri-bearer* has a jata of plaited hair, with long locks hanging over the front of his shoulders, and a lotus in his left hand. On the right of this apartment is a small damaged pictorial litany.⁶²



Figure 37: Buddha with Chauri bearer

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

⁶⁰ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁶¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 16

Cave No. 4

Cave no. 4 was not completed and is also much ruined. A door in the right wall leads to a shrine. The left wall which is designed for cells has been left unfinished. The inner hall is devoid of pillars except for two pillars between pilasters in front of the shrine. The figures of Bodhisattavas as dvarpalas or as attendants of the



Figure 38: Facade of cave 4

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

Buddha have been depicted. The female Bodhisattavas are now shown prominently.⁶³ Figure of Avalokitesvara has been depicted on the left wall of the shrine. He is flanked by Tara and Bhrikuti. The former holding a lotus and the latter a string of beads. This theme also appears in the subsidiary shrine in front.⁶⁴

Cave is 35 feet wide and 39 feet deep up to two pillars and pilasters. These have capitals with drooping florid designs, and necks with thirty-two flutes with square shafts. A cross aisle is behind the pillars and at the left end of it is Lokeswara seated like Buddha.⁶⁵

He is shown with high *jata*, a small Buddha as crest on its front, and locks hanging down upon the shoulders. A lotus in the left thigh, a deer skin over the left shoulder and a rosary in the right hand have been depicted. A female to the right has a rosary and in the left has a flower bud. Over the first is a standing Buddha, and above this is another Buddha. He is shown seated cross-legged on a lotus, with the left hand down and the right hand raised.⁶⁶

⁶³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁶⁴ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

⁶⁵ James Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 11-12.

⁶⁶ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 119.

There are doors to two cells and to the shrine. The dvārapālas have elaborate head-dresses, and a dwarf stands between each dvārapāla and the door. The shrine contains a seated Buddha in the teaching attitude. A nimbus at the back of his head and the foliage of the sacred Bodhi tree rising from behind have been depicted nicely. The *chauri-bearers* stand at the rear of the throne but one of them is destroyed.⁶⁷



Figure 39: Bhadrasana Buddha Standing with Tara

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

While the other on Buddha's left is richly dressed, and wears a jewelled cord across his chest. A cell in the south has its western side broken away. It contains figures of Buddha with attendants, and a female with rosary. To the west of the door a figure of Padmapani has been carved. At the same side a sort of litany which has two supplicants instead of four, with a smaller flying figure of Padmapani before each group has been depicted.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

Cave No. 5: Maharwada

Maharwada is an exceptionally large monastery. The inner hall is divided by twenty-four pillars into nave, side, front and rear aisles. The two parallel plinths running the entire length of the nave similar to those in cave no. 10 at Kanheri.⁶⁹ The front aisle has a ruined annexe which consists of a small verandah, a shrine with processional path around it and cells in the sides of the passage.

In the centre of the side walls are two rectangular pillared vestibules with attached cells.

The left wall has an additional shrine preceded by a pillared antechamber. In the far end of the hall is the main shrine containing a seated figure of the Buddha is located.⁷⁰ He is attended by Avalokitesvara with Tara and Bhrikuti on the one side and Maitreya with two goddesses on the other. The pillars in the rear row are carved with decorative medallions, while the others resemble those in cave no. 2.⁷¹

This large vihara measures 117 feet deep by 58 feet 6 inches wide, excluding of two large side recesses. The roof is supported by twenty-four pillars with square

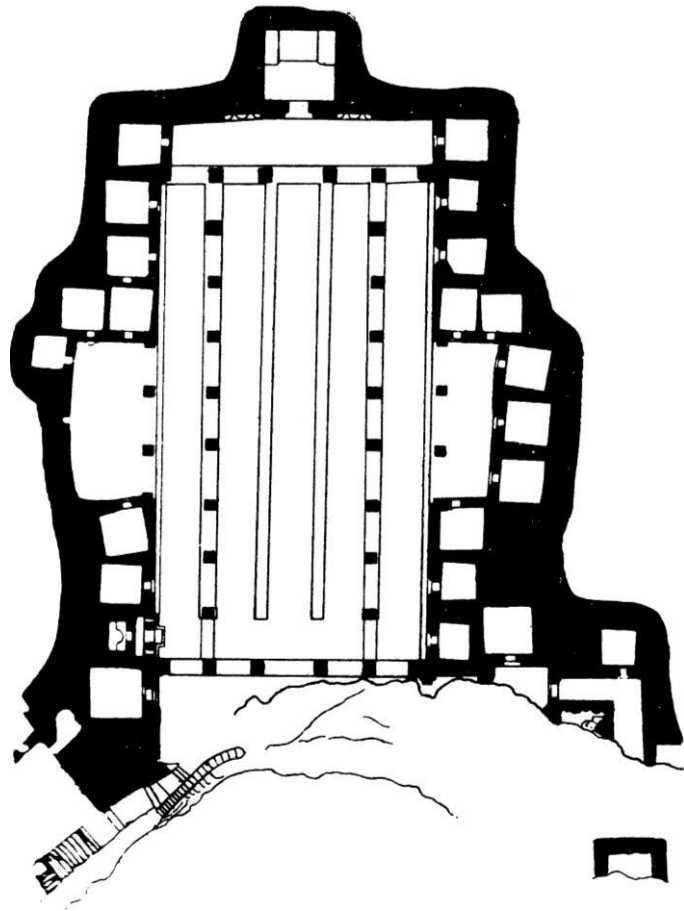


Figure 40: Plan of the Maharwada

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

⁶⁹ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁷⁰ Mahajan, Malti. (2004). *A gate to Ancient Indian Architecture*. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. p. 70.

⁷¹ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

shafts having thick compressed cushions. These are arranged in two rows from front to back. The space between is divided into three passages by two stone benches.⁷²

The cave was probably a *dharmasala* and its date may be fixed about the 6th or 7th century CE. It has about twenty cells for monks. At the entrance of the left aisle is a chapel which contained a figure of sitting Buddha. A large figure of seated Buddha with attendants has been carved in the shrine at the back. The shrine is guarded by separate attendants in arched recess on either side of the door.⁷³



Figure 41: Main Prayer Hall at Cave 5

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

On the north side, Padmapani is shown flanked by two small female figures with royal head-dresses. The other figure is ornate with more jewels and similarly attended, while *gandharvas* on clouds with garlands.⁷⁴

⁷² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷³ Kail, Owen C., p. 119-20.

⁷⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Cave No. 6

Cave no. 6 is a large excavation consisting of two vestibules on either side with cells in their side walls and an astylar hall. At the far end is the antechamber and shrine. Though architecturally similar to the other excavations, the walls of the antechamber are richly decorated with sculptures of the Vajrayana pantheon.⁷⁵

On the left wall Tara with male and female devotees has been depicted. On the right wall Mahamayuri is shown standing under well ornate canopy with female attendants and dwarfs. She is

the tantric goddess of spells and the magic arts. On either side of the doors of the sanctuary are Avlokitesvara and Vajrapani with male and female attendants.⁷⁶

The door posts of the sanctuary have been decorated with the river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna. An image of Buddha seated on a lion throne with attendants has been carved in the shrine. The side walls are embellished with rows of Buddha and images of male and female worshippers. Inside the shrine there are two panels of seated Buddha and his consort.⁷⁷



Figure 42: Colossal Image of Buddha cave 6

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies,
Gurgaon

⁷⁵ Burgess, Jas. (1883). *Report on Ellora Cave Temples and Brahmanical and Jaina Caves in Western India*. London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill. p. 6.

⁷⁶ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p.59.

⁷⁷ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 18.



Figure 43: Pillars with square base with vase and foliage design

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

On the south side of the cave, Buddha is shown with attendants. In addition, a female figure with attendants is also there. A circumambulation is round the cave and several cells are located on this passage and from the vestibule in front. But the rock has fallen now. A hall to the north of this is 26 feet by 28 feet 9 inches, and has a stair from Cave 4. The staircase is located below the hall.⁷⁸

The hall is entirely located on the west and there are three cells on the east. It is separated on the north from a still larger and lofty hall, by two pillars and pilasters, of which one pillar and pilaster remain. The central hall is 26 feet 6 inches by 43 feet, excluding of the antechamber. It is located at the east end, which is cut off by two pillars and their corresponding pilasters. Another hall to

⁷⁸ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, pp. 119-20.

the north is 27 feet by 29 feet. This one is similar to that on the south having three cells in the back.⁷⁹

The north end of the antechamber has a female figure dressed like Padmapani. The south end contains a figure represents Saraswati with a peacock at her left hand and a monk reading below. The dvārapālas, Padmapani and perhaps Manjusri, are tall and carefully cut with foliage over their heads.⁸⁰ Two *Gandharvas* are located above, and a male and female attendant are beside them. The door is simple but lofty and boldly cut. The shrine contains a large seated Buddha with the usual attendants. On the right side of the shrine is a panel containing three figures on lotus seats. All three have aureoles behind their heads.⁸¹

A similar compartment is located on the left side of the wall with male and female figures. These figures are attended by a dwarf, then a male behind her on one knee. An elephant's head and fore-foot, with a small figure representing the driver have been carved nearby. Three Buddha figures have been carved on wall above the panel in three rows.⁸²



Figure 44: A colossal image of Bodhisattava

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
New Delhi

⁷⁹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James. (1969). *The Cave Temples of India*. Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation. p. 12.

⁸⁰ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁸¹ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

⁸² Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 18.



Figure 45: Depiction of Tara on the northern end

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The north side has a passage divided from a balcony by two pillars. This passage leads to cave 9, which has a sculptured façade. It's architrave is divided into compartments by divisions carved with arabesques. The compartments alternately containing a sitting and a standing Buddha with attendants.⁸³ Three chaitya-windows have been carved above frieze. These windows are occupied by a figure of Buddha with many smaller human figures between the projecting members. Above at each corner, a Bodhisattva has been depicted with female attendants.⁸⁴

Caves No. 7

Caves 7 is below cave 6 and is a plain *vihara*. Its dimension is 51 feet 6 inches by 43 feet 6 inches. The roof is supported by four square columns and the cave

⁸³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁸⁴ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

has five cells at the back, and three on each side.⁸⁵ The cave is in ruined condition.

Cave No. 8

The shrine of cave no. 8 is projected into the hall. It has a procession path or passage all round similar to some of the monasteries at Aurangabad. The passage has three cells on the left and a pillared gallery at the back. The gallery is partially finished. In front of the shrine is a smaller chamber with a pillared chapel and a cell.⁸⁶

Sculptural decoration in this cave is much the same as in the other viharas. The Buddha is depicted in the midst of Maitreya, Vajrapani and Manjusri. Other Bodhisattavas are shown as dvarpalas with female devotees.⁸⁷

On the wall of the antechamber appears for the second time Mahamayuri with a female *chauri-bearer* has been depicted on her left. A monk has also been depicted as reading a manuscript. Within the sanctuary a seated image of the Buddha flanked Avlokitesvara accepting the homage of worshippers. Some of them are with offerings of fruit and others with incense. Both Avlokitesvaras are shown accepting the homage of worshippers.⁸⁸ Both Avalokitesvara and Maitreya on the other side are accompanied by their Śaktis. These Śaktis are holding a string of beads and a lotus. On the left, outside this monastery, a panel of Hariti and Panchika has been carved.⁸⁹

The inner hall is 28 feet by 25 feet, and has three cells on the north side. Two pillars and two pilasters screen are on the east from the shrine. The circumambulatory passage and a similar screen cuts it off from an outer apartment on the west. The front pair of pillars resemble those in cave 2.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Burgess, James, p. 14.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 15

⁸⁷ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁸⁸ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁸⁹ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 47

The bases of the other two pillars are high and square. The pillars have thirty-two flutes. The capitals are square and carved with scroll-leaf pattern. The door of the shrine has the usual dvārapalas and attendants. Padmapani however, has four arms, and a deer skin over his shoulder. Figures of devotees at his feet are small and behind them is a tall female with a flower in her left hand.⁹¹

A figure of *Gandharva* has been carved over her head. The other tall attendant has a similar companion on his left. She is holding a lotus flower and rosary in her hands.⁹² On the wall at the south entrance to the circumambulation a figure of Saraswati has been carved. A cell has been carved on the opposite side and two more in the passage. There is a long raised recess having two square pillars in front can be located behind the shrine.⁹³

The outer room is 28 feet by 17 feet, and has a slightly raised platform filling the west end. The north side has a shrine on a raised floor with two slender columns in front. It contains a seated Buddha on its back wall and attendants dressed nearly alike with Brahmanical sect. The attendant on Buddha's left holds a three-pronged object being the half of the Vajra or thunderbolt. On the west wall is Padmapani, with the female figures.⁹⁴

Cave No. 9

The next excavation is an open terrace with a parapet in front and pillared chapel at the back. The façade is divided into compartments containing a figure of the Buddha with Bodhisattavas. There are five chaitya arches above the facade which are decorated with images of the Buddha or of Avalokitesvara. An interesting sculpture is depicted as Tara as a savior of 'Eight Great Perils'. The shrine contains an image of the Buddha with attendant Bodhisattvas, female deities and devotees.⁹⁵

The architectural plan of consists of a small outer balcony and an inner covered portico 23 feet by 10 feet. This is separated by two pillars square below and

⁹¹ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 120.

⁹³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁹⁴ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, 120.

⁹⁵ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 20.

octagonal above, and with drooping-eared capitals. Two deep pilasters in the back wall with compressed cushion capitals.⁹⁶ It is divided into three compartments, of which the centre one has a seated Buddha with four *gandharvas* above. The compartment on the left has Padmapani, with two female attendants and two *gandharvas*. On the right has Indra, Manjusri or Vajrapani, with two females figures.⁹⁷

Cave No. 10: Visvakarma Cave

The Ellora Chaitya, cave no. 10 is known as Visvakarma or the carpenters' cave. It is the most remarkable cave in the Buddhist group.⁹⁸ The external appearance is so altered that it is difficult to recognise it in its original form.⁹⁹

It is also known as Sutar-ka-jhopra. It is frequented by carpenters who worship the image of Buddha as Visvakarma, the patron of their craft. It has a large open court in front, surrounded by a corridor.¹⁰⁰



Figure 46: Facade of Cave 10

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 20.

⁹⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁹⁸ *Buddhist Shrines in India*, (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1956), p. 80.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 81

¹⁰⁰ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 20.

The temple inside is 85 feet 10 inches by 43 feet, and is 34 feet high. The nave is separated from the aisles by twenty-eight octagonal columns. These columns are 14 feet high with plain bracket capitals. Two square pillars inside the entrance support the gallery and cut off the front aisle. The dagoba almost fills the far end of the nave, and is 15 feet 6 inches in diameter and about 27 feet high. A frontispiece almost 17 feet in height is attached to it. A colossal seated Buddha 11 feet high, with his feet down can be located on it.¹⁰¹ He has his usual attendants and on the arch above his head is the Bodhi tree with *Gandharvas* on each side.

The body of the dagoba is carved round with alternate broad and narrow panels. These panels are filled with figures of Buddha seated with his feet on the lotus. The capital is cut up by numerous offsets like the shafts of some pillars. The arched roof is carved in imitation of wooden ribs. Each rib has been carved rising behind a little Naga bust alternately male and female and joins a ridge-piece above. The arcade over the pillars is 4 feet deep and is divided into belts, the lower of which is carved with fat little *ganas* in all attitudes.¹⁰²



Figure 47: Chaitya Arch of Cave 10

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

¹⁰¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁰² Mahajan, Maiti, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

The upper is much deeper and is divided over each pillar so as to form compartments. In each compartment containing a seated Buddha with two attendants and two standing Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. The inner side of the gallery over the entrance is also divided into three compartments filled with figures.¹⁰³

The ends of the front corridor outside, contain two cells and two chapels with the usual Buddhist figures. A staircase from the west end of the north corridor leads to the gallery. It consists of an outer one over the corridor and an inner gallery over the front aisle is separated by the two pillars.¹⁰⁴

It divides the lower portion of the great window into three lights. The pillars of the corridors have tall square bases changing into octagons, then into sixteen and more sides, and then returning under the capital to the square by the vase and falling leaf pattern.¹⁰⁵

Four small chapels can be entered from the outer verandah. Each contains sculptures of Buddhist mythology in which the females have very elaborate headdresses. The chapel at the end of the verandah that passes the entrance has Padmapani. He is flanked by a female to the right having four arms and personifying the law.¹⁰⁶

The figure on the other side is also a female with two arms. Over the chapel to the right of the window is a group of fat little *ganas*. The projecting frieze that crowns the facade is elaborately sculptured with pairs of figures in compartments. On each side there are two small chapels. This has a long frieze of a forest scene, above which is an arcading containing amorous couples and scroll work. It composes the front or outer side of the parapet of the upper corridor.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, 121.

¹⁰⁶ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁷ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

The central corridor below has an unfinished shrine on the left an elaborate shrine dedicated to Avalokitesvara on the right. The latter consists of a pillared antechamber carved with a seated figure of the Bodhisattava, with Tara and other male and female deities. Images of Buddha with attendant Bodhisattavas are placed above these sculptures. The walls have additional images of the same Bodhisattava and of other Bodhsattvas and deities.¹⁰⁸



Figure 48: Flying Gandharvas in Cave 10

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

It may be noted that this cave is the last of its class and conspicuously all traces of wooden forms are lost. The great horse-shoe windows of the earlier *chaityas* are cut into three divisions with an attic window over the central opening. A recess on the right side of the front window contains Avalokitesvara with two female attendants and *Gandharvas*. A similar recess on the north side contains Manjusri.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Malandra, Geri H., p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 57.

In the north end of the balcony a female figure is holding a lotus in the centre. Eight figures of Buddha in line are above. Six figures of Buddha having lotus and seated with one foot down are on her left. While five are on her right. One of these being a female with four arms. On the south side a recess contains another statue of Avalokitesvara with female attendants. To the west of this was a portico similar to that on the north side having two pillars in front.¹¹⁰

There are three cells in the back and one of them in the east end has several seated and standing figures. One of the figure is four-armed. Next to this is a figure of Buddha with Padmapani and Vajrapani as supporters. On the either side of the door are elaborate panels, that on the right depicting Avalokitesvara with Prajnaparmita.¹¹¹

At the northern and southern ends of this verandah there are two recesses or alcoves, surmounted by a pyramid of chaitya arches. The recess on the left has a large image of Vajrapani with Tara on either side. There is a panel of *maithuna* couple above recess. That on the right has Avalokitesvara with Tara and Bhrikuti on either side below a panel of dwarfs above. The last vestige of wooden forms is the roof of the verandah which seems to rest on rafters.¹¹²



Figure 49: Bodhisattava Padampani with female attendant
Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
 New Delhi

¹¹⁰ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹¹¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 17

¹¹² Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The ends of two rafters are to be seen within the arch and the edge of a third protrudes through the face of the arch. The arch is crowned by *kirtimukha*, below which and on either side are flying *vidhyadharas*.¹¹³

This radical transformation of the famous chaitya arch is the final phase of its development. It is the last of its series and of its class, as no further development of the true lithic form of the chaitya arch exists anywhere in India. The date of this cave can be surmised by architectural style and can be ascribed to the first half of the 7th century.¹¹⁴

Interestingly, besides other features as mentioned above, the chaitya hall is larger than the two Mahayana chaityas at Ajanta. It is a splendid effort. The hall is separated into a front aisle located below the inner gallery above by two central pillars and the side aisles are formed by 28 columns. The two central pillars have tall square bases, octagonal shafts, vase and foliage members with mouldings and foliated capitals.¹¹⁵

The remaining 28 pillars with bracket capitals are octagonal, except for a narrow fluted necking, with unfinished medallions immediately below and above. The seventh pillar on the right has an inscription. According to Kail its paleography points to a date in the thirteenth century.¹¹⁶ But Dhavalikar has view of having it much earlier of seventh century CE.¹¹⁷ This can be potulated by the following inscription:

*Ye dharma hetuprabhava hetum,
Tesamtathagato hyavadattesaṃ cha
Yonirodha evamvadi vadimaha-sarmana.*¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹¹⁴ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹¹⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹¹⁶ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹¹⁷ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 23

Meaning: *all things proceed from cause; this cause has been declared by Tathagta (Buddha); all things will cease to exist; that is, that which is declared by the great sramana (Buddha).*¹¹⁹

In the far end of the shrine the dagoba can be located. It is nearly 4.9 meters in diameter and 8.2 meters in height. It has a larger size and remarkably similar to those in Ajanta no. 19 and no. 26. A large seated Buddha attended by Avlokitesvara and Prajnaparamita has been carved on it.¹²⁰

The traditional rock-cut chaitya has an apsidal hall which was exclusively used for worship. Its culmination can be seen in the Ellora chaitya. The chaitya arch, which was its most distinguishing feature, changed but its outward appearance was so altered that it is difficult to recognize it in its original form.¹²¹ Not only that but also the dagoba, reminiscent of the dead master and so greatly venerated in ancient times, became a setting for the living Buddha. Further, the images of the Buddha appeared everywhere and even dominated and overshadowed the dagoba itself. Mahayana eventually no longer considered it necessary to maintain separate prayer-halls.¹²²

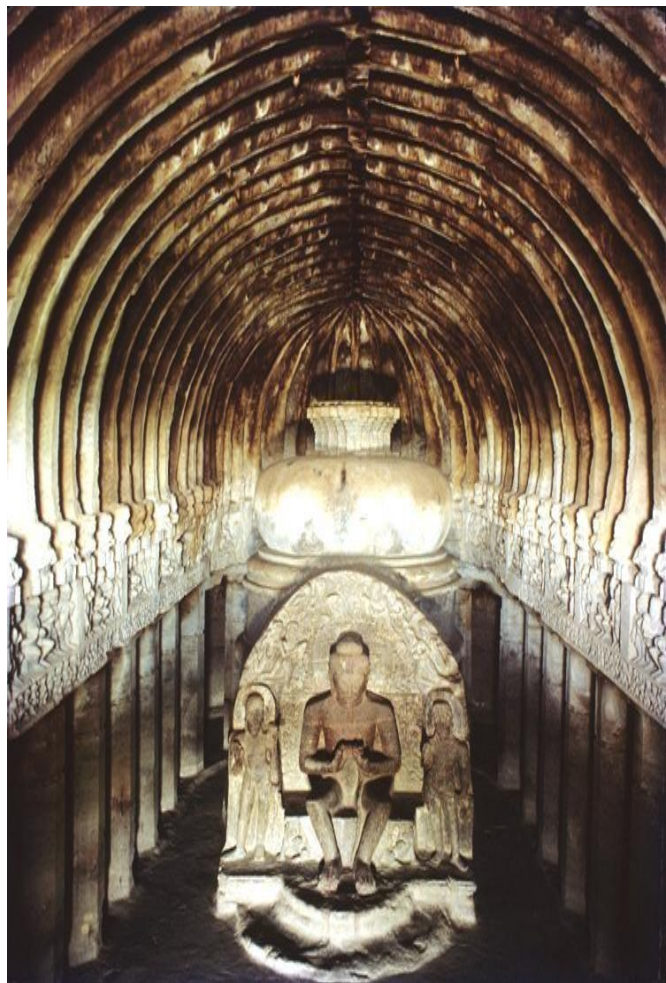


Figure 50: Chaitya Hall at Cave 10

Showing wooden ribs in ceiling

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 24

¹²⁰ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58.

¹²¹ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 12

Their viharas became self-contained and resplendent and were complete with main and subsidiary shrines containing images of Buddha. These chaitya-viharas served the dual purpose of being both places worship and halls of residence. In fact, the viharas enshrined the chaitya to provide both the facilities.

The storied monasteries

Next in the sequence, both the three-storied monasteries at Ellora, no. 11 and 12 are remarkable for their originality and design. Though designed on a massive scale, they still give the impression of simple three storied viharas.¹²³

In these caves, each floor is having a pillared verandah in front. In contrast to the simplicity of the facades, the inner halls of these storied sanctuaries have considerable sculptured details. Each floor is different from the other caves. The basic difference between these monasteries is that cave no. 11 does not have any residential cells.¹²⁴

Cave No. 11: *Do Thal*

Cave 11 or the Do Thal consists in reality of three storeys. It is called also as don Taal, as one storey was hidden under an accumulation of earth.¹²⁵ Its description Do Tal has been retained to distinguish it from the other three storied excavation which is called Teen Tal. It has a court in front 102 feet wide by 45 feet deep. On the west it is 50 feet wide.¹²⁶

The right side has a small rudely cut chamber with some others chambers. The north-west corner of the court has a large irregular room, with a bench round the inner walls. The ground floor has a broad pillared verandah with two cells. A

¹²³ Kannal, Deepak H., *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹²⁴ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

¹²⁵ Kannal, Deepak H., *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹²⁶ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

shrine is located in centre having a seated figure of the Buddha flanked by Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani.¹²⁷



Figure 51: Facade of Don Thal Cave

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

On the left chamber from a flight of steps leads to the upper floor. There is a recess or minor shrine dedicated to Avaokitesvara, who is flanked by Tara and Bhrikuti. The adjacent walls are carved with figures of the Buddha above, and Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Kunda and other deities below.¹²⁸

The first floor is a row of five chambers to the rear of a pillared verandah. The first cell is incomplete and the fifth is a plain cell with a rock-cut bench. The three central cells are shrines extravagantly sculptured with figures of the Buddha and almost every major and minor deity of the Vajrayana pantheon. At the south end of the verandah is another small shrine with similar embellishment.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 18

¹²⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹²⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

The upper level has in addition to the pillared verandah a second row of pillars which screens the shrine at the rear. The shrine has a seated image of the Buddha with Avalokitesvara on either side. Its walls are decorated with carvings of the Buddha, of male and female Bodhisattvas, their attendants and other deities.¹³⁰

Close to it is a chapel containing on the right Avalokitesvara seated on a lion-throne with a female figure seated cross-legged on each side of him. On the left a female deity having four arms. Above on each side there are seated figures. To the left is another four-armed female deity with a rosary and a flower. On the right of the room is a headless Buddha two Bodhisattvas and two *chauri-bearers*.¹³¹

There are other figures on the walls. The second storey of the cave consists only of a verandah having eight massive square pillars in front. A small shrine is located at one end and three larger shrines at the back. The central shrine has a room in front with two square pillars. The other shrines contain colossal figures of Buddha seated cross-legged and each side of the chamber is carved with Bodhisattvas.¹³²

The ground floor consists of a verandah 89 feet long, 6½ feet wide, and 8 feet 4 inches high with seven square pillars in front. The back wall has three shrines of which only the central one is finished. It is decorated with a cross-legged Buddha flanked by Padmapani and Vajrapani.¹³³

The verandah at the first floor above is 102½ feet long, 9 feet wide, and 10 feet 3 inches high, with two cells and three shrines in the back. A fourth shrine at the south end has an arched door, and contains a figure of Buddha seated cross-

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 17

¹³¹ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 122-23.

¹³² *Ibid*, 124

¹³³ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

legged on a high square block. Above his shoulders there are two *gandharvas*, while Padmapani and Vajrapani attend him as chauri-bearers.¹³⁴

By the side of Vajrapani there stand three male figures. All three figures are decorated with high head-dresses and aureoles. Opposite of them are three females figures of which one bearing a flower stalk. In the back of the verandah is a door leading into a cell with a low broad bench on the right side. Next to this is a shrine in which Buddha is seated cross-legged on a throne. His right hand is on his knee, his left on his lap, and four dwarfs are at the corners. A small figure of a female in front of the throne to the right holds up a jar. On the same wall are three other standing males the first with a flower the second with a large round bud, and the third with a pennon.¹³⁵

A tall female with a flower is on the return of the wall. The north side has also three figures one of which holds a very long sword. While returning on the wall there is a fat male adorned with garlands and necklaces. He is, probably, holding a coconut in his right hand and a money bag in his left.¹³⁶ Above these are seven Buddhas on either side. The foliage of the peculiar Bodhi tree of each extends over the several heads like umbrellas. A little figure kneels in an arched recess to the north of the door and a pair of *gandharvas* appear over each shoulder of Buddha. The central door leads into a small hall 30 feet wide, 20 feet deep, and 8 feet 9 inches high. It is supported on two square pillars and lighted by two small windows. Behind this is a shrine 13 feet wide, and 8 feet 9 inches high, with Buddha on a lion throne. His feet crossed and his right hand hanging over his knee.¹³⁷

Here, Vajrapani holds up the vajra in his right hand. The fourth door has a carved architrave, and leads into a shrine containing Buddha and his attendants, somewhat similar to a corresponding shrine on the other side of the central area.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 15

¹³⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹³⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 24

¹³⁷ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

Padmapani is bejewelled, and wears a thick cord or necklace. Vajrapani has three tall figures on either side, one next to him is shown holding a flower bud with a book on the top of it. There are seven squatting Buddhas above with the foliage extending over their heads.¹³⁸

The inside of the front wall on the north has a fat male with garlands and necklaces. Probably he is holding a cocoanut in the right hand, while the left has a purse from which coins are dropping out. On the south side stands a female with a flower in her hand. On the verandah wall between this shrine and the door of an unfinished cell, is a figure of Dharma with two other females. The stair at the north end of the verandah ascends to the upper storey.¹³⁹

It has a hall 101 feet long, 21 feet deep, and 9 feet 7 inches high. It is supported by eight square pillars. The pillars of the verandah have very thin plain brackets but they are decorated with little ornaments.¹⁴⁰ At the south end of the verandah is an empty cell. The inner wall was planned for three shrines as below. The south one has not been started. The north shrine has a squatting Buddha with attendants. The central shrine has a sitting Buddha with two attendants only. The walls contain many small Buddhas and a figure of four armed Padmapani along with females with lotus buds.¹⁴¹ The entire carving of cave 11 is crude which suggests a period of political disturbance. Dulari Qureshi has cited R. S. Gupte due to the disturbance when Chalukyan hegemony was being challenged by the Rashtrakutas under the Dantidurga, the excavation of the cave was disturbed.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 122.

¹³⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 17-18.

¹⁴⁰ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴¹ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.

¹⁴² Qureshi, Dulari. (2010). *Rock-cut Temples of Western India*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. p. 152.

Cave 12: Tin Thal

Teen Thal is an even more remarkable excavation both for its architectural plan and the abundance of sculpture at all levels.¹⁴³ The long transition from symbols of the Buddha to images of the Buddha. From these images to representations of Bodhisattavas and their Śaktis reached its climax at Ellora. ¹⁴⁴ The Buddha, though not completely relegated to the back ground. He is here overshadowed by host of divine Bodhisattavas and their female counterparts. Considerably more importance is given to all other deities which Vajyayana had introduced and had begun to worship.

A narrow doorway leads to large rectangular courtyard which is almost 34 meters broad and 12 meters deep. At the eastern of farther end of which is the lower level of cave no. 12.¹⁴⁵ The ground floor of the Teen Taal is shaped like an inverted T. The antechamber and shrine being placed at the far end. There are three cells in the left wall, four in the rear. However, two on either side but not connected to the antechamber.¹⁴⁶



Figure 52: Facde of cave 13

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

¹⁴³ *Buddhist Shrines in India*, (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1956), p. 82.

¹⁴⁴ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁵ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

¹⁴⁶ Burgess, Jas, p. 15.

The main hall has three rows of eight pillars. The antechamber has three rows for two which create a corridor leading up to the entrance of the shrine is quite visible.

On either side of the door of the shrine seated figures of Maitreya and Manjusri have been carved. A large stature of the Buddha in the dhyani-mudra is carved within the shrine. Buddha is surrounded by figures of Manjusri, Jnaketu, Tara, Kunda and other deities.¹⁴⁷

Large images of the Buddha with attendant Bodhisattvas occupy the side walls of antechamber. The rear walls of the hall as well as the pilasters are carved with images of Vajrapani, Vajrasattva, Padmapani, Kunda and Tara as well as the Buddhist mandala. The mystic square composed of nine compartments containing figures of Bodhisattvas, the Buddha and other deities.¹⁴⁸

A flight of steps leads from the first cell on the right to the level above. The walls of the staircase are covered with carvings of Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Mandala, along with Tara, Kunda and Bhrikuti. The development of style can be noticed as these deities have been now shown with halos.¹⁴⁹

The plan of this level is similar to that below the hall having three rows of eight pillars with one row of four pillars in the antechamber. Most of the sculptures are also on the walls towards the far end. Vajrasattva, the sixth Dhyani Buddha, is depicted on a pilaster flanked by Padmapani and Vajrapani. There are panels of the Buddha, Tara and a Bodhisattava in below portion.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁸ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁴⁹ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 123.



Figure 53: View of Teen Thal from inside

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The doors of the shrine have images of Padmapani and Vajrapani who are also on either side of the seated image of the Buddha within. The inner walls of the shrine are carved with images of Tara, Jambhala. Other female deities are located below seven smaller figures of the Buddha.

The staircase leading to the upper level is on the northern or left side of the hall. There are five rows of eight pillars in the main hall and two pillars between pilasters which screen the antechamber. The first row divide the hall into four cross aisles.¹⁵¹

At the ends of each aisle are identical seated images of the Buddha flanked by Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani on either side under the Bodhi Tree. On the rear wall of the main hall, on either side of the antechamber, the seven Manushi

¹⁵¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

Buddhas and the seven Dhyani Buddhas have been carved. The sixth being Vajrasattva and the seventh the Adi Buddha.¹⁵²



Figure 54: Buddha with seven meditative Buddhas/ Dhyani Buddhas

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

On the side and rear walls of the antechamber a panel of twelve female deities is located. It include the three Tārās, Kunda, Janguli, Mahamayuri, Bhrikuti, Pandara, Vajradhatisvari and other.¹⁵³ Above these goddesses are eighteen images of the Buddha. The shrine has a large seated image of Buddha with Avlokitesvara and Vajrapani on either side, and its walls are carved with images of Bodhisattavs of whom Maitreya, Manjusri and Jnanaketu can be recognized.¹⁵⁴ Above these images, seven figures of the Buddha have been depicted. On the walls opposite the Buddha statue, Tara and Jambhala have been carved.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 17

¹⁵³ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 27-31.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 32

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 33



Figure 55: Buddha flanked by Bodhisattava Padmapani and Vajrapani

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

On the right side of this latter is a stair leading up to the top of the front wall of the court. The lower hall which is open in front is entered by a few steps from the court, measures 116 feet by 42 feet, and is 11 feet high.¹⁵⁶ It has eight square columns in front, with bases and plain brackets.¹⁵⁷ The upper portion of the central pair is covered with very pretty florid ornamentation. Behind these are two more rows of eight pillars each, with pilasters along the back wall. In the north end wall are three cells with a stone couch in each. In the north end are two cells and an open apartment. In the back wall are also four cells two near each end.¹⁵⁸

In the middle, a large antechamber to the shrine is located. It is 37 feet wide and 40 feet deep, with two square pillars in front. Four more pillars support the roof, and have corresponding pilasters on each side wall. A cell is on each side between the first and second pilasters. Between the two pilasters on the back

¹⁵⁶ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁵⁷ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 17

wall, to the left of the approach to the shrine, is a large compartment with nine sculptured squares.¹⁵⁹

In the centre is Buddha with chauri-bearers and to the right and left are Padmapani and Vajrapani. While above and below are six figures. The figure in the middle of the upper row has a sword supported on a lotus flower. The figures in the lower corners have a standard and a book similarly upheld. While the middle one has a lotus bud. This sculpture is repeated in different parts of the cave. A Buddha is shown seated cross-legged in the corresponding portion on the outside. Avalokitesvara and Manjusri have been depicted as attendants.¹⁶⁰ The pilasters of the antechamber have been decorated with sculptures. In three cases, Buddha occupies the upper part of the area with the usual Bodhisattva and attendants.



Figure 56: Bodhisattava Padampani Seated with Female Goddesses

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

¹⁵⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ Burges, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

Tara with the lotus is on a pilaster below. On another is Buddha alone and on another Buddha with attendants. On fourth one a female and on fifth Buddha with a four-armed deity. The central recesses, right and left, contain Buddhas on throne. The left attendants having different flowers in each case. On either side of the shrine door is a fat seated guardian with flower-stalks. The one on the south side has also a book laid over a bud. On the wall of the small lobby from which the stair ascends, the sculpture of nine panels is recurring.¹⁶¹ Above it, there is also a Buddha between two chauri-bearers. One with a flower and the other with a bud covered by a book. His right is a female holding a flower-stalk and to the left a four-armed deity.¹⁶²

The stair has a room at the first landing, 23 feet by 15 feet, with two pillars in front looking into the court. The back wall contains the figure of Buddha on a high lion-throne. Buddha is shown with *gandharvas* above and with two Bodhisattva chauri-bearers. To the right and left are the nine panels again repeated. Over that to the right are three arched compartments containing figures of four-armed goddesses.¹⁶³

The second having a lotus-bud and attendants, and the third a bottle and conch shell. On the east wall, a four-armed female figure holds a lotus and has a dish with fruit or food in one of her left hands. Then follow- Buddha, attendants and again Buddha with attendants. On the west wall is Padmapani seated between a male and a female, most probably Tara. Outside this compartment to the left are two females in the attitude of supplication. Above of them is a Bodhisattva with a flower-stalk.¹⁶⁴

The stair continues up to a small room at the south end of the verandah of the second storey. The verandah is 116 feet long by 11 feet wide and 12 feet 2 inches high, with eight square pillars in front and with a small room at each

¹⁶¹ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, 122-23.

¹⁶² Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.

¹⁶³ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 17-18.

end.¹⁶⁵ From each of these a smaller apartment is located. At the end has a stone bench, and the other an image of Buddha seated in the teaching attitude with chauri-bearers. The wall opposite the foot of the stair contains Padmapani and two female figures. Above of them are a dagoba, a Buddha, and a male and female each with a flower-stalk.¹⁶⁶

The hall is entered by side doors at the ends of the verandah, and through a vestibule 36 feet wide by 18 feet deep, with two square pillars in front and back. Two cells are carved in each of the two large blocks of rock that are left. The hall is 118 feet from north to south, 34 feet deep, and 11 feet 5 inches high. It is divided into three aisles by rows of eight square pillars.¹⁶⁷

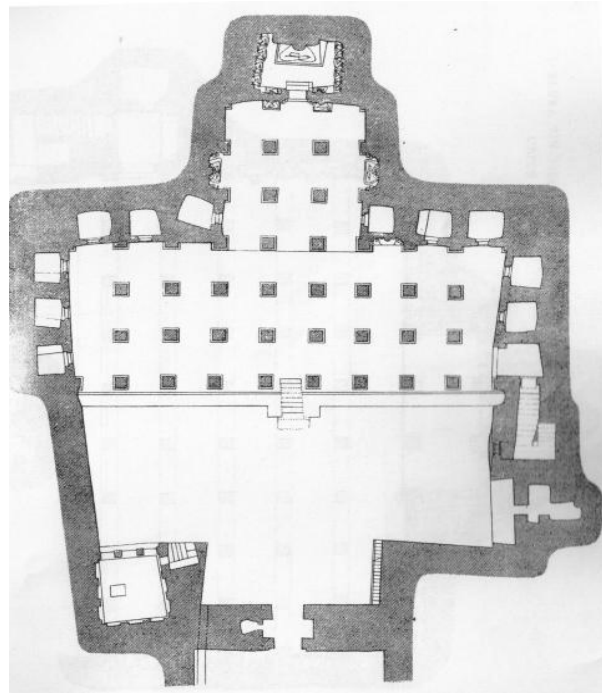


Figure 57: Plan of second floor

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

In each end of the hall are four cells and in the back wall are five more. The antechamber to the shrine is 36 feet wide and has two pillars in front. In the north end of the vestibule of the hall, is a large Avalokitesvara seated between two females. On the pilaster to the left are a squatting Buddha. Two males and four females with different flowers also have been depicted. On that to the right are a dagoba and flower, a squatting Buddha below, and a female figure with a flower branch still lower.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

¹⁶⁶ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, 382-84.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 385

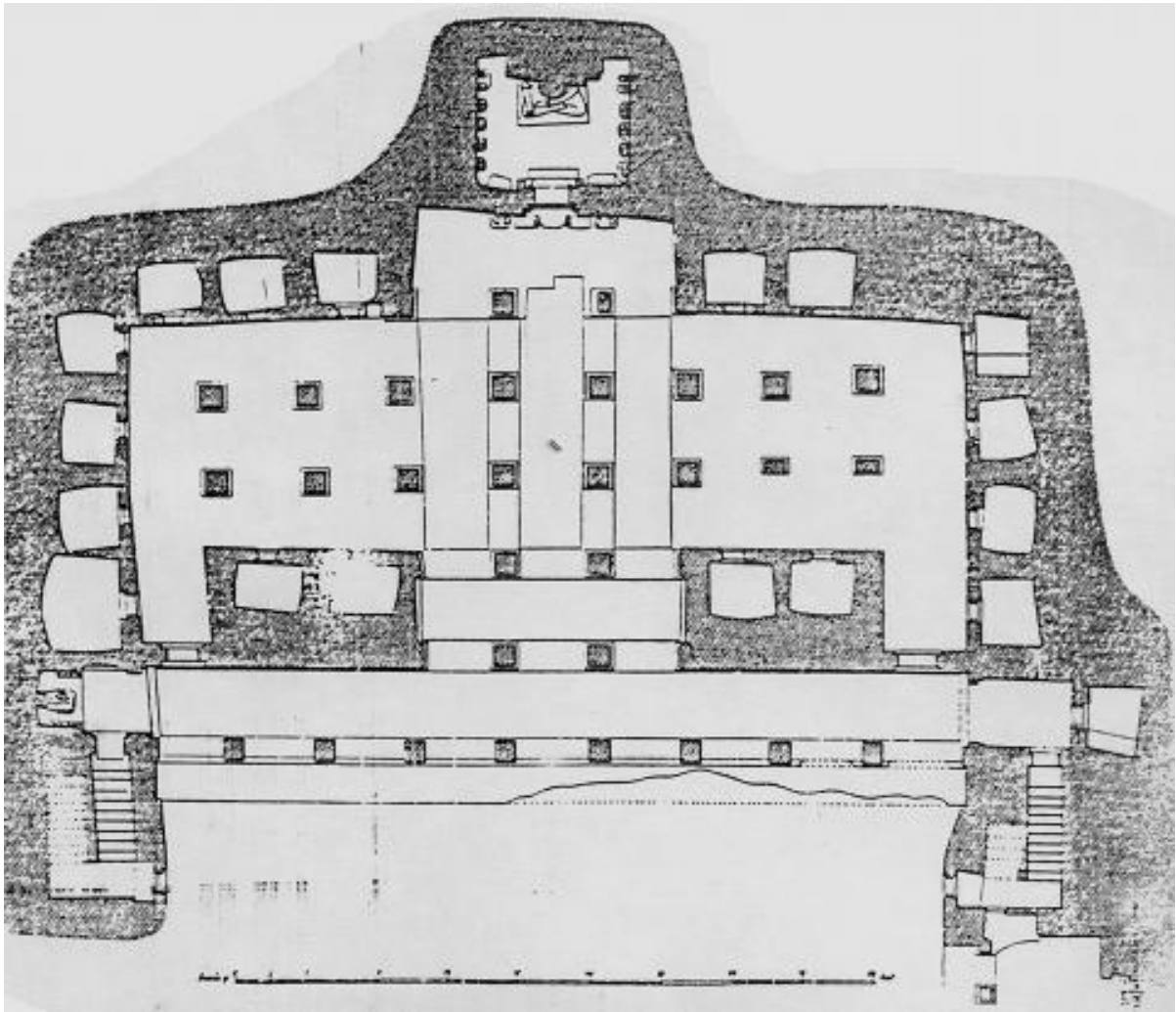


Figure 58: Plan of third floor

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The plain shrine door has two large Padmapani and Vajrapani guardians. The shrine is 22 feet wide, 19 feet deep, and 13 feet 8 inches high. It contains an enormous Buddha seated cross-legged, with the left hand in the lap, and the right lying over the knee. In front of the low lotus throne is a female holding up a jar. A prostrated human figure is another figure to the left.¹⁶⁹ Against each side wall stand five tall Bodhisattvas. On the right are-1) Avalokitesvara as chauri-bearer; 2) a figure with a bud in his right hand; 3) another with a sword; 4) another with hand raised; and 5) one with a lotus flower.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 382-383.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 384

On the front wall a female holding a flower-stalk squats on a high seat. On the left side are-1) Vajrapani; 2) a figure with an opening flower, and holding some small object in his right hand; 3) another with a full-blown flower and a small object; 4) another with a flag and small object; and 5) one with only a bud in the right hand.¹⁷¹

On the front wall is a stout male figure, with a round object in the right and a curling object in the left hand. On shelves above are seven Buddhas on each side, seated cross-legged. The jamb of a window that lights the stair ascending to the upper storey has a small figure on horseback with two attendants. Above of this a female with a flower has been carved.¹⁷² The upper floor of this cave measures 115 feet in length by 64 feet deep and 12 feet 2½ inches high, the roof being supported by forty square pillars in five rows. At the back it has an open antechamber 37½ feet wide and 16¼ feet deep, with front divided by two pillars. Five recesses in the south, and four in the north end wall, contain nine colossal images of Buddhas with their attendants.¹⁷³



Figure 59: Buddha seated in preching attitude

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

¹⁷¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, p. 21

¹⁷³ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

Along the back wall of the hall are fourteen large cross-legged figures of Buddhas. Seven on the north side have the hands in the lap, aureoles behind the heads. Trees have been shown rising from the rear with foliage carefully varied in each case. They probably represent the seven last Buddhas-1) Vipasyi; 2) Sikhi; 3) Visvabhu; 4) Krakuchhanda; 5) Kanakamuni; 6) Kasyapa; 7) Sakya Simha.¹⁷⁴ Corresponding to these figures on the southern portion of the wall there are other seven very similar figures. All are shown with hands in the teaching attitude. These may be the seven divine Buddhas. On each end wall of the antechamber leading to the shrine are three female figures. The inner one on each side with four arms, and holding a rosary and a crooked rod. These female deities are seated on open lotus thrones, and have high crowns and aureoles.¹⁷⁵ The left hand holds the stalk of a lotus, the right holds another stalk on the knee. All have bracelets formed of many rings, and necklaces. Three other figures on each side of the shrine door cover the back wall. Each has her left foot under her, and the right down upon a lotus flower. The thrones are supported by Nagas. Above these are four Buddhas on the back wall on either side of the door, and five on each end wall.¹⁷⁶

The shrine door is plain with bold mouldings. The guardians have very high caps, and stand with their arms crossed. By the door jambs, there are small couchant lions. The shrine is 21 feet wide, 24 feet deep, and 14 feet 4 inches high. The large Buddha is 11 feet high and is seated cross-legged, with the left hand in the lap and the right over the knee, pointing to the ground. Round the image is a dark circumambulation. On the floor against the front of the throne are two females.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 383-84.

¹⁷⁵ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

¹⁷⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James. p. 383.

¹⁷⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 22.



Figure 60: Four Bodhisattvas holding different attributes

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The sides of the shrine contain five tall standing Bodhisattvas against each wall. On the left side are-1) Padmapani with a chamara; 2) a figure with a flower bud; 3) another with a long sword in the left hand, and a bud or small fly-flap in the right; 4) a figure with a pear-shaped object, and a small chauri; and 5) one with an object in the left, and a bud or small fly-flap in the right hand.¹⁷⁸

On the upper part of the right wall are five Buddhas in the attitude of meditation. Below on the left, and next to the great image, is Vajrapani acting as chamara-bearer. To his left are four smaller figures, each holding some symbol. One carries a book, the third and fifth hold buds in the left hand, and something like fruit in the right. The fourth has a small standard.¹⁷⁹

All stand on lotus flowers, and have very rich head-dresses. The front wall has a seated male with an object resembling a bag on his left knee, and something like

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 23

¹⁷⁹ Kail, Owen C., *op. cit.*, p. 122-23.

money in his right hand.¹⁸⁰ A water-jar with flowers growing out of it has been carved below him. On the other side of the door is a squatting female holding a bud. On the walls above are Buddhas seated cross-legged. Each side-wall carrying five images of Buddhas. There are two images of Buddha on the front wall. In the north side of the court is a small cave containing a water cistern with two pillars on the eastern face.¹⁸¹

This is the last of the Ellora Buddhist caves, and exhibits the early Mahayana mythology in a more developed state than any other cave in India. It is probably not earlier than seventh century CE.¹⁸²

Each Buddhist cave of Ellora has been brought onto the anvil of dispute time. The final phase of development of Buddhist caves in western India is well represented at Ellora. Although the specific patronage of the Buddhist caves is not known. But it is assumed by the scholars that these caves were excavated during the seventh century. Architecturally, a number of Buddhist caves at Ellora seem to recapitulate some of the basic iconography and style found at other sites, but other suggest innovative and advanced Buddhist thinking. Susan L. Huntington has pointed out that '*with cave no. 12 Buddhist artistic activity in the western Deccan came to a virtual halt*'.¹⁸³ The developments over the period of about two hundred and fifty years from the Vakataka resurgence to the creation of cave 12 at Ellora were rapid and dramatic.¹⁸⁴

In the shrine area alone, the format changed from a simple image in the centre of a shrine, to one where the central image was moved to the rear wall of the cell. More figures of Buddha were carved into the shrine. Further, the shrine had a circumambulatory pathway than a secondary shrine was added to it. The

¹⁸⁰ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

¹⁸¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹⁸² Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁸³ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 274.

¹⁸⁴ Malandra, Geri H., *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

experimentation was not stopped at this, the artisans further carved a series of caves to enshrine bodhisattavas.¹⁸⁵

The experimentations in style of the carvings and adding pantheon into one shrine postulate that the site itself served a base for innovative ideas. The Buddhist tradition did not end here in Deccan. But the shift in political power and continuous struggle of political supremacy of staunchly Hindu followers like Rastrakutas left a long impact on the patronage of religious edifices. The tradition of Buddhist rock-cut monuments provided a platform for Hindu temple activities at Ellora with regional affiliation of architectural pattern and zeal of paramountacy in rock-cut trends.



Chapter-5

Development of Brahmanical Cave Architecture at Ellora

There are seventeen Brahmanical caves located between the Buddhist and Jain groups. These caves are magnificent example of decoration in comparison to its predecessors. This chapter analyse the architectural details of sixteen caves. The cave no. 16, Kailash Temple would be discussed in the next chapter.

Situated in the middle of the complex are the Hindu caves that constitute the largest group at Ellora. M. K. Dhavlikar¹ has proposed that the work first began on cave no. 28, 27 and 19. It can be deduced from the modest style execution. The most impressive representation of early Hindu group of caves are Dumar Lena (cave 29) and cave 21.² Contemporaneously, work was also going on at cave 20 and 26 and a little at cave 17, 19 and 28. These excavations were followed by cave 14 and 15.³ Here, at Ellora, the earlier examples of Brahmanical caves seem to be copied to a certain extent from Buddhist edifices.⁴ The Brahmanical sect seems following the Buddhist architecture as it can be noticed in arrangements of the Buddhist caves. But they gradually deviated from their prototypes by substituting sculpture for cells. They completely liberated themselves from the influence of Buddhist cave architecture till Kailash temple cave no. 16.⁵ The Brahmanical rock-cut activities culminates in cave 16 (Kailash Temple) which is the greatest achievement of the Indian genius. The earlier examples seem to be following the

¹ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2003). *Monumental Legacy: Ellora*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 33.

² *Ibid*, p. 34.

³ *Ibid*, p. 35.

- ⁴ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James. (1969). *The Cave Temples of India*. Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation. p. 399.
- ⁵ Qureshi, Dulari. (2010). *Rock-cut Temples of Western India*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. p. 153.

notion of the latest caves at Ajanta and Aurangabad. In their plans and in the style of their architectural details these caves resemble with the caves at Ajanta and Aurangabad. The style of execution with their predecessors suggest that they may probably belong to the second half of the 7th century.⁶ Their chronological succession appears to be nearly in the order in which they are locally situated from the Buddhist group.

Although the caves at Ellora do not possess that unity and completeness like Ajanta yet their variety, and the exceptional magnificence of some of them, renders them more interesting. But it must be noticed that they are in consequence far more difficult to understand. On the basis of stylistic examination Asok K. Bhattacharyya⁷ has given a time bracket from 650 CE to 1000 CE for the development of Brahmanical caves.

Cave 13

Cave 13 seems to be the first Brahmanical excavation. It is located on the north of Buddhist cave Teen Thal. It consists of a large room which is comparatively plain.⁸ The front of which has been destroyed due to weathering of the rock.



Figure 61: Facade of cave 13

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi

⁶ Brown, Percy. (1971). *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Period*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd. p. 71.

⁷ Bhattacharyya, Asok. (1988). 'Ellora Sculpture: A Stylistic Examination' in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, RatanParimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al, New Delhi: Books & Books. p. 271.

⁸ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

James Burgess has proposed it to be a rest house for the visitors.⁹ Dulari Qureshi has also supported the view stating it as a resting place and also for keeping tools.¹⁰

Cave 14

Ravana-ka-khai.

Cave no. 14 is locally known as Ravan- kakhai. It has four pillars in front and twelve inside, the open hall, which is 54 feet by 55 feet 6 inches to the front of the shrine.¹¹ A wide *pradakshina* runs round the shrine, giving a total depth of 85 feet to the excavation. The pillars have high square bases and drooping-eared florid capitals, with circular necks of varied patterns.¹² The style of decoration is similar to that found at Aurangabad, and in the latest caves at Ajanta, belonging to the middle of the 7th century.¹³ The pilasters are carved from

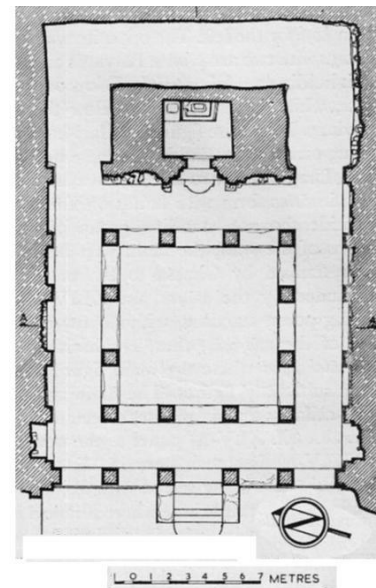


Figure 62: Floora Plan of Cvae 14

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

the floor to the brackets, and resemble the pilasters that were developed in the Brahmanical caves at the commencement of the following century. All the compartments of the wall between the pilasters are filled with carving.¹⁴ The sculptures of the cave are partly Saiva and partly Vaishnava.¹⁵

The south wall has the following Shaiva sculpture:

⁹ Burgess, James. (1972). *Elura Cave Temples*. Varanasi: Indological Books. p. 23.

¹⁰ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

¹¹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

¹² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹³ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

¹⁴ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹⁵ *Ibid* p. 73.

- 1) Mahishasuri killing the buffalo-demon.¹⁶
- 2) Siva and Parvati have been depicted on a raised platform playing at *chausar*. Ganapati and another attendant are shown waiting behind Siva with two females and a male behind Parvati and Nandi. There are thirteen rollicking *ganas* have been depicted below the panel.¹⁷
- 3) Siva dancing the *tandava* over the destruction of the world, three figures with drums are to his right. Bhringi the skeleton attendant of Siva is located behind. Parvati with two *ganas* one of them with a cat's face has been depicted on his left.¹⁸ Above that panel Brahma and Vishnu on the left and Indra on an elephant have been depicted. Agni on a ram and two other figures are on the right have been carved nicely.
- 4) Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, have been depicted under Kailasa, the heaven of Siva. He is trying to carry the mount Kailasha. Shiva and Parvati with attendants and two guardians stand at the sides have been depicted.¹⁹ While four *ganas* are shown mocking Ravana. Parvati is shown worried at the place shaking clings to Siva. Shiva has been depicted trampling Ravana under the hill with his foot.²⁰
- 5) Bhairava the destructive form of Siva have been depicted on one foot trampling a large fat dwarf. Another dwarf has been shown at his side, and Ganapati behind him. He has been depicted holding up elephant hide with two hands in which he wraps himself. With another two hands he holds a spear with which he has pierced Ratnasura. With a fifth hand he is shown

¹⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 24.

¹⁹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

²⁰ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 34

holding a long sword and the sixth has a bowl to receive the blood of his victim.²¹

The *pradakshina* on this side has three skeletons. The first skeleton is of Kaal. He has been depicted four-armed with a scorpion on his chest. The second is of Kali, the female personification of death and a third is a kneeling skeleton. The next panel is of Ganapati who has been depicted eating his favourite *laddu*.²² Beyond him, there are the seven divine mothers equipped four-armed, and each with a child and a cognizance on the base below.

These are, probably-

- 1) Chamunda with the owl;
- 2) Indrani with the elephant;
- 3) Varahi with the boar;
- 4) Lakshmi with Garuda;
- 5) Kaumari with the peacock;
- 6) Maheswari with the bull; and
- 7) Brahmi with the *hansa* or goose.²³



Figure 63: Saptamatrikas in Pradakshina
Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The walls of the cave are fully decorated with sculptures it gives a sense of sculptural gallery. Following panels have been depicted on the north wall:²⁴

- 1) The first panel is of Bhavani or Durga in a four-armed sculpture. A *trisula* in her upper right hand has been depicted. Her foot has been resting on a tiger.²⁵

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 35.

²² Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 153-54.

²³ Dhavalikar, M.K., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 33-34.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 35.

2) In the next panel, sculpture of Lakshmi has been carved over a mass of lotuses. In this panel four-armed Naga-canopied figures are holding up water jars. Depiction of a tortoise is among has been added into as a creature of water. A figure of attendant on the right of Lakshmi is holding a conch, while elephants bathe Lakshmi with water from jars.²⁶

3) The third panel has been decorated with the sculpture of Varaha, the boar-incarnation of Vishnu. His foot resting of on Sesha, the great serpent. He is holding up the earth goddess, which he rescued from destruction. A figure of snake-demon is shown between his feet. The Varah figure has been flanked by Naga hooded figures on either side.²⁷



Figure 64: Pillar with vase and foliage design

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

4) Next panel depicts Vishnu with four-arms sitting between two female deities, probably Lakshmi and Bhudevi. Behind them four attendants with *chamaras* have been depicted. Garuda is below, with several males and females, some of them playing on musical instruments.²⁸

5) The fifth panel enshrines Vishnu and Lakshmi both sitting on the same couch under an ornamental arch. The presence of attendants can be noticed behind them. There are seven dwarfs figures seated below the couch. Among them four dwarfs are carrying musical instruments.²⁹ The front of

²⁶ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 153-54.

²⁷ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

²⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 34.

²⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

the shrine has been decorated with two tall male *dvarapalas*. A number of female figures, attendant dwarfs, fat *gandharvas* with curly wigs and garlands have also been added to the front of the shrine. Presence of an altar inside against the back wall along with a broken image of Bhavani postulates that temple was dedicated to Bhavani. Four holes in the floor of the hall the presence of firepits signifies ritual activities.³⁰

Cave 15

Dasavatara

Das Avatara means ten incarnations of Vishnu. The cave plan resemble to the Buddhist caves 11 and 12. Significantly both of these caves have two storeys. A very substantial ascent by means of steps up the rock has been provided from the pathway from the Buddhist caves and Ravana-ka Khai.³¹

Mandapa in Das Avatara Cave

The main attraction of this cave is the Nritya-mandir in the centre of the courtyard and exactly opposite the main cave. Its entrance is facing the latter. The court is hewn out of the solid rock, leaving a curtain wall across the front. A sacrificial hallis excavated on a raised platform in the middle with a number of small shrines, and a cistern in the surrounding rocky wall.³²

The *mandapa* is 31 feet wide, 26 feet deep, and 10½ feet high, the roof being supported by four square pillars with plain square brackets and moulded bases. It has a porch in front of a perforated window on the west side, supported by two pillars. Over this wall, a Sanskrit inscription in the Brahmi script of the eighth century has been engraved. The maximum part of inscription has damaged due

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 26.

³¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³² Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

to weathering. It provides genealogy of the Rashtrakuta dynasty which ruled over the Dakhan from about A.D. 600 to the end of the 10th century.³³

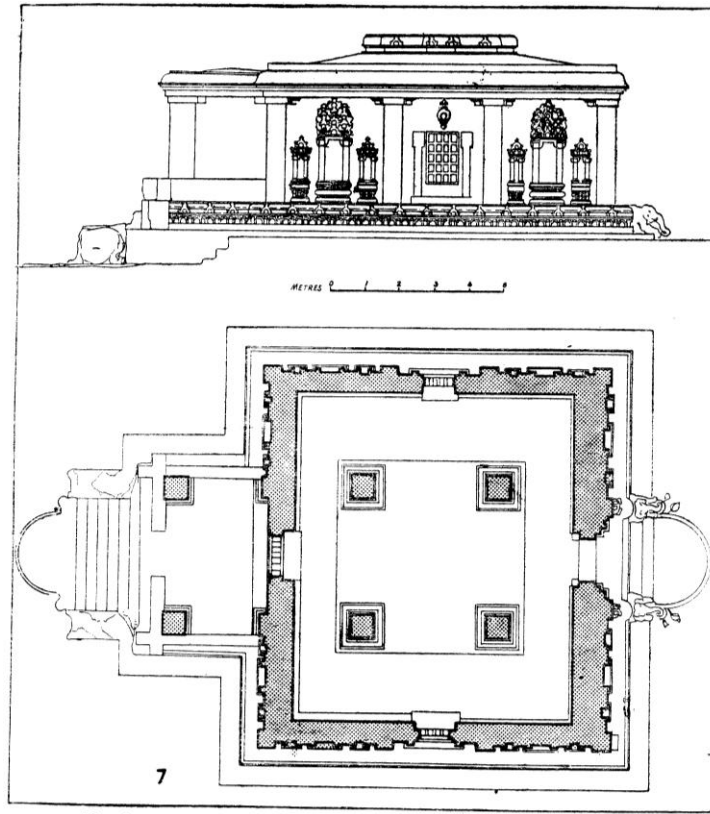


Figure 65: Plan and elevation of mandapa in front of Dasavatara Cave (XV).

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The inscription is in fourteen lines written in Devanagari characters. On the basis of stylization of alphabet, it can be ascribed to the first half of the eighth century. With due efforts of Pandit Bhagvanlal Indraji who could make a transcript of all the letters, inscription gives two earlier kings of the great Rastrakuta dynasty than those given in the copperplates, viz. Dantivarman and Indraraja.³⁴ It then gives the dynasty, and mentions Maharaja Sarva, perhaps the brother or first minister of the king. The last two verses describe him as coming

³³ Dhavalikar, M. K. *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³⁴ Burgess, Jas. (1883). *Report on Ellora Cave Temples and Brahmanical and Jaina Caves in Western India*. London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill. p. 25.

with an army and staying at this temple. Another king Gurjara raja is also mentioned in the inscription. On the basis of the inscription it can be surmised that Dantidurga must have ruled about A.D. 725-755.³⁵

It is probable that the visit to Elura mentioned in this inscription, was connected with the dedication of Dasavatara. The names mentioned in the inscription are:³⁶

- 1) Dantivarma I (Cir A.D. 600-630);
- 2) Indraraja I son of Dantivarma (630-650);
- 3) Govindaraja I son of Indraraja (650-675);
- 4) Karkaraja I (or Karka 675-700) son of Govindraja;
- 5) Indraraja II son of Karka I (700-730);
- 6) Dantidurga Khadgavaloka (or Dantivarma II.) son of Indraraja, who overcame Vallabha or the western Chalukya king Kirttivama II.³⁷

The reference from inscription may prove that the cave was finished when Dantidurga visited Elura in the middle of the 8th century. However, it may not be denied that he constructed it.³⁸ The inscription is an unfinished one. In another inscription, Krishna-raja, the uncle and successor of Dantidurga, is said to have established himself at the hill or hill fort of Elapura. It was the place where a splendid temple of Swayambhu Siva.³⁹

The north and south sides of the *mandapa* have also perforated windows and in the back is a round hole, probably a firepit. The door has a plain architrave, and very small pairs of gods and animals in miniature temples are on the lintel.⁴⁰

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 26.

³⁶ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 27.

³⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

³⁹ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 27.



Figure 66: Mandapa in front of cave 15

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

On each jamb is a female, with a small umbrella over the head-dress, and a chauri-bearer on each side. The corner pilasters contain pairs of amorous couple. The outer walls are embellished with sculptural carving. Along the edges, the flat-roof outside has been decorated with lions at the corners having fat human figures in between.⁴¹

On the north end are one male and three female figures on the four pilasters; females are in the larger intervening panels. The north side has a torana over a window while the corresponding one on the south side is empty. On the corner pilasters on the west are females with hair done up.⁴²

⁴¹ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁴² Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Two of the smaller panels are empty and males fill two larger and two smaller ones. In a small room on the left of the entrance to the court, Brahma and Vishnu with a female goddess occupy the left wall, and Ganapati the right. Inside is a shrine containing a round salunkha or altar and a linga, and behind it on the wall is a rude Trimurti.⁴³

On the two sides of the entrance door, two *dwarapalas* have been carved. The one on the left is Yamuna and on the right is Ganga on a crocodile. The hall is square and its roof is supported by four square pillars. There are no sculptures inside the hall. There are three windows on the three wall. The walls of hall on the outside contain many beautiful female sculptures.⁴⁴

Outside, on the end of the balcony, a four-armed Rudra in a state of fearful mood has been depicted. Only the front pillars have been carved. The rest inside the cave are plain square shafts. It is interesting to be noticed here that the upper part of the pillars are carved in Buddhistic style, but the sculptures on the lower parts of the capital seem more Brahmanical.⁴⁵

The cave is in two storeys. The lower storey is a few feet above the level of the court. It is supported by fourteen plain square pillars. It measures 95 feet in length, and has two cells in the back wall near each end. The stair ascends at the northern extremity of the front aisle.⁴⁶

The first landing is lighted by a window which reveals eleven compartments, each 2 feet high. These compartments have been embellished with bas-reliefs of the following deities:⁴⁷

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

⁴⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁴⁷ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 435-36.

- 1) Ganpati;
- 2) Parvati;
- 3) Surya with a lotus in each hand and two attendants;
- 4) Siva and Parvati;
- 5) Mahishasurmardini- the head of the buffalo struck off, and the Asura coming out of the neck;
- 6) Ardhanariswar- the androgynous form of Siva, four-armed, with *trisula*;
- 7) Bhavani-four-armed, on her tiger, with *trisula* and *damru*
- 8) Ganapati;
- 9) Uma with water-pot and rosary like an ascetic between two fires, with Brahma and others;
- 10) Ardhanariswar and
- 11) Kali, four-armed, with sword, trident, bowl, and a piece of flesh at which a dog snatches.

The front aisle of the upper storey can be approached by the stairway. The hall is 95 feet by 109 feet including the vestibule to the shrine. It has been supported by forty-two square columns, besides two in front of the Vestibule.⁴⁸ The pillars in front are richly carved with floral decoration. New motifs such as dwarfs, snakes, have been introduced.⁴⁹

Another innovation of design such as-deep recesses are filled with large sculptures in almost entire relief between the pilasters in each side wall.⁵⁰ Such kind of innovative designs were used to fill the gap between the pilasters. This

⁴⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁴⁹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James., *op. cit.*, pp. 439-40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid* p. 441.

style of execution, however, provided the space to the artisans to demonstrate ornamented technical skill.

The heterogeneity of the *bhaktism* is well represented here. The sculptures on one side are mostly Vaishnava and on the other are Shaiva. Each end of the balcony front a gigantic *Saivadvarapala* has been embellished.⁵¹

Among Shaiva sculptures, Bhairava is a gigantic figure lounging forward. He is adorned with a necklace of skulls hanging below his loins. He has been depicted holding up his elephant hide and a cobra is knotted round him. His large teeth are seen in his open mouth. Another very dramatic addition is of a struggling victim has been stabbed by his *trisula* in a pitiful condition. Another victim is held by the heels in one of his left hands. He raises the *damru* in joy, as he catches the blood with which to quench his thirst.⁵²



Figure 67: Shiva as Bhairava

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

⁵¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 28.

Image 1 Shiva as Bhairava panel

Kali has been depicted in is in a skeletal figure and in a forbidding mood. Her mouth is huge. With sunken eyeballs and shaggy hair makes her skeleton length stretched below. She is holding vampire behind her head. She is holding a curved knife in her right hand, and reaches out the other with a bowl, as if eager to share in the blood of the victim.⁵³

In the 2nd chapel Siva has been depicted performing the *tandava*. In the 3rd, there is an altar probably for Bhavani. In the 4th, Siva and Parvati have been depicted playing the game of *chausara* accompanied by Nandi and the rollicking *gana* below.

In the 5th panel, the most interesting scene of marriage of Shiva and Parvati is shown in which the bride is to the left of the bridegroom. Brahma with triple face has been depicted squatting below to perform the priestly functions of marriage. The gods riding on various animals witnessing the scene have been depicted above.⁵⁴ In the 6th chapel depiction of Ravana and Kailasa has become significantly dramatic.⁵⁵

The back wall is embellished with the narrative of Markandeya. Shiva has been depicted springing out of the *linga* to protect his worshipper Markandeya, whom Yama has noosed. Next panel is of Shiva and Parvati. Shiva has been depicted holding a lock of his hair in one hand and a rosary in the other. Nandi is shown on the right side.⁵⁶

⁵³ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James,, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 437.

⁵⁵ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

Details of the antechamber

The capital of pillars in front of the antechamber have been carved with a pair of figures and foliage. A huge Ganapati figures has been carved to the left of the antechamber. The figures of lions on the floor of antechamber at the back corners have been nicely carved.⁵⁷

On the wall to left of shrine door a figure of Parvati with a rosary can be located. She has been shown seated on a *padmasana* with musicians on each side of her. The *dvarapalas* of the shrine are four-armed, and hold a snake, a club, and the *vajra*. The altar inside the sanctuary is broken. To the right of the shrine door is Gaja Lakshmi with four elephants pouring water over her. She has a lotus and fruit in her hands, and two four-armed male attendants are offering jars of water and hold the *sankha*, *chakra* and lotus in their hands.⁵⁸

In the south end of the vestibule depicts Vishnu with his lotus and *trisula*. A large bird is at his right hand, and a dwarf stands at his left. The south side of the back wall comprise of the following panels:

- 1) The first panel depicts the *Lingodbhavamurti* Shiva. Shiva has been depicted inside a *lingam* with flames issuing from the sides. The story goes that once Vishnu and Brahma were arguing how one of them was greater than the other.⁵⁹ Vishnu incarnated as Varaha below on the right. He has been shown digging down to see if he can discover the base of the great *linga*. After struggling having failed to do so, worships it. Brahma has been depicted on the other side ascending as a worshipper.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁵⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 42.

- 2) In the second panel, Shiva has been depicted as Tripurari. This form was assumed to kill the demon Tripurasura. He is riding a chariot with shield, sword and bow. Brahma is shown driving the chariot while holding the four Vedas.⁶¹

The south wall (right side) towards the front represent panel of Vaishnava theme allocating five of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. The following depictions can be notice with the narratives:⁶²

- 1) In the first panel, Vishnu has been depicted as Krishna with his left foot on a dwarf. He is holding up the hill of Govardhan to protect the flocks of Vraj, from the torrent of rain that Indra sent down.⁶³
- 2) In the second panel, Vishnu as Narayana resting on Sesha. Depiction of the great serpent with a human head and five hoods has become significant here. On contrary, Brahma sits on a lotus which springs out of Vishnu's navel. Goddess Lakshmi is shown rubbing her lord's feet. Seven other figures are represented below.⁶⁴
- 3) Next panel comprises of Vishnu riding on Garuda. Garud is shown in anthropomorphic form.⁶⁵
- 4) A *salunkha* or altar protected by a high screen in front or an unfinished attempt of carving a lingam.⁶⁶
- 5) Varaha holding Prithvi on his hand, with three Nagas below.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶² Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 43.

⁶⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶⁵ Dhavalikar, James, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 42.

- 6) Sixth panel depicts narratives of the *Vamana* avatara, the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu. In this narrative he deceives king Bali, from whom he obtained a promise that he should have all that he could cover in three strides. Then at the third stride thrusts Bali down into Patala. Garuda has been depicted behind binding a prisoner.⁶⁸
- 7) Seventh panel depicts Narasimha, the man lion incarnation of Vishnu. He is holding a battle axe (*parsu*) and a conch. He is wrestling with his enemy, Hrinakshipu who is armed with sword and shield, but has only two arms, and has no chance against his eight-armed opponent.⁶⁹

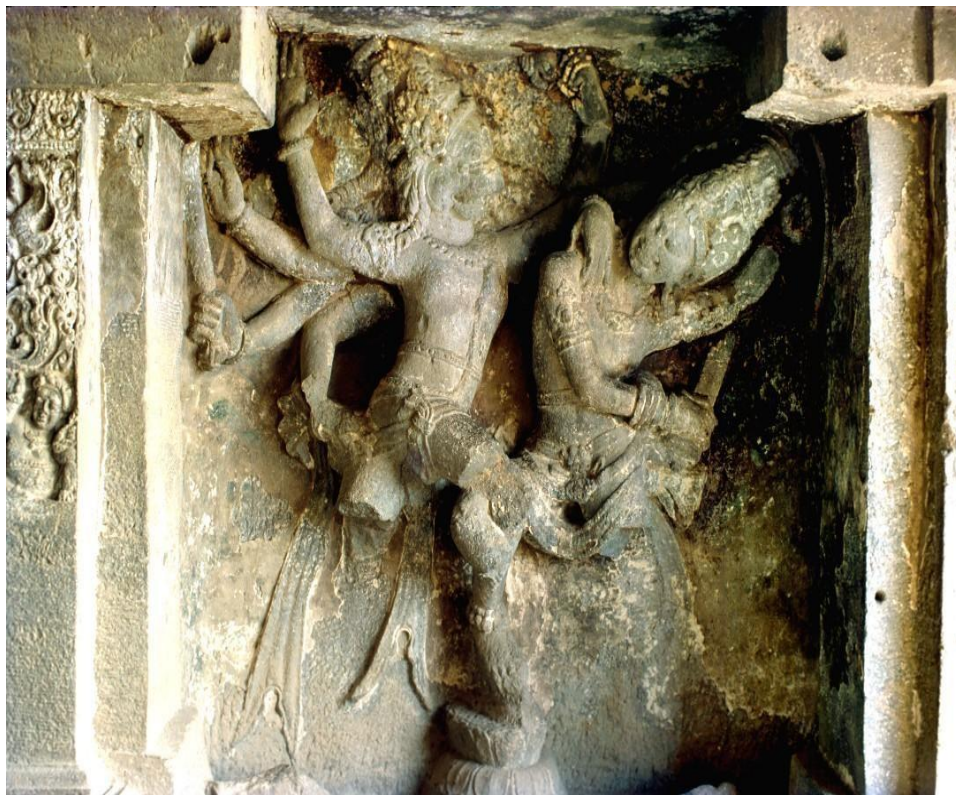


Figure 68: Narsimha Killing Hrinakshipu

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

⁶⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁶⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

On the basis of style and execution and cave no. 15 becomes a dynamic representation of Indian art. The high stylization of sculpture and movement of body are very well depicted. A cinematic succession of multiple views can be observed after viewing the different panels. The intention of the artists seems to make narrative submissive to concept. On body movement and depiction of panel Carmel Berkson has said ‘*a combinative interrelation of fluidity and denseness, loose and compact volume, ascension and weight of mass, merges opposites.*’⁷⁰

Cave 17

Chota Dumar Lena

Cave 17 is locally known as Chota Dumar Lena though there is no similarity between this cave and Dumar Lena cave. It is a Shaiva temple. It has three rows of columns from side to side and each row contains four pillars. The back and front aisles are 64 feet long. The total depth is 76 feet but the front of the shrine it is 37 feet.⁷¹ The cave had a porch on two massive square pillars. It has been raised by seven or eight steps above the level of the court. A low covered corridor surrounded the court on three sides and a

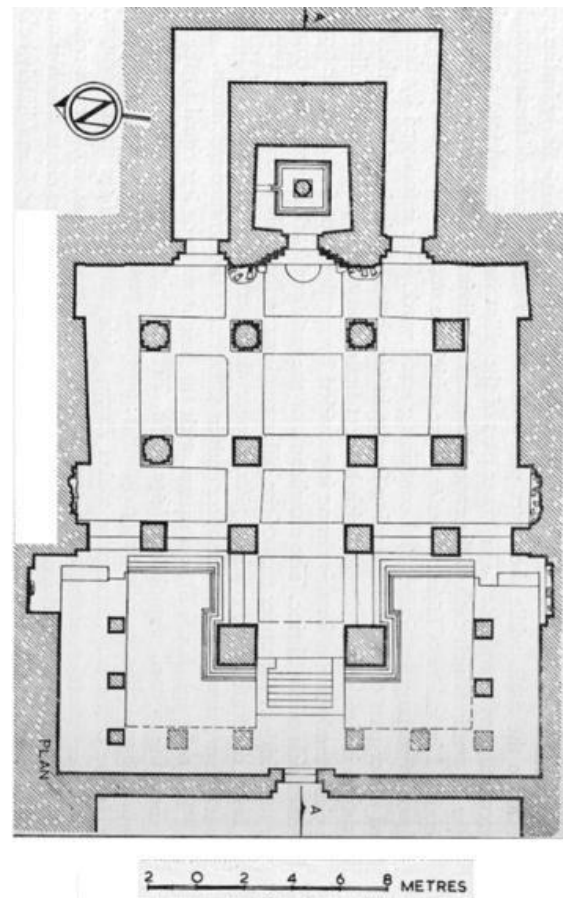


Figure 69: Floor Plan cave 17

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
New Delhi

⁷⁰ Berkson, Carmel. (1988). ‘Daśāvtāra Cave: Its Importance in the History of the World Art’ in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, RatanParimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al, New: Books & Books. p. 211.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 40.

small door is in front.⁷² A sculptured compartment is located above the door. Each end of the façade is well decorated. On the southern side of the door Brahma has been depicted with two female attendants and two *gandharvas* floating on clouds. On the northern side, a male deity, most probably Vishnu four-armed has been depicted with female attendants. There is a hole in the lower portion of it which opens into the veranda of the next cave.⁷³

The pillars of the front in extreme side are plain and square ones with bracket capitals. The two inner pillars have deep brackets on two sides. These brackets have been carved with female figures and dwarf attendants. Interestingly, the middle pillars in the next row have cushion capitals with female



Figure 70: Broken square pattern pillars in Cave 17

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

figures. These figures have been carved as struts on their inner side. Though, fat dwarfs have been carved upon the corners of the high square bases yet the brackets above are unfinished.⁷⁴ The outer pillars in this and the next row are in section "broken squares"⁷⁵ pattern.

The middle pillars in the next row have the base of the "broken square" pattern, with female figures carved on the principal faces. It carries male figures on the corner face of the pillars. Further, it has been decorated with a Dravidian

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁷³ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, 441.

⁷⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁷⁵ The pattern is so called due carving on main face of the pillar.

moulding over it along with a belt with a floral ornament in the centre and two dwarfs at each corner. A sixteen-sided shaft and then the struts with female figures and attendants on three sides have made these pillars a marvellous example of carving skill.⁷⁶ The shrine door is boldly moulded in the Dravidian style. Each *dvarapala* has two hands have been depicted holding flowers. They are further attended by a dwarf and *gandharvas*.⁷⁷

Inside the shrine, there is large square *salunkha* (altar) and *linga*. The *pradakshina* is entered by a door on each side of the shrine. The inside walls are decorated with sculptures.⁷⁸

On the south end of the front aisle sculpture of *Mahishasuri* has been decorated. A four-armed Ganapati on the north end has been very well decorated. The rock on the left side of the court, at the end of the facade, has a figure of Buddha with three faces. Inside the shrine, there is large square *salunkha* (altar) and *linga*.⁷⁹

Cave 18

The court of cave 18 is of irregular shape. It contains a shallow trough in the middle. The cave is slightly raised above the level of the court. It has four unfinished pillars in front with a deep recess inside at each end. The hall is 67 feet long by 22½ feet deep. It has a slightly raised platform inside.⁸⁰ The portico contains a *chandrasila* (semi-circular slab) at its base.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

⁷⁷ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁷⁸ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 40.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁸¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 72.



Figure 71: Entrance of cave 18

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi



Figure 72: Shivalingam inside cave 18

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The vestibule of the shrine is located on the back of the hall. It is 30 feet long and 10 feet 6 inches wide. It has two square pillars in front and corresponding pilasters are decorated with low bases of two members. It is interesting to note that portions of the walls and pillars contain fragments of plaster consisting of mud with vegetable fibres in it. The shrine contains a Shiva lingam.⁸² A few letters of a painted inscription in Devanagari is on one of the pillars. The shrine contains a round structural altar and a *linga*.⁸³

Cave 19

The roof Cave 19 has partly destroyed, and the front pillars are gone. It is not impressive like other Brahmanical excavations at the site. The entrance for some distance inside is not as wide as it is in the middle. In the middle, four pillars have been carved on each side



Figure 73: Inside view from cave 19

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 73.

⁸³ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

screen off recesses. In line with the fourth pillar, are four more in front of the shrine, which contains a broken *salunkha* and *linga*.⁸⁴ The pillars are rude attempts of the style with cushion-shaped capitals. The hall inside is 43 feet wide by 32 feet deep. The cave consists a squarish shrine and it is surrounded by a *pradakshina* (circumambulation).⁸⁵ Close to the next is another unfinished cave, all in ruins.

Cave 20 (A)

Cave 20 (A) comprises a very spacious interior hall of plain character with transverse corridor. In front the corridor has access into the inner hall from a central opening. This openings at the side ends has two side cells in the front corridor of similar character provided with similar openings on each side.⁸⁶ This corridor has a *mukhamandapa* borne by a series of four free-standing pillars and two pilaster of plain character, though sometimes tending to be rolled and having the upper part schematically rendered into a narrow octagonal shaft and a *ghatapallava* incompletely designed.⁸⁷

Beyond this *mukhamandapa*, an open free side court has two side cells one on each side of indeterminate character and purpose. The one to the north is, however, fairly well finished and on the wall space looking west adjoining this cell is the figure what would appear to be Matanga (one of the *Yakshas* of Mahavira). His mount the elephant is apparently carved in front in a bad shape.

⁸⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁸⁵ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁸⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara. (1981). *Cave Temple of the Deccan*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India. pp. 84-85.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 86.

The pot belly of the figure further supports this. The cell may be a later addition when the Jaina group at the site was being excavated.⁸⁸

Cave 20 (B)

This cave is adjacent to Ramesvara cave 21. It is relatively on higher platform. The style of execution postulates that it was excavated at a relatively a later period. Certain features can be noticed such as projecting front *mukhamandapa* like porch is an innovative process. The upper part of the projecting has been damaged. The plinth part of projecting with moulding and pilasters in the corners with a lateral space leading a flight of steps can be noticed. It might have been leaded towards the *mahamandapa* in the upper part.⁸⁹

The cave has a *linga* shrine with a wide passage round it. It has a hall 37 feet wide by 30 feet deep. A block can be located in the middle of the hall which is hewn into a shrine and of 20 feet by 16 feet. Originally it had in front two pillars and pilasters with cushion-shaped capitals.⁹⁰

A figure of Ganapati is outside the facade on the north, and another of Mahishasuri is on the south.⁹¹

The figure of Durga is in standing posture. She is probably shown riding lion. On her right side she is holding a trident and a sword in the two extant hands. On the other side,

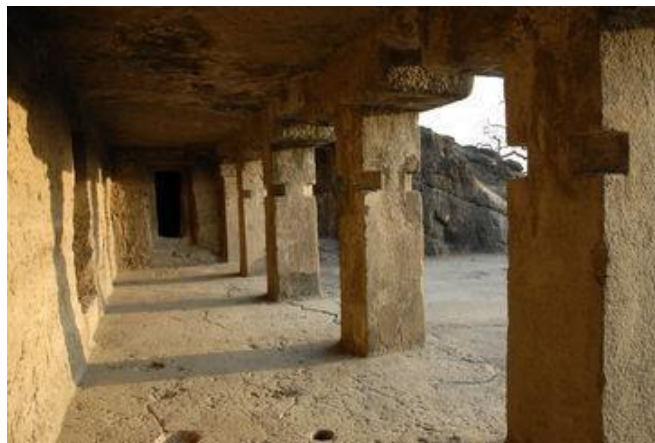


Figure 74: Frontal Porch of the Cave

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
New Delhi

⁸⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁸⁹ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁹⁰ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁹¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 73.

her left hands are damaged very badly. The figure of Durga has been decorated with an elliptical nimbus on her back. There is a figure of *gana* below. The space near *gana* indicates that there were two *gana* attendants above. But now only one can be seen hovering in the air with mala in the hands.⁹²

Image 2 Pillars in the front of the cave

The Nandi pedestal is rectangular unlike elliptical pedestals of a separate Nandi in slightly later examples and this additionally goes to show Chalukyan occupation.⁹³ The projecting entrance porch with lateral projection into the cave has its panels provided with figure sculpture, probably of Ganesha, Kubera etc. It can be approached by flight of steps. The design of balustrade has been decorated with designs of elephant head and trunk. The most remarkable innovation in the design is such that the artisans has created four legs actually on either side of its exterior⁹⁴

In each side of the shrine is a large cell with two square pillars having octagonal necks in front. The door of shrine is carved round with the "creeper and roll" pattern. The entrance has been flanked by a tall *dvarapala* on either side along with a female figure.⁹⁵

Cave 21

Ramesvara

Cave 21 is known as Ramesvara. It is a lofty Shaiva temple behind a fine large platform. The Nandi has been carved in the court on a high pedestal. On this pedestal bas-reliefs of goddesses and attendants on the sides have been

⁹² Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 89.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 90.

⁹⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

decorated. A sculpture of Ganapati on the north side has been carved in a chapel with two pillars in front.⁹⁶

These pillars have a close resemblance with Elephanta pillars. It is a noteworthy feature that at Elephanta the pillars have been decorated with brackets while at Ellora they have a deep square abacus. The abacus has been carved on the front and sides with figures. Between pillars and pilaster a gigantic female figure has been depicted standing on a *makara*. This female figure is attended by dwarfs, *chauri-bearer*, and *gandharvas*.⁹⁷ A similar female figure can be noticed Entrance of the Cave on a tortoise on the south side. As per iconographical details, these figures represent the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna. Dhavalikar has assigned these figures in the middle of sixth century based on the Gupta-Vakataka tradition.⁹⁸



Figure 75: Pillar decorated with a screen on the base and human figure on upper side

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

⁹⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁹⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁹⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 73.

The design of executing monolithic edifices here becomes noteworthy. The front pillars are connected by a screen for half their height. A string course of animals, mainly elephants has been decorated above. The face of the rail is divided into narrow panels by broad vertical bands of intricate design. Each panel contains a standing male and female figures. Over the railing runs a series of festoons.⁹⁹

The pillars are square from the base and then have an octagonal member. These are further decorated with dwarfs on the corners just above the screen, then shafts become circular with flowered members and flutes. The capitals have been decorated with drooping ears and a square abacus design.¹⁰⁰

Over the abacus, long brackets are carved in front with the figures human and animals. To make the pillars more projecting, struts have also been added to denote a structural member of edifice. These struts are decorated with female figures and attendant dwarfs standing under foliage. Carving of horned monsters on top of the brackets significantly gives a dramatic look to the pillars.¹⁰¹

A frieze with sunk panels containing dwarf figures has been carved over a plain architrave. It has been divided by compartments carved in arabesque designs. The hall of the shrine is 69 feet by 25 feet by 15½ feet. It has a shrine at each end cut off by two pillars with cushion capitals. These chapels are surrounded by sculpture.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 439-40

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 441.

¹⁰¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰² *Ibid* p. 43.

On the right end of hall, a large group of Saptamatrik as covers the three inner sides of the shrine. Ganapati has been depicted at the beginning in the panel. The following sculptures have been carved in order from right to left:¹⁰³

- 1) Chamunda,
- 2) Indrani,
- 3) Varahi,
- 4) Lakshmi,
- 5) Kaumari,
- 6) Maheswari, and
- 7) Brahmi.

All the divinities have a child with them except Brahmi. Conspicuously, Shiva has been depicted at the end with his vehicle Nandi below. On the left side wall Shiva has been depicted engaged in the cosmic dance *tandava*.¹⁰⁴



Figure 76: Shiva dancing Tandava

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

¹⁰³ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 40.

On the other end of the wall representation of Kali and Kala have become significant. Remarkably, Kali on the south has a tall four armed ghastly skeleton with a broad short pointed knife. Another skeleton has been shown clasping its leg and looks up to Kali just behind.¹⁰⁵ This second skeleton has been shown wearing a snake round her neck and grabs the first skeleton by the hair. Kali is holding a dis severed head in her left hand. Another skeleton is holding a snake round its neck and grins over her head. A figure with a sword stands in front of Kaal, while a *gandharva* is depicted above with an offering.¹⁰⁶



Figure 77: Skeletal depiction of Kali

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The back wall is decorated with figures of Ganesha, Saptamatrikas and a musician. A beautiful sculpture of Shiva has been depicted in dancing pose. Such a magnificent view has been created when we see that gods are shown appearing in the clouds over Shiva's sculpture. These gods are depicted very well riding on the peacock, elephant, ox and *garuda*. This magnificent view

¹⁰⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 44.

comprises Parvati with attendants and four musicians and Bhringi's dance behind Siva's leg.¹⁰⁷

In the north shrine, a gigantic four-armed standing figure has been depicted on the left end. The figure is holding a chick in one left hand and a large bird in the other. The figure has been flanked by attendants with ram's heads on the right and left. Next panel on the back wall, Brahma has been depicted sitting on a chair with an attendant behind him. He is shown addressing a squatting figure with a female to the rear.¹⁰⁸

The third panel witnesses the cosmic event, the marriage of Siva. Soundra Rajan has associated the scene of Shiva's marriage with Kalidas's *Kumarsamhava*.¹⁰⁹ In this panel, figure of Brahma can be located on the extreme left with a fire before him. A bearded man, most probably Himavana, sits on the other side. There are two male figures, one of them carrying a box. Parvati has been depicted with a female behind her and a male is holding a round jar.¹¹⁰ Siva is shown holding the hand of Parvati. A tiny figure of Ganesa has been carved in front. The artisan has very nicely created the scene of Shiva's wedding by carving a dwarf with four other attendants. Among this group one of them is holding a *shankha*, probably Vishnu as identified by Dhavalikar.¹¹¹

Consequently, next panel comprises the story of Parvati's penance. Parvati, the daughter of Himalaya, undertakes a penance in order to gain the love of Siva. She appears as an ascetic among four fires. The artisan has created scene of mountains by carving several rocks behind her. She is holding a rosary in one hand like a *tapasvini*. She is accompanied by her maids. Among them, one has been depicted kneeling at her right and another with a box on her left.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁰⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 75.

¹⁰⁹ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 83.

¹¹¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹¹² Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.* p. 82.

Mahayogi Shiva is shown approaching her with a water vessel. The forest scene comprises of lotuses behind and fruits over him has been very well depicted. In this scene Shiva is shown entangled in the mouth of crocodile himself. Although, Shiva was relieved by the Brhamachari but the coming of Parvati to rescue Shiva has become a praiseworthy depiction of *Shivaleela*.¹¹³ A tall female figure has been depicted behind Shiva. She is, perhaps, addressing Kamadeva who has shown coming out of a *makara's* mouth, according to James Burgess.¹¹⁴ But Dhavalikar has the opinion that the figure coming out from the mouth of crocodile is Shiva himself who is rescued by Parvati. A most remarkable row of *ganas* is on the base of this tableau.¹¹⁵ Whatever it may be the case but it can be well surmised the scenes from the Hindu mythology have been in a cinematic style.

The very next panel, comprises of Mahisasurmardini on the east end of the chamber. She is shown slaying the Mahisasura. She has been depicted four-armed figure. She is holding a club in front, a sword in the hand behind. *Gandharvas* have been depicted in upper part of the panel.¹¹⁶



Figure 78: Mahisasurmardini killing Mahisasura

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 83.

¹¹⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹¹⁵ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 77.

The either side of the way towards the shrine has been carved with a large sculpture. The north side of the panel contains narrative of Ravanashaking Kailash. Ravana has been depicted having five heads under Kailasha. Conspicuously, one of his heads looks like of an animal (probably boar). On Kailasha, Shiva and Parvati have been shown seated with their attendants.¹¹⁷

The south side of the hall represents a sublime experience of creativity and carving ingenious. It represents Siva and Parvati playing. The Shaiva *gana* Bhringi can be seen in middle of panel. He is exclusively watching the game of dice while resting his chin and hand on his knee.¹¹⁸



Figure 79: Shiva Playing Chausar with Parvati

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 77.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*. p.77.

The royal depiction of Parvati has become a significant scene in the panel. She has been attended by females like a queen. Among them, one is plaiting her hair. One of her attendants is moving holding a fan in her hand. The upward movement of the fan denotes its movement. The attitude of Parvati is shown little irritated, may due to plaiting of hair or due to Shiva's cheating in the game. Nandi and other *ganas* have been depicted below.¹¹⁹

The antechamber is decorated with pilaster on either side. These pilasters are decorated with female *chauri*-bearers along with dwarf attendants. The deep square abacus has been carved on the compressed cushion capitals of these two columns.¹²⁰ The elaborate carved door of the shrine show an extended similarity in style to the doors in caves 1 and 4 at Ajanta.¹²¹ The similarity in design points towards their same period of origin. The doorway is flanked by a gigantic *dvarapala* on each side. Interestingly, these *dvarpalas* are attended by wigged dwarf attendants.¹²² One of the *dvarpalas* has a high cap with the prongs of the *trisula* projecting from the top of it. He is having a broad dagger, a sword, and a cobra round his loins. The shrine has a wide and lofty circumambulation pathway (*pradakshin*). It contains a square *salunkha* (altar) with a *linga* in it.¹²³

Cave 22

Nilakantha

Cave 22 is locally known as Nilakantha, one of the names of Shiva. Nilakantha literally means 'blue throated'. There is a round *salunkha* (altar) with a highly polished *lingam*, in the shrine. The *lingam* has bluish streaks, that is why the cave is called "Nilakantha".¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹²⁰ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 77.

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 77.

¹²³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹²⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 79.

It has a court measuring 42X42 feet square, within which an ascent of three steps leads to a sloping platform. It contains a *Nandimandapa* having four-doors. A shrine can be located on the south side of the court. It contains Bhringi or Kala with two arms and outspread hair, Ganapati and the *saptamatrikas*. All the *matris* as well as



Figure 80: Saptamatrikas panel

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India,
New Delhi

Shiva have four arms each. The last, Brahmi is holding a vessel and a figure of Shiva.¹²⁵ The cave can be approached by thirteen steps. The doorway is flanked by a *dvarapala* at each end. It is 70 feet by 40 feet. The dimension includes the end chapels and the vestibule to the shrine. It contains four pillars in front and two on each of the three other sides of the hall.¹²⁶ These pillars have been decorated with square plain shafts with bases and bracket capitals. Both the ends have a shrine with an altar. The walls of the vestibule comprises of Ganesa, three *devis*,-(one on a crocodile, probably Ganga), and a four-armed Vishnu or perhaps Kartikeya.¹²⁷

Cave 23 and 24

Cave 23 and 24 are rather close to the last excavations. They are probably of later date than larger cave temples. The ground plan of the caves shows that these contain six altars and one of the caves, 23 contains *trimurti* on the back wall.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 80.

¹²⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James,, op. cit. p. 443.

¹²⁷ Burgess, James, op. cit., p. 44.

¹²⁸ Burgess, Jas, op. cit., p. 40.



Figure 81: Sculpture of Nandi inside Nandimandapa

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi

Cave 23

Cave 23 is an excavation of lower size. It consist of a partly double *verandah* (courtyard).The courtyard is embellished with five doors entering into small cells. One of the cell, as mentioned earlier, contains a round *salunkha* and *lingam* along with a *Trimurti* on the back wall.¹²⁹

Cave 24

Teli-Ka-gana

Cave 24 is locally known as ‘*Teli-ka-gana*,’ or the ‘Oilman's Mill’. It comprises of five cells. The cells contain some small sculptures, among which is an injured figure of a river goddess.¹³⁰ A little to the north is the beginning of another cave.¹³¹

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 72.

¹³¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

Cave 25

Kumbharvada

Cave 25 is known as Kumbharvada (potter's quarter) and Suresvara. The local name given to the cave also suggest that it was used by the Kumhar community. The name of Suresvara is given due to the image of Surya on the ceiling of the antechamber.¹³²

The frontal porch is supported by six columns and pilasters which have fallen now. It has a hall with recess of 90 foot by 27 feet, by 13 feet 10 inches high. An image has been placed on a pedestal at the north end. The south end has a recess with a 15 feet shrine behind it containing an oblong altar. A fat male with a bag in his hand has been shown seated on a rich cartin front of this recess.¹³³



Figure 82: Frontal porch of the cave supported by six pillars

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

¹³² Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹³³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

The back portion of the hall contains four free-standing and two attached square pillars with moulded bases. Behind these pillars, a smaller measuring 57 feet by 23 feet can be located. It has two pillars at both the ends and two at the back. The two attached pillars divide it from the vestibule of the shrine which is 30 feet by 9 feet.¹³⁴

The pillars are decorated with brackets. A male and a female flying figure have been carved on the front of each bracket. The vestibule part of this shrine provide an exemplary skill of the artisans. The ceiling has been carved with a figure of Surya in his chariot drawn by seven steeds. The depiction of a female at each side shooting with a bow has become magnum opus.¹³⁵

The shrine is 15 feet square and contains an oblong altar. The shrine door has a Dravidian moulding on the frieze, and tall *dvarapalas* with very bushy locks and long swords are by the jambs standing on lotuses.¹³⁶

Cave 26

Janawasa

Cave 26 is locally known as *Janawasa*. The Marathi meaning of *Janawasa* is a house given to a bridegroom's party for stay at the time of marriage.¹³⁷ It has four pillars and two pilasters in front, with two pillars and pilasters at the back, all with cushion-shaped capitals. According to Fergusson, the columns of this temple are quite of the Elephanta's pattern.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 81.

¹³⁵ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

¹³⁶ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

¹³⁷ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

¹³⁸ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 444.



Figure 83: Shrine door flanked by gigantic dvarpalas

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The hall is 74 feet wide X 25 feet deep, and 16 feet 6 inches high. Each end of the hall has a shrine raised 3 or 4 feet above the floor. This shrine has two square pillars and pilasters in front. A larger room of 40 feet square with two square pillars and pilasters in front can be located on the back. The total length including these shrines is 112 feet. The circumambulatory is 67 feet wide on the back.¹³⁹

A female *chauri*-bearer can be located in front of each pilaster of the vestibule. She is decorated with carefully crimped hair and a dwarf attendant by her side. The shrine door is flanked by two large *dvarapalas*, and one of them is shown holding a flower. Along with these attendants, there also some stout figures have been depicted. Among these figures an attendant has been decorated with a very high cap terminating in a spear-point. A skull has been depicted on the right side of this figure. The shrine of this end is 16 feet square from inside. It contains a

¹³⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

large *salunkha* (altar) and *lingam*. The circumambulatory (*pradakshina*) of this shrine is 9½ feet wide.¹⁴⁰

Cave 27

Milkmaid's Cave

Cave 27 is locally known as the milkmaid's cave. It has courtyard which is 69 feet long by 8 feet 4 inches wide. Originally, it had six pillars but now one octagonal pillar with bracket capital and a fragment of another are left. The back wall has three doors and two windows. It is decorated with following sculptures:¹⁴¹

- 1) Lakshmi with two male attendants;
- 2) Vishnu, four-armed, with club, *chakra* and rosary;
- 3) Siva with cobra and trident;
- 4) Brahma, three-faced, with staff, water-pot, and rosary; and
- 5) Mahishasurmardini with the buffalo.



Figure 84: Sculpture of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

In the north end of the shrine sculpture of Varaha with Prithvi is located. The south end is adorned with the sculpture of Narayana on Sesha. The hall is 53 feet X 22 feet and 11 feet 8½ inches high.¹⁴² It comprises of three cells which are rudely excavated in the walls. The vestibule to the shrine is 23 feet X 10 feet. It has a raised floor and adorned with two short pillars in front. The door of the shrine has been flanked by Vaishnava *dvarapalas* in the recesses. Inside the shrine, there is an oblong altar at the back of the shrine.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 45.

¹⁴¹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

¹⁴² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁴³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

Cave 28

Cave 28 is located on the edge of a ravine where a waterfall formed by the stream flows from the hill. The cave consists of the remains of a couple of cells. It has remains of a vestibule and a shrine with *dvarapalas* at each side of the door. The shrine door has Vdhyadharas hovering above. Inside of the shrine is the base of a square altar. In western corner of the hall has an eight-armed *Durga* with attendants which seems to be later addition.¹⁴⁴



Figure 85: Entrance of the Shrine

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

There are several other small caves and in the shrine. First of these is a Trimurti of Siva. Shiva has been depicted as creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world. It can be said a fine specimen of a class of sculpture very common during that period. There are several larger cells further north direction.¹⁴⁵ These can be approached by a considerable group of small shrines. Among these shrines, some of them have small open courts entered by a door with a Dravidian pediment over it. Others cells have Trimurtis on the back walls of the shrines.

¹⁴⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

These cells also have round *salunkhas* (altar) for the *lingams*. It is interesting to note here that the ceilings of two cells among them have traces of painting.¹⁴⁶

Cave 29

Sita's Chavadi or Dumar Lena

Cave 29 is locally known as Sita's Chavadi. It is also called Dumar Lena. This cave can be compared with main cave at Elephanta or Garapuri. It bears a striking resemblance but it is larger and in some respects a more refined version. It can be said that it is the finest cave of its class. The other two at Elephanta and at Jogeswari show a deterioration in architectural style and a divergence from Buddhist style of representation in sculpture. It seems to be a great step towards the spreading transformation over the forms of two great religious faiths of its time.¹⁴⁷

The hall including the shrine is 148 feet wide X 149 feet deep, and 17 feet 8 inches high. The excavated area from the entrance court extends more than 200 feet in a direct line north and south.¹⁴⁸

The sculpture of two large lions have depicted on both sides of the steps leading to the hall from three sides. These lions have been depicted with small elephants under their paws. Nandi has been depicted in a large circle in front of the west entrance.¹⁴⁹

The architectural plan of the hall is in the form of a cross. The roof of the hall has been supported by twenty-six colossal pillars. The three sides of the front aisle have been decorated with large sculptures on each end.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 446

¹⁴⁷ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 276-79.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 280.

¹⁴⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁰ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

The southern end of the west aisle is adorned with Ravana shaking Kailasa panel. Ravana has been depicted under Kailasha try to move it with his eight hands. The left side of the opposite wall has been carved with the sculpture of Andhakasura-vadha-murti Shiva. Shiva has been depicted eight armed with a stretched elephant hide over his head. He is holding a sword a bowl and a snake. His sword is shown stabbed in the demon's body. Parvati has been depicted to the left of Shiva.¹⁵¹



Figure 86: Ravana Shaking Kailash
Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

The northern side of aisle is adorned with Bhairava and two figures of victims. The verandah in the southern side has a large pit when come down. The west end of the hall contains Siva and Parvati playing *chausar*. Vishnu and Brahma have been

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 81.

depicted to the right and left respectively. Nandi and frolicking *ganas* have been depicted below.¹⁵²

In the eastern end, the marriage scene Shiva and Parvati has been depicted. The gods and goddesses are shown above. Left side has Vishnu mounted on Garuda, Yama on a buffalo, Vayu or Soma on a stage, Agni on a goat, and perhaps Varuna. While on the right side has Indra or Airavati, and Nirriti on *amakara*. The entire panel is somewhat similar to that in the preceding caves only differentiating by its colossal size.¹⁵³ Image 3 Marriage of Shiva and Parvati



Figure 87: Scene of Shiva's marriage with Parvati
Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

There is a gigantic figure of a Devi outside the pilaster to the south. She is adorned with round head-dress peaked in front. There are four sages above and three

¹⁵² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹⁵³ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, 81.

females below. Quite interestingly, may be a goose or some other bird is shown pulling mantle of Devi.¹⁵⁴

A staircase to the south descends to the stream below. The north veranda comprises the panel of Shiva as Mahayogi. He is shown seated on a lotus, with his club in his left hand, the stalk of the lotus upheld by Naga-hooded figures. He is worshipped by two female figures from behind. Jas Burgess has pointed it as an evident copy from the Buddhist sculptures.¹⁵⁵

On the opposite side, Shiva is shown with heavy legs dancing the *tandava*. Parvati is seated at his left, and Nandi and musicians are on his right.¹⁵⁶ The eastern wall outside the pilaster is decorated with a tall river goddess. It can be identified as Yamuna standing on a tortoise. She is flanked by a single female attendant and *gandharvas*.¹⁵⁷

On the north side of the cave a small courtyard is located. The east side of the courtyard has a low cave with a large oblong block of stone inside. The square shrine is located in the back wing. It contains a *lingam* in it. It has four doors guarded by a pair of gigantic *dvarapalas*. These *dvarpalas* are holding a flower in the right hand and accompanied by a female attendant each. Each female attendant is also holding a flower. The difference can be noticed in their head-dresses. In the southern side of this square cell a circumambulatory has been provided.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁵ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 41

¹⁵⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp.48-49

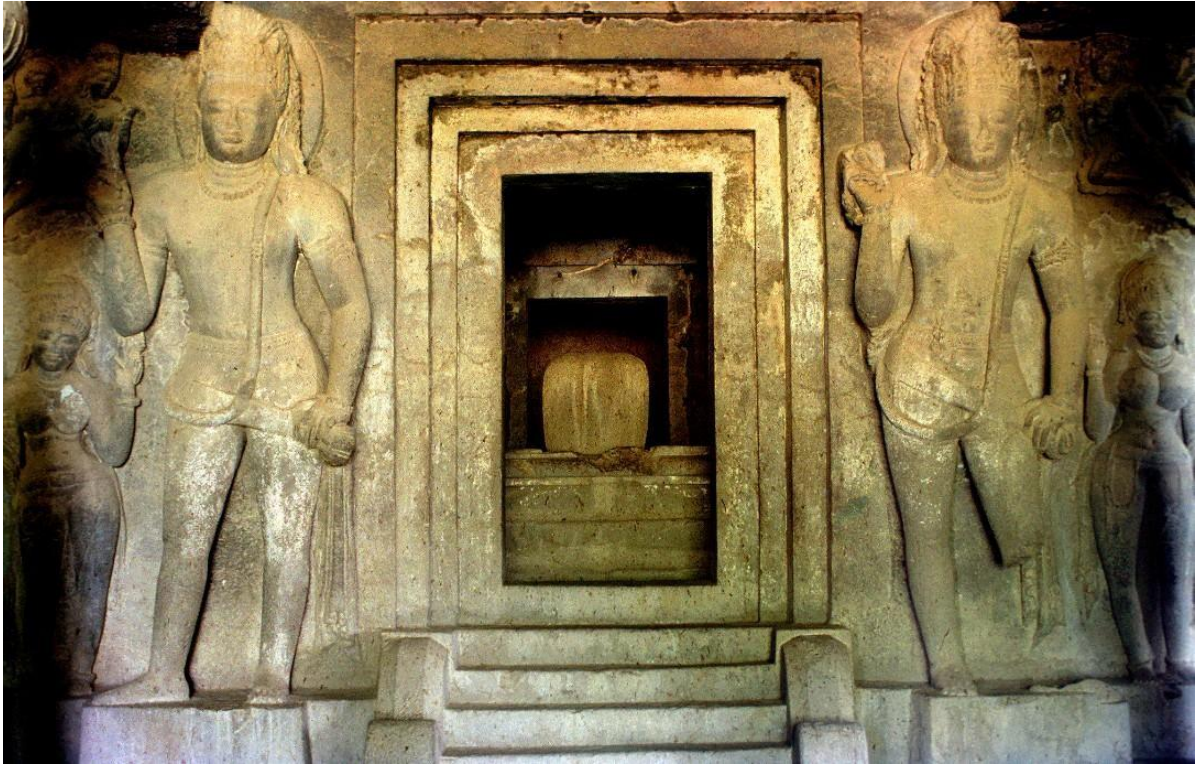


Figure 88: Shrine door is flanked by the gigantic dvarapala

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

s by the Jains, who excavated there a remarkable series of caves to be described hereafter. But between these two, at an intermediate age, the Brahmans excavated 17 caves.¹⁵⁹

These caves rival the Buddhist caves in magnificence and definitely exceeds in richness of decoration. It is evident from the carvings that in earlier caves, the Brahmans followed to a certain extent the arrangements of Buddhist caves. Later on, they gradually emancipated themselves from the Buddhist influence till the series culminated in the Kailash. It is not only the largest and most magnificent rock-cut temple but the one in which the craftsmen completely liberated themselves from the influence of Buddhist cave architecture.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 432.

Strategically, the Brahmanical caves begin to the south Kailash at a distance of about 40 yards north of the Tin Thal, cave 12. As mentioned earlier, the first one is a large perfectly plain room. The front has been destroyed by the decay of the rock and the floor is deep in earth. It might probably have been a *dharmashala* or rest-house for visitors. Near to this, the cave known as Ravan-ka-Khai is located. Next to it, a little higher up in the rock, the Dasavatara cave has been carved.¹⁶¹

In the northern side of Kailash, a deep ravine is located. Beyond the ravine, there are five small caves are located. Then the following caves are located: Rameshwara, Nilakantha, a small cave, Teli-ka-Gana, Kumbarwara, Janawasa, and the Milkmaid's cave.¹⁶² The Milkmaid's cave has been excavated near a high waterfall. At the north side of the waterfall, the magnificent temple known as Sita-ki-Nhani or Dumerlena has been excavated. It is the most northerly of the Brahmanical series.¹⁶³

The age of these caves can be ascertained within a small time period from the style of their architecture. However, it has also become difficult to associate these caves to a particular ruler due to lack of inscriptions. But on the basis of architectural style, these caves can be placed subsequently to the caves at Badami around 579 CE and before to the Kailash temple.¹⁶⁴ These can be said at least the extreme limits within which the age of the group of caves is comprised. It is highly probable that the earliest of them overlap the Buddhist series to the extent which that would imply.

It may be noted that both in the plans and in the style of their architectural details, these caves resemble the last caves at Ajanta and Aurangabad. It is highly probable

¹⁶¹ Dhvalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁶² Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹⁶³ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-53.

¹⁶⁴ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

that they belong generally to the second half of the seventh century rather than the first.¹⁶⁵

The carving of the Brahmanical caves seems to be started with those situated nearest to the Buddhist group, and ending with the Dumer Lena, the most northern. Dumer Lena can be assumed to be the last excavated, anterior to the Kailash, which probably however, was not completed before the end of the seventh century.¹⁶⁶

After analysing the Buddhist and Brahmanical caves, it can be deduced that Buddhist gave emphasis on beauty whereas Brahmanism caves emphasized on vigour. It may be noted that the affiliations between Ellora Buddhist and Brahmanical works extended for a long time until the latter had not decided to move further.¹⁶⁷

The Brahmanical caves and the architectural details that have been described in this chapter, can be said the copies of Buddhist *viharas* in some manner. But the cells for monks are absent and also the character of the sculptures has also been changed to suit the Brahmanical pantheon.¹⁶⁸ It can be noticed that in the Sita's Chavadi and later caves, the Brahmanism was gradually departing from their Buddhist originals. It landed on the verge of creating its own style. This innovation resulted into a revolution where Brahmanism abandoned the cave and decided to excavate rock-cut temples.¹⁶⁹

On the basis of evolution in architectural styles, the Brahmanical cave temples can be divided into eight varieties in ground plan. The ground plans of caves 21, 26,

¹⁶⁵ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹⁶⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

¹⁶⁷ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 276-80.

¹⁶⁸ Havell, E. B. (2000). *Encyclopaedia of Architecture in the Indian Subcontinent, Vol-I Ancient and Early Medieval*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International. p. 90.

¹⁶⁹ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

20b, 17, 14, 27, 19, 16 and 15 (Dasavatara) can well portray these evolutionary stages. Particularly, the Dasavatara cave forms a transition between the pre-Rashtrakuta and the Rashtrakuta series.

As per the style of execution, it can be surmised that when the Buddhist caves began from the south end of the hill, no work on Brahmanical caves was started. The prevailing condition allowed the Buddhist activities to spread into the other part of the hill towards the north. It is quite visible in two caves, namely caves 20a and 27. These two caves have different ground plans. Cave 20a has an astylar *mandapa* and cave 27 has a Latin cross plan with a *nirandharagarbhagriha*. This style of execution was prominent in Buddhist cave. This Latin cross type has also been adopted in 20b and 21.

On the basis of the Brahmanical caves, it can be said that the caves at Ellora originally begun for Buddhism and eventually completed for the Brahmanical faith. The transition of Buddhist caves into the Brahmanical caves can be noticed in the ground plan of early Brahmanical caves.¹⁷⁰

The other types comprise of *mandapa* and *sandhara* shrine. It is without an entrance veranda in cave 14. It contains a full axial strike of the inner temple with peripheral open projections and sandhara *garbhagriha*, as in Dumarlena (cave 29). The triratha layout (cave 19) and pancharatha layout (cave 27) anticipating the advent of large pillared halls with *nandimandapa* which came into being from Rashtrakutas times. Many of the pre-Rashtrakutas examples do not have an *ardhamandapa* or *antarala* as in the case of caves 26, 17 and 14, while an *antarala* is clearly seen in others caves 21, 20b, 27, 16 and 15. The former group has its prototypes in the *rekha*-affiliated category which would have had a *sukanasa*,

¹⁷⁰ Spink, Walter. (1967). *Ajanta to Ellora*. Bombay: Marg Publications. p. 10.

while the latter group might have developed from the *vimana* or *phamsana* category would have had a regular *antarala* or *ardhamandapa*. Thus we find that in the evolution of the cave temple plan, the early phase of the *Brahmanical* group was not only of changing format but also affiliated to the *rekha* type. Some in the group also display the *sandhara* feature, while others are of the *nirandhara* category. The two streams of temple forms thus coalesced: the *rekha* and the *vimana* or the indigenous *Deccaniphamsana* types. This indicates that patronage itself flowed from two source regions, besides a region which had and skilfullyutilized both *rekha* and *vimana* types, together with indigenous *phamsanasandhara* and *nirandhara* temple forms.¹⁷¹

Direct transfer of new elements like the octagonal pillars on the façade of cave 27 show that migrating Buddhist craftsmen mingles with guilds of another school, evolving mixed forms in subsequent phases. But the wtwisted cord and beaded ornament pattern running diagonally across the shaft of the pillar, so characteristic of Ajanta's Mahayana caves, does not appear at Ellora thereby indicating that the level of workmanship and intensity had somewhat declined by the time the migrating craftsmen of Buddhist.¹⁷²

Ajanta had begun their new shrines as well. This decline underscores the chronological gap between the cessation of major activities at Ajanta and commencement of activity at Ellora. The one major activities at Ajanta commencement of activity at Ellora.¹⁷³

The one major point of continuity between the two places was the *ghata-pallavapillar* type and the use of the capital block on the top, a central and upper

¹⁷¹ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹⁷² Spink, Walter, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-15.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 16.

Indian pillar form, as distinguished from the southern use of corbels on pillar tops. Both styles were used at Elephanta.¹⁷⁴

Ajanta shows predominating, except in late *viharas* of the Mahayana phase, the capital block and where corbels are used, they are of the coiled type of the lower DeccaniChalukyan genre. Corbels are widely seen in many pre-Rashtrakutas caves, for instance, caves 26, 28, 29, 14.¹⁷⁵

Hence, these features make it clear that there was, firstly, a time-lag between Ajanta's end and Ellora's beginning. Secondly typical Ajantan usages are continued and mingled with typical southern forms, especially in the non-Buddhist and Brahmanical caves.



¹⁷⁴ Berkson, Carmel, *op. cit.*, p. 24-28.

¹⁷⁵ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.* 134-188.

Kailash Temple: Culmination of Monolithic Architecture at Ellora _____

Cave 16 is well known as the Kailash or Rang Mahal. It is a great monolithic temple. The final type of Brahmanical rock-cut architecture consists of one example only, the Kailash (Siva's Paradise) at Ellora. It stands a class apart by itself. Instead of the underground halls like caves, it is isolated from the surrounding rock and carved both on the outside and inside. The architectural design suggests that its creators threw aside all previous conventions. They boldly undertook the task to reproduce a structural temple on a very large scale and in full detail of the period in the living rock. Percy Brown has said "*the Indian artist had an extraordinarily developed plastic sense. No other people has ever dreamed of sculpting such great temples out of the solid rock as it was. Indeed, Indian architecture proceeds, not as ours, according to the principles of construction; it is rather conceived as an object cut out of solid material as any ivory figure might be.*"¹

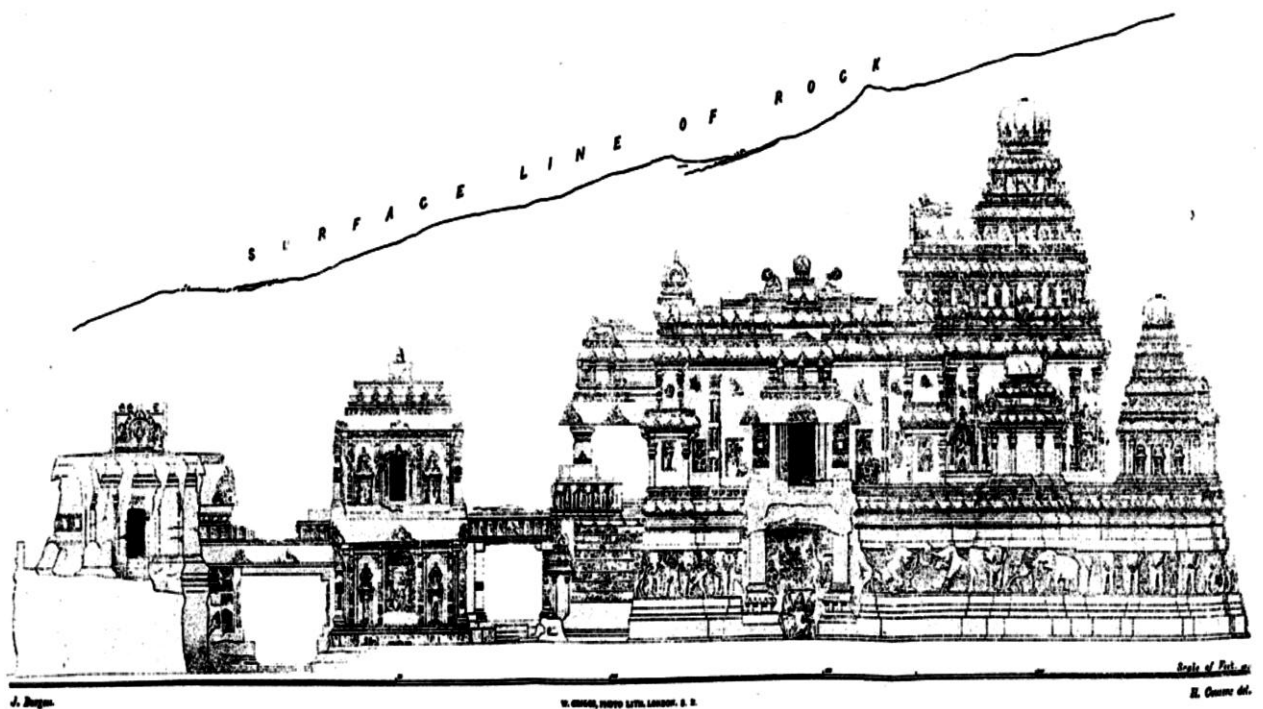
Kailasha is indeed a memorable experience one would never forget. The scholars in the 80's and 90's have broken new grounds in the study of Kailasha. One of the new ground way to examine Kailasha as a pilgrimage centre, although earlier it has appeared in the Puranic list that includes the site as one of the Jyotirlingas or as a place where *shradha* would be performed and later in a tantric text that Kailasha is named as one of the fifty Sakti Pithas.²

¹ Brown, Percy. (1956). *Indian Architecture* (Buddhist and Hindu Periods). Bombay: D.B Taraporewala Sons and Company.

² Bhatt, G. P. (2004). *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology* vol. 36. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, pp. 759-60.



Figure 89: View of Kailash Temple from North East
 Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi



South Elevation of Kailash Temple (After Burgess)

Historical Development

In the historical references, the control of Deccan was taken by the Raśtrakutas from the early Western Chalukyas around 750 CE. In this way they began a supremacy that was lasted around 973 CE.³ Though the political might of this family has been widely acknowledged, little is known about the artistic developments that took place during the period of their supremacy. The major site related with these rulers is Ellora. Several cave excavations were carried out at Ellora under the aegis of Raśtrakutas.

Its boldness suggest centuries of traditions in which carving techniques and an understanding of the rock medium were developed. It enabled craftsmen to push the architectural type to its limits.⁴ It can be said that the Kailaśa temple is more than simply a building. It is a huge complex with all the architectural members of contemporary free standing southern type temple.

It is difficult to say how long it took to create the main temple and its surroundings elements or the precise sequence of the excavations. Most scholars today feel that the major portion of the monument, including the central temple and Nandi shrine as well as the gateway belong to the reign of the Rastrakuta king Krishna I, who ruled from around 757 to 773 AD.⁵ However, it may be possible that the temple was planned and begun under his predecessor, Dantidurga. It is evident from the cave prior to the Kailaśa temple cave no. 15 which bears an inscription of the earlier king reigned from 735 to 757 CE.⁶ These two cave temples are very similar in terms of stylization.

³ Huntington, Susan L. (1985). *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. p. 341.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 342.

⁵ Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 4.

There is some conceptual relation between Kailāśa temple and the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal and Kailāśanath temple of Kanchipuram.⁷ But here Soundrarajan⁸ has opined that „*Undeniably, all the three are of the same genre—the southern architectural style – but perhaps the resemblance almost ends here. The integrally constructed seven subsidiary shrines of identical shape built in the thickness of the wall around the central shrine of Kailāśanath each not only showing identical god-head within, namely, the Somasakanda panel, but also having only a restricted eastward or westward orientation and not at all having any front vestibule beyond its transept passage as emerges from the cella, is so completely and drastically different from the phraseology implicit in the Virupaksha and the one manifest in the Kailāśaa.*’

From an analytical point of view it may be surmised that monolithic Pallava *Rathas* at Mahabalipuram were the initiator of this typology in southern part of the country.⁹ The Kailāśa temple was conceived and carried out when structural temple architecture in the stone medium had already developed. It is also interesting that there was no contemporary monolithic architecture to take immediate inspiration except for *Rathas* of Mahabalipuram.¹⁰ It must have been a novel experimentation in terms of freestanding monolithic complex hewn in the living rock. The most prominent and an innovative experimentation was done by the King Narsimhvarman I, Māmalla. Mamallapuram was the famous sea-port of the Pallavas. King Narsimhavarman might have chosen it implements his dream to make sanctuary of vested legends.¹¹

⁷ Bhattacharyya, Asok. (1988). „Ellora Sculpture: A Stylistic Examination“ in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al, New Delhi: Books & Books. p. 274.

⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundra. (1988). *The Ellora Monoliths*. Delhi: Gian Publishing House. p. 4.

⁹ Tadgell, Christopher, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *Rock-cut Temple Styles, op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹¹ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 346.

Karka-II, Rastrakuta monarch rightly mentioned about this temple as:¹²

Elāpur-āchala-gat-ādbhuta-sanniveśam yad=vīkṣya

vismita-vimana-char-āmarendrāḥ I

Etat savayambhu siva-dhāma na kṛtrime

srīs dṛṣṭ=edṛs=iti satatam bahu charchayanti II

Bhūyas-lathāvidha-kṛtau vyavasāya-hānir-

Etan-mayā katham-aho kṛtm=ity-akasmāt I

Karttāpi yasya khalum, ver vismayam-āpa śilpi

Tan-nāma-kīrttanam=akārayyata yena rājñā II

Meaning¹³: (That King) by whom verily was caused to be constructed a temple on the hill at Elāpura of wonderful structure, - on seeing which the best of the immortals who move in celestial cars struck with astonishment, think much constantly, saying, “*this temple of Śiva is self-existent; in a thing made by art such beauty is not seen*”- a temple, the architect-builder of which, in consequences of the failure of his energy as regards (the construction of) another such work, was himself suddenly struck with astonishment, saying, *Oh, how was it that I built it!*”

If we see the rock of the Deccan trap it would be difficult to believe that the complexes at Ellora were created with such an aesthetic perfection. However, it is equally true that Kailāśa temple was not built in a day.¹⁴ It is evident from the site that it took ages for the development of architectural skills to reach such a level of perfection which have been discussed in the subsequent chapters.

¹² Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K. “*Kailasa: A Structural Analysis*”, *op. cit.* p. 353.

At the time of initiation of Kailaśa temple, as already mentioned, Mahabalipuram group of temples served as a model. But in the late eighth century monolithic architectural models were well patronized. The earliest of these temples are- Vettuvankoil¹⁵ (800 CE) at Kalugumalai in the Pandyan country, after that Dhamner (850 CE)¹⁶ in Madhya Pradesh, the Chaturbhuj Viṣṇu on Gwalior Hill¹⁷ during late ninth century. The series of seven monoliths at Masrur in Kangra valley¹⁸ of the same time. The small rectangular unfinished shrine with wagon types *sikhara* at Coglong in Bihar,¹⁹ sometime later. The excavation of monolithic temples is practically go out of vogue after ninth century A. D.²⁰

The importance of Ellora largely stems from the awesome showpiece of the Kailaśa temple. Ellora was part of a chain of monolithic carvings of architectural forms set in motion from the time of Dantidurga. It carried on up to the second quarter of the ninth century CE, beyond the time of Govinda III.²¹ There is much variety in this series of five. The Kailaśa temple built by Krishna I is the most ambitious, complete and intricate of the series at Ellora.²² It is overwhelming and attributed to the perfect rhythm and harmony of component parts. The double story excavation of Kailaśa temple complex is a marvel example in realm of monolithic architectural edifices. It is located in the central place in the 34 caves at Ellora.²³ Not only the location but also the style of execution gives an important place in the history of architecture.

¹⁵ Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *The Ellora Monoliths*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶ Dayalan, D. *op. cit.*, p.2

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.5

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.4.

²¹ Dayalan, D., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²² Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, p. 342.

²³ Dhavalikar, M. K. *op. cit.*, p.6.

Philosophical aspect of the Kailash temple

It is quite strange that the *vastu-sastras* are almost quiet on this style of architecture. M. N. Deshpande²⁴ in his paper has proposed that the monolithic temples in general and the Kailāśa temple at Ellora in particular had the impact of Śankara's philosophy of Advaita (monism). Here, it is important to mention that the very first reference of monolithic temple's association with Advaita philosophy is from Amṛtānubhava in Marathi. It is written by Jnāneśvara, a thirteenth century saint poet of Maharashtra.

Deva deūla parivāru kīje korunī dongaru

Taisā bhaktīkā vyavashāru kana vḥāvā I

- Amṛtānubhava (9.43)²⁵

Meaning:²⁶ "God, shrine and devotee carved in the rocky hill, such is the affair of non-dualist unity of knowledge and devotion".

The physical relationship between the caves and the cliff is a strange one. They differ from it even as they are of it, and they are visible within it even as they sometimes seem to disappear in its own variegated surface.²⁷ There also have physical, philosophical and religious grounding which inspired the construction of the caves.²⁸ While the relationship between a religion or philosophy and its physical manifestations is a complicated one, the cave temples at Ellora clearly depict Indian beliefs about and desires for architecture, pilgrimage sites and ritual. Stella Kramrisch has written that "*tirthas* and *ksetras* on Indian soil are potent sites where a presence is felt to dwell. Its support is in the place itself.

²⁴ Deshpande, M. N., „Kailāśa: A Study in its symbolism in the light of contemporary Philosophical concepts and Tradition“, in Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al, (New Delhi: Books & Books, 1988), pp. 232-234.

²⁵ Deshpande, M. N., op. cit. p. 240.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 241.

²⁷ Havell, E. B., op. cit., p. 187.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 188.

Whatever makes the site conspicuous or memorable is reinforced in its effect by the attention of the people directed towards and concentrated on that spot.”²⁹

The text of Amṛtānubhava also gives details about the technique of carving. Interestingly, Saint Jñāneśvara expresses his surprise about the reverse process of starting the carving of the Kailāśa temple from top to bottom in a very mystic style. He says, „*the space was created out of a tamarind leaf and the construction laid down the pinnacle first and the foundation last.*”³⁰ While praising the skill of the artisans at Ellora, Carmel Berkson has said, “*The Raṣtrakutas artists seem to have been driven also by the philosophy which denied by absolute with corollary. It would nullify an exclusive focus on the theory that the central point influences all forces within the configuration of the panel. The conceptions which eliminate God and might also prove to be useful tool by means of which to approach the art in the relief panels, since magnetic forces outside the panel sometimes force a relative view of all the elements.*”³¹ It shows the qualities of the absolute exist in the central point. In this way, a certain ambiguity arises out of the question of what is beyond the circumference of the cave.

The association of the name Ilapura and Ellora represents a long mythological tradition. Ila is the Goddess of priests and the kings in the Vedic period.³² The *Puranas* mention a river Ela somewhere in the Deccan and a tribe called Elikas or Ailikas.³³ There is also reference of Chalukyan King Vijyaditya issued a grant during his military encampment at Elāpura in 704 A.D.³⁴ It may be

²⁹ Kramrisch, Stella, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³⁰ Baumer, Bettina. (1988). „From Guha to Akasa: The Mystical Cave in the Vedic and Shaiva Traditions, in the *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all). New Delhi Books & Books. pp. 62-63.p. 77.

³¹ Berkson, Carmel. (1988). „Daśāvtāra Cave: Its Importance in the History of the World Art” in *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, Shivaji Pannikar, et. al. New Delhi: Books & Books. p. 218.

³² Soar, Micaela, *op. cit.* p. 81.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 82.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 83.

proposed that the circumference which exists in Ellora was occupied by many powerful dynasties.

Micaela Soar has stressed on the quasi mythical stories providing a paradigm for worship at Ellora. This story according to Soar, suggest lingam worship by women at Ellora.³⁵ Another medieval Marathi story about the queen Manikavati and the king of Elapura was also discussed by Dr. M.K. Dhavalikar. Dhavalikar has also written a stylistic analysis of Kailasha another interesting study.³⁶

The Mansara, a text on architecture describes in details that all such cities have special significance as they are based on cosmic geometry also called *vastu-purush* mandala. It is generally square in shape. All the four corners of this square represent the four cardinal directions of the world. Within this square there is a circular design. This circular design represents the universe. Square and circle these two geometrical signs also represent the celestial and domestic fires. Fire in *Vedas* is omnipotent. It is the most vital source of energy. This energy is both spiritual and temporal. It contains occult potentiality. So cosmic city also consists of spiritual power which is subtle and sublime and it is inherent in the sacred ecology of the cosmic town.³⁷

Architectural Plan

After visiting Kailash, one could understand that the ground plan of the Kailaśa approximates in area that of the Parthenon at Athens. Its height is one and half times that of the same Greek masterpiece, some idea of the magnitude of the undertaking may be conceived.³⁸

In its plan and general arrangements the Kailaśa bears a certain resemblance to the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal, even then a recent building, and one which was no doubt at the time considered the last word in temple design. But although the early Chalukyan example may have provided some inspiration.

³⁵ Soar, Micaela. (1988). „The Tirtha at Ellora” in *Ellora Caves: Sculptures and Architecture*. Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all). New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 80-85.

³⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., (1988). „Kailasa-A Structural Analysis” in *Ellora Caves: Sculptures and Architecture*. Ratan Parimoo, (et. all). New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 351-361.

³⁷ Shukla, D. N. (2003). *VastuShastra, vol. 1, Hindu Science of Architecture*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. pp. 368-70.

³⁸ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

The Kailash is more than twice its size, and is clearly an illustration of the normal development of the Dravidian temple-type, adapted to conform to the particular technique involved.³⁹

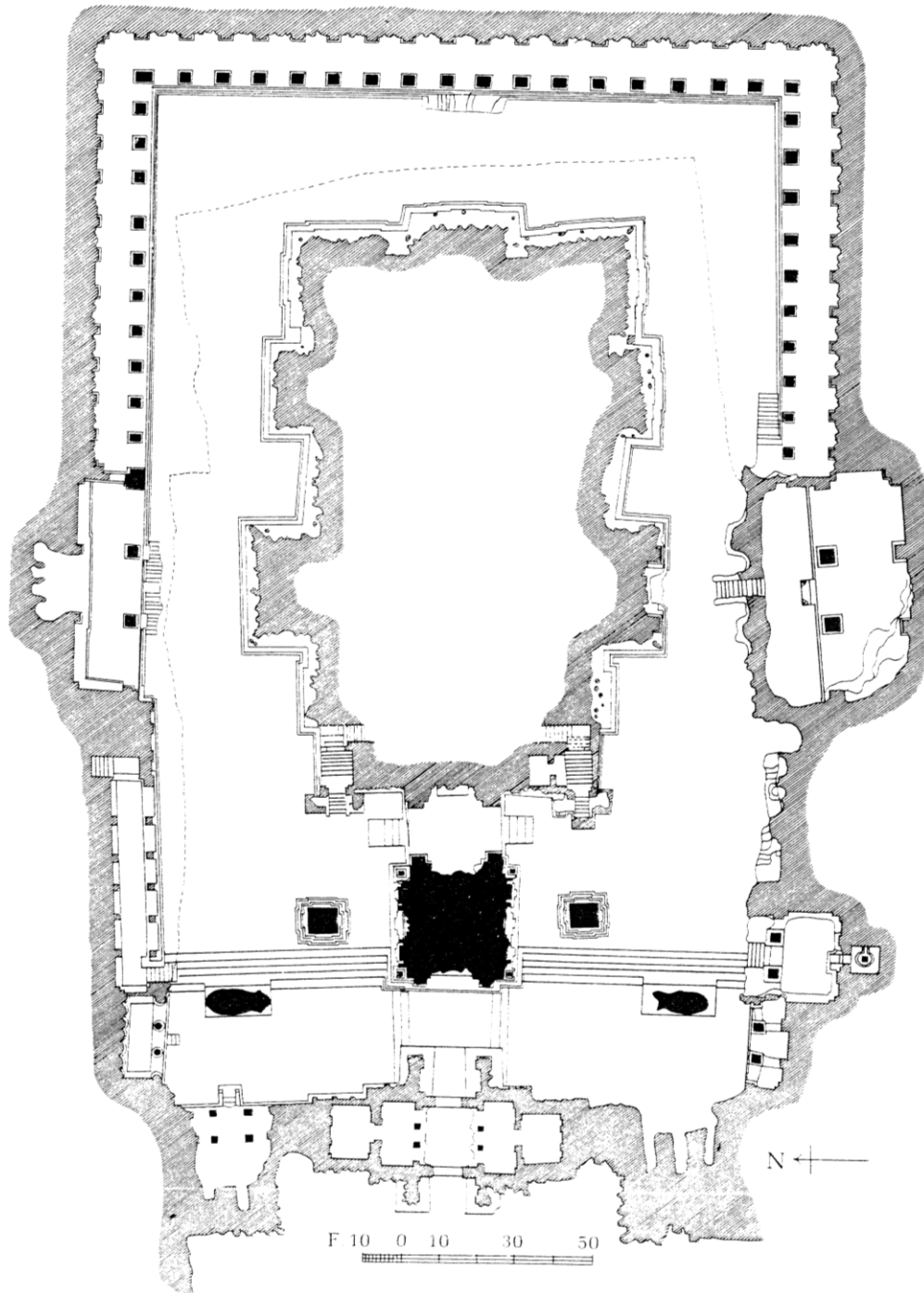


Figure 90: Plan of Lower Section, Ellora Kailasa Temple (After Burgess)

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

³⁹ Huntington, Susan L. (1985). *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York and Tokyo: Weather Hill. pp. 325-330.

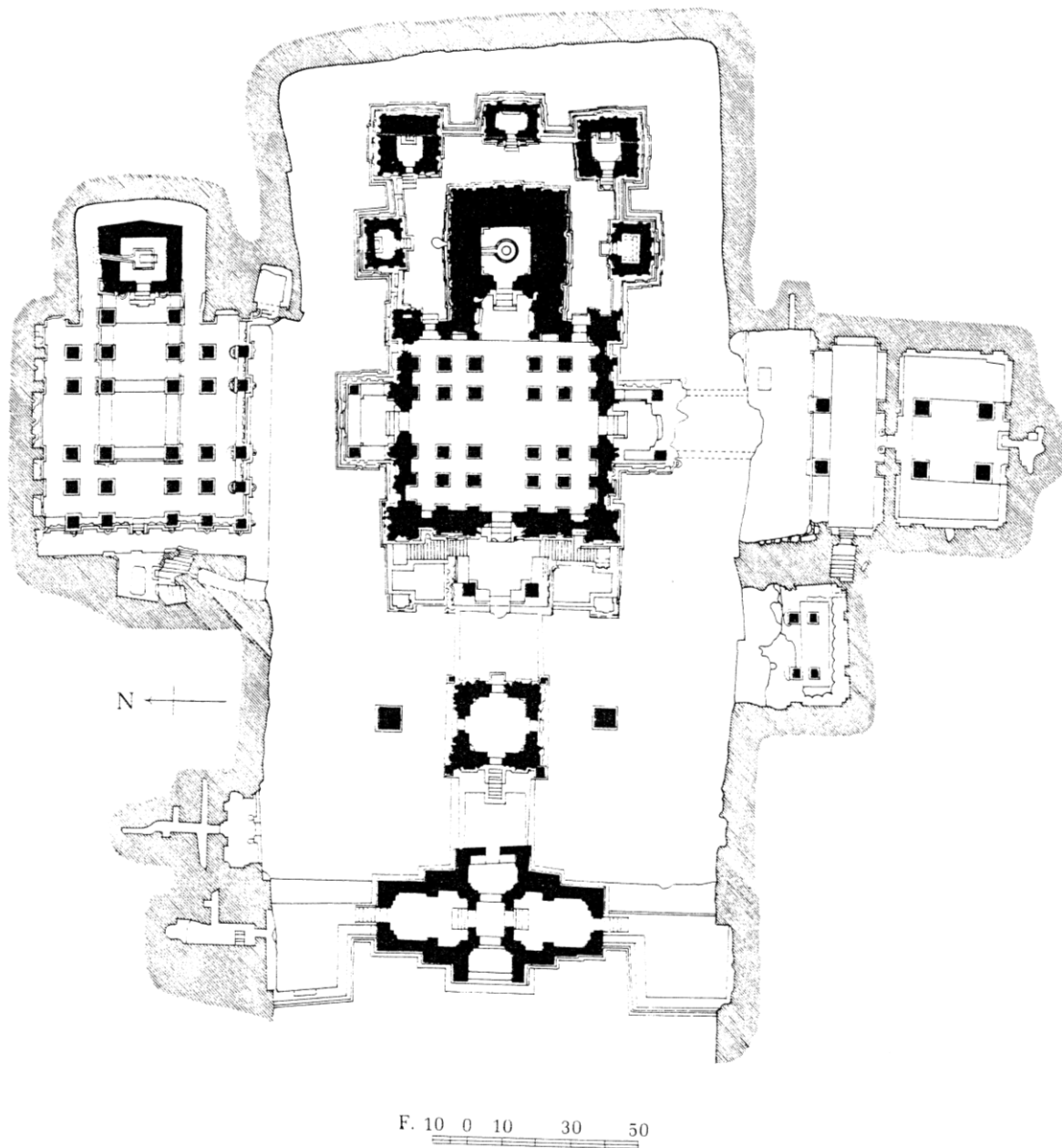


Figure 91: Plan of Upper Section Ellora Kailasa Temple (After Burgess)

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

It is only logical that each individual temple at this formative period of the art, should be a copy of its predecessor, but improved and enriched by the accumulation of previous experience. Once the idea of the Kailash was conceived, its production became a matter of time, patience, and skilled labour, all of which appear to have been readily forthcoming. It was an expression of exalted religious emotion. It is obvious, but even this condition could not have made such a monument possible. It must have had the patronage of a ruler with

unlimited resources and who was at the same time moved by the loftiest ideals.⁴⁰

Description of the Kailash Temple

Describing Kailash is the most difficult and stupendous job. The sheer magnitude of the monolithic temple excavated and carved into gigantic form. Its back cliff rising and falling into an immense colossal mass of stone. Significantly, a maze of courtyard, galleries, porches, porticoes, a courtyard surrounding the main temple. The *mahamandapa*, the *dhwajastambhas*, the elephants and semi divinities and divinities are simply a creation of no ordinary mortals. It is a most beautiful example of the blend of the north and south, both at its best. It may be called as one of the well-planned and well-designed temple, excavated with the support of the prosperous Rashtrakuta dynasty.⁴¹



Figure 92: Roof of the Rangamandapa has been Decorated with Moving Lions

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

It rises to a rocky height of approximately 100 feet, its length about 145 feet nearly 250 feet deep and 150 feet broad. While making notes on architectural plan, Percy Brown had observed, "*three trenches were made at right angles and*

⁴⁰ Burgess, James. (1972). *Elura Cave Temples*. Varanasi and Delhi: Indological Book House. pp. 29-32.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 33.

cut down at right angles to the level of the base of the hill. First a mass of rock 200 feet long, 100 feet wide, 100 feet in height was isolated. Then the mass was hammered into shape. Then the sculptors began their work.”⁴²



Figure 93: Lion trampling elephant on the sukanasa

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

Each part of the carved details appears to have been completely finished as the work progressed downwards. It might be obvious that the entire plan of the temple was conceived before starting the excavation which can be postulated on the basis of its



Figure 94: Lion on the *karankuta*

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

dimensions, the location of the halls and pillars, staircases, the panels, the

⁴² Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.

shikaras of the main and sub shrines, lotuses, elephants, lions on the roof, then the *karnakutas*, the *salas*, the *kapota etc.*, all were pre-conceived. The walls of the main shrine that were carved with flying *gandharvas* above and other deities. The main hall, then the huge *adhithana* (plinth) with a *vyalavari*, the *jagati* (tall flat course). The *upama* of the *adhithana* (plinth) showing lions attacking elephants at corners and finally the *upapitha* rising from the floor level with a series of recessed offsets.⁴³



Figure 95: Adhithana of the temple is supported by the elephants

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The work was commenced by cutting three mighty trenches in the solid rock—two of them at right angles to the front of the rock. More than 90 yards in length, and the third connecting their inner ends, over 50 yards long and 107 feet deep.⁴⁴ A great mass of rock was left in front of the court to represent the *gopura* of Dravidian temples which is here in two storeys. The lower one

⁴³ Rajan, K. V. Soundara. (1988). *The Ellora Monoliths*. Delhi: Gian Publishing House. pp. 35-40.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 41.

with rooms inside, and the exterior adorned with figures of Siva, Vishnu and other Hindu pantheon.⁴⁵

The *gopura* is pierced in the centre, by an entrance passage with rooms on each side. Beyond this, a large sculpture of Lakshmi seated on lotuses with her attendant elephants has been carved. The leaves of the lotuses contain some letters and a date, probably of the 15th century CE. There have been inscriptions on the bases of the pilasters on each side, which bear characters of the 8th century CE.⁴⁶

Gajalakshmi panel



Figure 96: Gajalakshmi Panel on the entrance porch below Nandimandapa © Kushal Parkash

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ Qureshi, Dulari. (2010). *Rock-cut Temple of Western India*. Delhi: Bhartiya Kala Prakashan. pp. 165-70.

Right in front of the entrance gateway when one enters the gateway, the magnificent panel of Gajalakshmi is carved below the Nandimandapa facing west. Lakshmi is generally regarded as goddesses of fortune. Though the panel has been mutilated, the deity of wealth and fortune is seated on a double lotus in the middle of *kshirsagar* (Milk Ocean) from where she was born as a result of churning of the ocean. Four elephants represent the four cardinal directions who are pouring water on the deity⁴⁷. Another panel is located opposite the entrance passage leading to the Lankeshwara shrine on the northern side. She has been mentioned in Rig Veda as a destroyer of the evil⁴⁸.

Eta ena vyakaran khile ga vishtithaaiv I

Ramanta pranyan lakshmiryan papishta aneensham II (RV 10:71:2)

As mentioned earlier, the Kailasha is a combination of the southern and northern styles. It has, however, a strong Dravidian Complex with the following components:⁴⁹

- (i) Gopuram or entrance gate-way
- (ii) Nandi mandapa
- (iii) The main vimana
- (iv) The surrounding cloisters and
- (v) An adjoining mandapa.

On the two sides of the courtyard (the north and the south) supplementary halls are carved. In the northern courtyard is the Lankesvara shrine, and the shrine of the river goddesses.⁵⁰ These however may be later additions.

⁴⁷ Deshpande, M. N., "Kailasha: A Study in its Symbolism in the Light of Contemporary philosophical Concepts and Tradition" in the *Ellora Caves: Sculpture and Architecture*, Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all), P.245.

⁴⁸ Kapoor, Subodh, *Indian Gods and Goddesses*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 52.

⁵⁰ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-92.

The entrance gateway is two storeyed and has a *sala-sikhara*. Over the upper entrance is a rectangular *griva* and a wagon topped sikhara. The Nandi mandapa is 25 feet square and stands on a highly decorative base. The plinth or *adisthana* shows mouldings.

The lower mouldings, however, are not properly finished. The plinth shows pilasters with sculptured panels. Near the floor the base rises in the series of recessed offset. Above, in the central space of the side, is a frieze of elephants and lions. Above the plinth is frieze of elephants and then the *kapota*. The *kantha* of the plinth shows a number of *mithuna* sculptures. The Nandi *mandapa* is connected with the gate of the bridge. The gate house is double storeyed with ample accommodation for the temple guardians.⁵¹



Figure 97: Mithuna couple on the wall of mandapa

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The base of the *vimana* proper measures 164 feet from the east to west, and 109 feet from north to south. The *adhithana* or plinth of the *vimana* is a solid mass of rock and its impressive height lends grandeur to the entire structure. The base greatly resembles the lower part of a chariot. The whole temple looks like a chariot resting on the back of elephants.⁵²

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 93.

⁵² Brown, Percy, *op. cit.* pp. 74-75.

The *vimana* proper is approached by flights of steps from both the courtyards. The flight of steps lead to a porch, the ceiling of which shows some interesting painting. The oldest of these may be contemporaneous with the temple.⁵³

River Goddesses Shrine

A shrine 23½ feet long by 9 feet deep and 11 feet high, with two pillars in front, is just behind the northern elephant. The pillars have moulded bases, sixteen-sided shafts, and massive capitals with a double bracket above. The floor is approached by five steps, with an elephant's head and front feet on each side of them. The rest of the podium is divided into three panels on each side, containing small sculptures.⁵⁴



Figure 98: River Goddesses shrine

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The ends also had the heads of elephants. The facade was terminated by gigantic *dvarapalas* with several arms and wearing high tiaras. The doorway of the shrine is intricately decorated with geometrical patterns and human figures.

⁵³ Ranade, P. V. (1980). Ellora Paintings. Aurangabad: Parimal Prakashan. pp. 12-18.

⁵⁴ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-33.

On either side are female *dwarapalikas*. On the left hand side is the River goddess Ganga, standing on a makara, and on the right Yamuna standing on a tortoise.⁵⁵

The other two lean slightly towards her-the one on the left standing on a lotus flower, with creeping plants and birds among their leaves. To the right on a tortoise (*kurma*), with creepers and water-plants behind. These two represent Sarasvati and Yamuna respectively. The frieze of the facade has been divided into seven panels. In the central panel three figures and in each of the others a male and female have been shown seated together. Over these are some mouldings. In front this of an unfinished cave is located above. It has a low rail carved with water jars, separated by two little colonnades.⁵⁶

Cloisters

The cloisters that surround the main temple are of great interest presenting as they do through the medium of stone. The story of Shiva and other gods of the Hindu pantheon. In the panel of the cloisters. The Hindu mythology springs into life in all its glory. A plethora of Hindu gods full of life and energy depicting all human emotions of love, hate, greed, anger, ecstasy.⁵⁷

The demon Ravana sacrificing his heads to God Shiva or God Shiva himself setting out in a chariot driven by Brahma to destroy the triple castles of the Asuras. Vishnu pushing king Bali into the earth, or killing the demon Hiranyakashyapa these and other sculptures fills the walls of the side cloisters.⁵⁸

Some of the best panels are the Siva Kalyanasundaramurti. The graceful figure of Parvati at the first touch of her Lord makes her blush coyly. One of the most expressive panels is the powerful dancing pose of Shiva are some of the most

⁵⁵ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁵⁶ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

⁵⁷ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-165.

⁵⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, 172-175.

memorable sculptures in these cloisters.⁵⁹ The great saga of the past moves before one's eyes and then one gets lost into it. The effect is overwhelming, as it is full of strength, life, vigour and beauty. The architectural effect when the visitor looks at the long rows of columns and the continuous series of sculptural panels from one end of them its most fascinating.⁶⁰

On the back wall is-1, Ganapati; 2, a female with a child sitting on a wolf; 3, Indrani; 4, Parvati with a bull in front of the seat, and a child destroyed; 5, Vaishnavi and child destroyed, with Garuda below; 6, Kartikeyi, and child crawling on the knee, with a peacock holding a snake as a cognizance; 7, a *devi* with *trisula* and a humped bull below; 8, Sarasvati holding a rosary; and 9, another Devi with four arms, holding a shallow vessel.⁶¹

On the east wall are three female seated figures. These are sometimes named Sivakali Bhadrakali, and Mahakali. Each holding a *chauri*, but without the nimbus and cognizance. They are separated from the others by a fat dwarf who sits with his back to the three. Under the west end of the sacrificial hall is a small low cave, the verandah of which is divided from the inner room by an arch springing from two attached pillars. The inside has an altar for some



Figure 99: Panel of Kalyansundarmurti Shiva
Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
 New Delhi

⁵⁹ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-182.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 183.

⁶¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 65-67.

idol. The rock on the right side of the great temple has been excavated in four storeys, none of them quite finished.⁶²

This corridor on the south side measures 118 feet in length. The wall is divided by pilasters into twelve compartments, each containing a large sculpture as follows:⁶³

1. Annapurna, four-armed, holding a water pot, rosary, spike or bud, and wearing her hair in the *jata* style.
2. Siva as Balaji who slew Indrajit, the son of Ravana, four-armed, with club, *discus* or *chakra*, and conch; has a supplicant and a small female in front of his club.
3. Vishnu as Krishna, four-armed, with the *sankha* and sword, holding the seven-hooded snake Kaliya by the tail, and planting his foot on its breast.
4. Varaha, four-armed, with the *chakra*, *sankha*, and the snake under his foot, raising Prithvi.
5. A four-armed Vishnu on Garuda. 6. Vishnu, six-armed, with a long sword, club, shield, *chakra*, and *sankha*, in the Vamana or dwarf incarnation, with his foot uplifted over the head of Bali, holding his pot of jewels.
7. A four-armed Vishnu as Krishna upholding the lintel of a compartment to represent the base of a hill over the flocks of Vraj.
8. Sesha Narayana or Vishnu on the great snake, with Brahma on the lotus springing from his navel, and five fat little figures below.
9. Narasimha, tearing out the entrails of his enemy.
10. A figure with three faces and four arms, trying to pull up the *linga*.
11. Siva, four-armed, with Nandi.
12. Ardhanariswar, four-armed, with Nandi.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 68.

⁶³ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 52-64.

The sculptures from the west end of the twelve corresponding bays on the north side (120 feet in length) are:⁶⁴

1. Siva springing from the *linga* to protect Markandeya from Yama, the god of death.
2. Siva and two worshippers, one of them a huntsman with a bow.
3. Siva and Parvati playing at *chausar*; below are Nandi and eleven *gana*.
4. Siva and Parvati, with Narada below playing on some wind instrument.
5. Siva, with Parvati above, her arms twined in Siya's; Ravana is below, but not complete.
6. Rishi Muchhukunda, with two arms and a bag on his left shoulder.
7. Siva and Parvati seated, facing one another.
8. Siva, four-armed, with snake and rosary, and Nandi on the right.
9. Siva and Parvati seated, and Nandi below.
10. The same pair, with a *linga* altar between them, and Nandi below.
11. Siva with Parvati on his left knee, and a seated and a standing figure below.
12. A *linga* with nine heads round it, and a kneeling figure of Ravana upholding the *vedi*, and cutting off his tenth head in devotion to Siva.⁶⁵

The nineteen subjects occupying the compartments in the east corridor (189 feet in length) are:⁶⁶

1. Siva as Kala Bhairava, four-armed, with the *trisila*, and accompanied by Parvati.

⁶⁴ Burgess, Jas, op. cit. pp. 27-32.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, op. cit., pp. 456-458.

2. A god stepping out from lotuses, with a small figure of a goddess holding him by the finger.
3. Siva, four-armed, with the *trisula*, beside Parvati.
4. Siva, four-armed, with the *trisula* in one of the left hands, and *gandharvas* above and other attendants below.
5. Siva with a long-shafted *trisula* dancing on a dwarf.
6. Chanda or Bhupala Bhairava, with a ribbon over his thighs, a *trisula* over his left shoulder, a begging bowl in the left hand, and a small drum in the right, with Parvati in front of him.
7. Siva, four-armed, holding a cobra, with Nandi on the right and Parvati on the left.
8. Siva and Nandi.
9. Brahma, three-faced and four-armed, with the ascetic's water-pot and rosary, and his sacred goose.
10. Siva with a cobra and Nandi.
11. Vishnu, four-armed, with *sankh* and lotus; also a worshipper with his hands clasped.
12. Siva holding the *trisula*, with Nandi and a worshipper.
13. Siva, holding a snake, the Ganges flowing from his hair; Parvati is on his left and an elephant on his right; above is Brahma, and overhead a *gandharva*
14. Siva in a *linga* with Brahma and Varaha.
15. Siva with four-arms, *damru*, club, and bell.

16. Siva and Parvati, with Nandi below.
17. Siva with six arms, going to war against Tripurasura; Brahma, armed with *trisula*, club, bow, and quiver, drives him in the sun's chariot, with the four Vedas as horses; Nandi is on the top of the club.
18. Virabhadra, six-armed, with *damru*, bowl, and *trisula*, holding up his victim Ratnasura. He is accompanied by Parvati, Kali, a goblin, and a vampire.
19. Siva holding a flower, with Parvati on his left, and Bhringi, his skeleton attendant, waiting below. A door from the north corridor leads into a continuation of it, 57 feet long. This is situated immediately under Lankesvara, and the two front pillars are elegantly ornamented, but there are no sculptures at the back.⁶⁷

Mandapa

A *mandapa*, 26 feet square and two storeys in height. It has been carved in front of the court. The lower storey of the *mandapa* is solid, and the upper one is connected with the *gopura* and with the temple by bridges cut in the rock. Figures of lions and fat dwarfs are placed on the roofs of the *gopura*, of the Nandi *mandapa*, and of the great hall itself. They stand about 4 feet high, and are executed in the same bold style as the figures of lions and elephants round the base of the temple.⁶⁸

The main hall on the first floor is a substantial dimensions measuring 57 by 55. Sixteen beautifully carved pillars support the ceiling. Earlier these pillars and plans have already been discussed. On the ceiling of the central hall is a panel depicting Siva dancing the *Lalitam*.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 459.

⁶⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-97.

⁶⁹ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, 168-70.

The entrance to the hall is to the left, in front of the Nandi. A low screen wall connects the west line of pillars. The roof is low, and is supported by twenty-seven massive pillars and corresponding pilasters, most of them richly carved and of varied and appropriate design, but of later date than the central temple.⁷⁰ The arrangement of the sixteen pillars in the centre is identical with that of the greater temple. The central aisle and the central cross aisle are wider. The hall has a more spacious appearance than the porch of the temple. The floor of the central area is somewhat raised above the surrounding aisles.⁷¹

Antechamber: The vestibule of the shrine is at the east end of the hall. On the left side wall of the antechamber is a big standing Nandi accompanied by Ganesha.⁷² On the ceiling of the antechamber is a beautifully carved Annapurna, standing on a lotus, with high *jata* head-dress. Brahma squats at her right elbow and probably Vishnu is on her left. *Gandharvas* have been depicted on corners of the sculpture.⁷³ The north wall of the vestibule has the depiction of Siva and Parvati. They are shown playing the *chausur*. On the south, both are on Nandi couchant on a slab supported by four *ganas*, with a fifth at the end. Siva has a child on his right knee and behind him are four attendants.⁷⁴ The *dvarapalas* on each side of the shrine door is flanked by female *dvarpalas*. One of them is on a *makara*, and the other on a tortoise. These female *dvarpalas* can be identified as Ganga and Yamuna respectively. The shrine is a plain cell, 15 feet square inside, with a large rosette on the roof.

The central fane is raised on a solid basement of rock 27 feet high. Under the bridge connecting the temple with the *mandapa* are two large sculptures, -the one on the west being Siva as Kala Bhairava in a state of frantic excitement. He

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 29.

⁷¹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 56-64.

⁷² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-35.

⁷³ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-66.

⁷⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 45-55.

has been depicted with flaming eyes. The Saptamatras have been depicted on his feet. On the east side, Siva is shown as Mahayogi.⁷⁵

The whole of the temple was plastered over and painted, and hence its name Rang Mahal or the painted palace. The painting was renewed again and again, and some bits of old fresco-paintings of two or three successive coatings, still remain on the roof of the porch of the upper temple.⁷⁶



Figure 100: Dancing Shiva in Rangmandapa
Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India,
New Delhi



Figure 101: Pillar in the mandapa
Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

A door leads to the main hall of the temple. It is 57 side and 55 deep. There are sixteen pillars, somewhat in the style of the four great central columns. The door at each end of the cross aisle leads out into a side balcony with two richly carved pillars in front. The massiveness of the sixteen great square pillars gives a solidity and grandeur to the hall. These pillars represents the dynamism in the history of Indian architecture.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-32.

⁷⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 450-52.

⁷⁷ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 74-76.

These pillars are arranged in groups of four, one in each quarter, leaving a big central nave and two huge procession paths. One from the door to the vestibule which leads to the cellar and the other to the two side balconies. The whole arrangement according to Dr. Gupta is that of a *navarangamandapa*. In this the *navaranga* are as follows:⁷⁸

- (i) The central square
- (ii) The space between the two groups of northern pillars
- (iii) The space between the eastern pillars
- (iv) The space between the southern pillars
- (v) The space between the western pillars
- (vi) The space between four north western pillars
- (vii) The space between four north eastern pillars
- (viii) The space between four south eastern pillars
- (ix) The space between four south western pillars

Two doors on the eastern side of the *mahamandapa* open into the open terrace behind.

The door is guarded by gigantic Saiva *dvarapalas*, leaning on heavy maces. It has wide central and cross aisles. The four massive square columns in each corner are supporting the roof.



Figure 102: Naga-hooded figures
 Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies,
 Gurgaon

⁷⁸ Qureshi, Dulari, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-170.

The four pillars round the central area are of one pattern, differing only in the details of their sculpture. The remaining twelve are also of general type.⁷⁹

Among the details worth noting are the windows and panels. There are six windows, two in front and two on each side, of which one on the south-east is very much broken. Three of them are arabesques of very rich but entirely different designs, and the other two are a combination of animal and vegetable forms.⁸⁰

Rati: the goddess of sensuousness

In the next panel to the Mashishmardini Durga, Rati is depicted significantly with Kamadev (Pradyumna)⁸¹. They are represented standing side by side holding the sugar-cane stalk which represents the rasa- essence of life⁸². As per her beauty and sensuality she is pictured here as a maiden who holds the power to enchant the god of passion. When Shiva burnt her husband to ashes, it was Rati, whose penance leads to the promise of Kamadeva's resurrection⁸³. Often, this resurrection occurs when Kamadev is reborn as Pradyumna, the son of Krishna. Another depiction of Rati with Kamadev can be observed along the inside aspect of the front enclosure wall. Kamadeva is shown having an arrow in his hand and Ikshukhanda has been depicted in between the twosome. Rati is shown standing in *abhang*a pose⁸⁴.

Uma/ Parvati

The earliest reference of Uma Himavati is found in the Kena Upnshad where she looks to remove ignorance arisen due to egotism⁸⁵. Hence, she appears a goddess of knowledge.

⁷⁹ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2003). Monumental Legacy: Ellora. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 53-59.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 60.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp. 74-75.

⁸² Rajan, K. V. Soundra, *op. cit.*, p.100

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.101

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 102

⁸⁵ Panikkar, Shivaji K., *op. cit.*, p. 23.

A rare iconic sculpture of Parvati is depicted along the gateway complex (gopura dvara) which is surmounted by Shala shikhara) where she becomes part of the triad. In the niche Shiva is shown carrying the *linga* on his shoulders and Brahma and Vishnu are depicted in the lateral part of *Shala Shikhra*⁸⁶.

Along the inside look of front enclosure wall, Parvati is depicted in Uma-sahita Shiva panel. She is depicted seated in ardhaprayanka pose. In the same panel, the female seated cross-legged in a mood of indecision and male is with his legs placed forward and arms in protestation, seemingly pulling the female to make the next move. The upper torso of the female is plain. This incident corresponds to the narrative that of Uma and garrulous Brahmachari form taken by Shiva took to test Uma⁸⁷.

Mahishasurmardini Durga:

After holy bath at river goddess shrine, the sculpted panel of Durga as *Mahishasurmardini* can be noticed in the south-west corner of the northern flank of the courtyard. Durga is depicted here as a dynamic force of *Prakriti* (nature) as a destroyer of the evil⁸⁸. In the panel Durga is shown trampling Mahishasur which is represented both with the animal head as well as the human body emerging of the neck of the human form of the demon⁸⁹. On

both sides, one each is depicted fighting with Durga. It may be a synoptic view showing all the three demon figures probably being the



Figure 103: Mahisasurmardini ©
Archaeological Survey of India
Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

⁸⁶ Deshpande, M. N., *op. cit.*, p. 242.

⁸⁷ Rajan, K. V. Sounda, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 243.

⁸⁹ Soundara Rajan, K. V., *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

Mahishasur⁹⁰. The appearance of Durga is quite interesting. She appears or made to appear by Vishnu and Shiva at the request of Brahma⁹¹. She appears from the fire came out as an anger from the mouth of Vishnu and Shiva with inexpressible beauty⁹². A beautiful and vigorous representation of Mahishasurmardini Durga can also be seen on the inner face of the front enclosure wall. Durga is shown seated on the lion in an *ardhapryankasana* pose in fight with Mahishasur. She is holding a bow in one of her hands with the other hand, she is discharging the arrows. The bend of the bow denotes the full stretch in discharge of the arrows. The remaining of her eight arms carries different weapons like *Sula* (trident), *Khadaga* (sword) and *Khetak* (shield)⁹³.

The front of the *mandapa*, to the north of the entrance, has a panel with Siva, four-armed, standing on the back of a kneeling figure, with Parvati by his side. He holds with one of his hands a long lock of hair out of the top of his head-dress.⁹⁴

Ravananugrahmurti

The sculptures of the lofty basement of the temple commence from behind these bas-reliefs, and continue in an unbroken line, but not on the south side, which had a bridge, since fallen down, from the balcony of the temple to a cave in the scarp. Beneath this is a fine sculpture of Ravana under Kailāśa.⁹⁵

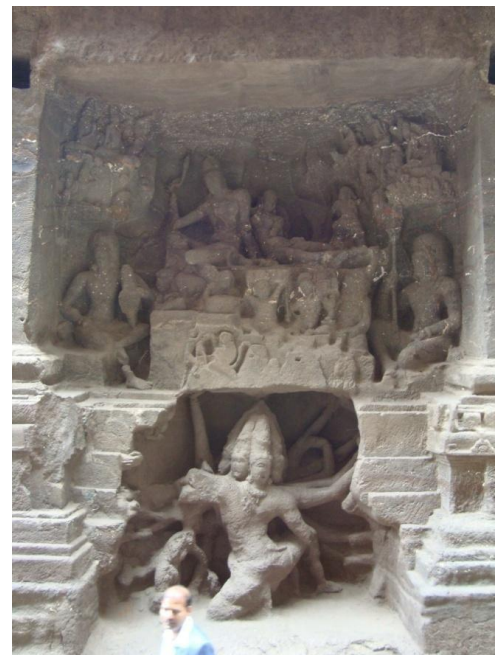


Figure 104: Panel of Ravana Shaking Kailash on the southern side of the porch
Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 97.

⁹¹ Kapoor, Subodh pp. 74-75.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 74-75.

⁹³ Rajan, K. V. Soundra *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁹⁴ Huntington, Susan L., pp. 342-345.

⁹⁵ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

The *Ravana-anugrahmurti* panel represents the majestic three dimensional sculpture. In the panel, the upper half depicts Parvati restlessly clutches Shiva⁹⁶. Ravana is depicted multi-armed who is shaking the Mount Kailasha where Shiva is shown seated in repose, and the pride of Ravana is trampled by just the pressure of the toe of Shiva. Parvati represents the aristocratic strain of the feminine is easily observable. There are also many others panel in the eastern and northern cloister wall representing various narratives such as- Shiva rescued from the lotus pond, Shiva as a mendicant, Shiva playing *Chaupad* game with Parvati, Vinadhara Shiva and Shiva seated with Parvati.

Gangadhara Shiva Panel

The Gangadhara panel on the northerly side of the *mandapa* (porch) represents Shiva, stands one side of the dialog box on the back of Ghana (attendant) in *abhang*a pose. Parvati is depicted standing cross-legged resting on lotuses and right arm is holding the left arm of Shiva. Here the artisan very nicely expressed the mutual understanding of the fact that the origin of the Ganga and acceptance by Shiva shows rivalry in her territory. The bashful, aristocratically Parvati appears again in a well curved *tribhanga* pose in *Gangadharashiva*



Figure 105: Gangadhar Shiva panel © Kushal Parkash
Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

panel. Heinrich Zimmer⁹⁷ says „*The Perfect serenity and timeless harmony of the couple is emphasized in this relief by their response to an attempt of a demon to shake their Olympus from below.*’ In the *antrala* (vestibule), on the

⁹⁶ Datta, Bimal Kumar *Introduction to Indian Art*, p. 70.

⁹⁷ Deshpande, M. N., *op. cit.*, p. 249.

left, Shiva and Parvati are shown in *akshakrida*, the eternal game of creation from the union of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. And on the right side is *Uma-sahita Skandamurti Shiva*⁹⁸. Near the Gangadhara Shiva panel facing south is shown further in the corner panel of *Ardhanarishwara* (an androgynous form of Shiva). It exhibits the feminine outline on the left side of the body also including left part of the head. Though maximum parts of hands, whole of the head and legs are lost. The remaining part such as the shoulder of Shiva and curved shoulder of Uma and smoothly rounded breast along with a hand resting on the well-formed hips are a singular representation of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The fertility aspect of the nature is well represented here. It seems an attempt of making a conciliation between the Shiva and Shakti cults signifying the fusion of the two to make a composite cult.⁹⁹

Privardevata Shrine

On three sides of the terrace and at the two back corners, there are five sub-shrines. These are mounted over prominent projections of the tall base and have their own *adhithana*. The terrace itself forms the base of the spire, which rises to a height of 96 feet from the court below. Below, between pilasters are a number of Shiva and Vishnu panels. Above these are some interesting flying figures carved in various postures of front, back and sides. Over these begin the horizontal mouldings of the *sikhara*.¹⁰⁰

Moulding on adhithahna

A door in each of the back corners of the hall leads to the terrace behind, and a wide path goes round the outside of the shrine, which forms the base of the *sikhara* or spire. The *pradakshina* for circumambulation is provided for by the doors in the east wall leading on to the terrace, on which are also five small shrines. These have little carving on their walls, beyond the *dvarapalas* at the

⁹⁸ M. N. Deshpande, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁹⁹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 45-55.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 58.

door; and there are altars in all of them for images, but the shrine on the south side has also a bench round the back and ends.¹⁰¹

In an advanced recess in the corner of the temple facing the shrine in the north side is an image of Ganapati. On the facade above is a figure with its face to the wall. The image in the corresponding recess on the south-west of the temple is perhaps Vishnu.¹⁰²

The base is in panels, six on each side and five on the back. These panels contain the various forms of Shiva, Durga, and Vishnu, standing on fat dwarfs and accompanied by other attendants. At the upper corners of the panels are conventionalised figures of peacocks with long tails. A Devi is shown seated cross-legged over each panel. The wall above contains flying figures, and over them are the horizontal mouldings of the *sikhara*.¹⁰³

Gopura and Nandi Shrine

The entrance of the hall is connected by a bridge outside the porch, to a pavilion with four doors and a broken Nandi. Several chambers are located to the west, over the entrance porch. There is access to the roof of the small chambers that form the screen in front of the court. The screen is covered with mythological sculptures in recessed panels, and is crowned on the outer side by a defended parapet.¹⁰⁴ Each parapet has been carved with three balls, and below them is a string of small figures in high relief, on foot, on horseback, in carts and fighting. There are twenty-five large panels. The south of the screen is a rock-cut cistern 22 feet by 19 feet. On each side of the entrance to the porch is a sitting figure with one foot up. On the front of the inner jamb on each side a female with umbrella and *chauri* overhead has been depicted. She is accompanied by a small attendant.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 455-65

¹⁰² Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 39.

Dwarf figures have been carved blowing *sankhs* over the *gopura*. The passage of *gopura* has been decorated with many sculptures. On the outer side of the north wall is the large Mahishasurmardini. The return wall of the court is embellished with figures. To the north of this is an unfinished cave in the screen, with four short stout pillars having thick compressed cushion-shaped capitals. There are several sculptures on the south side of the entrance and partly on the west wall. Next to this is an unfinished excavation in the south end of the screen, apparently intended for a small open room or shrine.¹⁰⁶

Lankeshwara shrine

An important part of the Kailasha temple is the Lankesvara shrine. It has been excavated on the northern side of it. It can be approached by a flight of steps in the left corridor. On ascending the steps in imposing temple is seen. The mere sight of the shrine overwhelms the visitor. A front corridor runs east and west. Right in front of the small Nandi shrine carved in the back wall is the shrine proper. The Nandi is seated on an elevated platform looking majestic.¹⁰⁷

The temple is raised on a platform with is beautiful polished floor. It is surrounded on two sides by an imposing plinth. The plinth has been carved with a number of couples to enhance the structure extremely beautiful. The size of 123 feet deep and 60 feet wide size of raised platform gives an imposing architectural effect. The plinth, the floor and the pillars become decorative elements to be added.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Dhavalikar, M. K., p. cit., pp. 64-65.

¹⁰⁷ Dhavalikar, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 69.

Dhwajastambhas

On two sides of the Nandi shrine, of the first floor in the two courtyards, are two huge elephants and two *dhwajastambhas*. This gave an air of majesty to the entire temple. The elephants are life size. The *dhwajastambhas* are 45 feet high. They are perfect pieces of art and lend great dignity to the temple. The *trisula* which once decorated the capitals of these pillars is gone.¹⁰⁹

The pillars are of the Dravidian order the characteristics of which are cushion member over a constricted neck. A development of this combination produced the Dravidian order of which these monolithic columns are an interpretation, the constricted neck having been transformed into that sloping shape below the cushion cap a contraction of the outline which is unmistakable.¹¹⁰

On either side of the main temple on the exterior wall behind the *dhwajastambhas* are two interesting panels of scenes from Mahabharata and Ramayana.¹¹¹

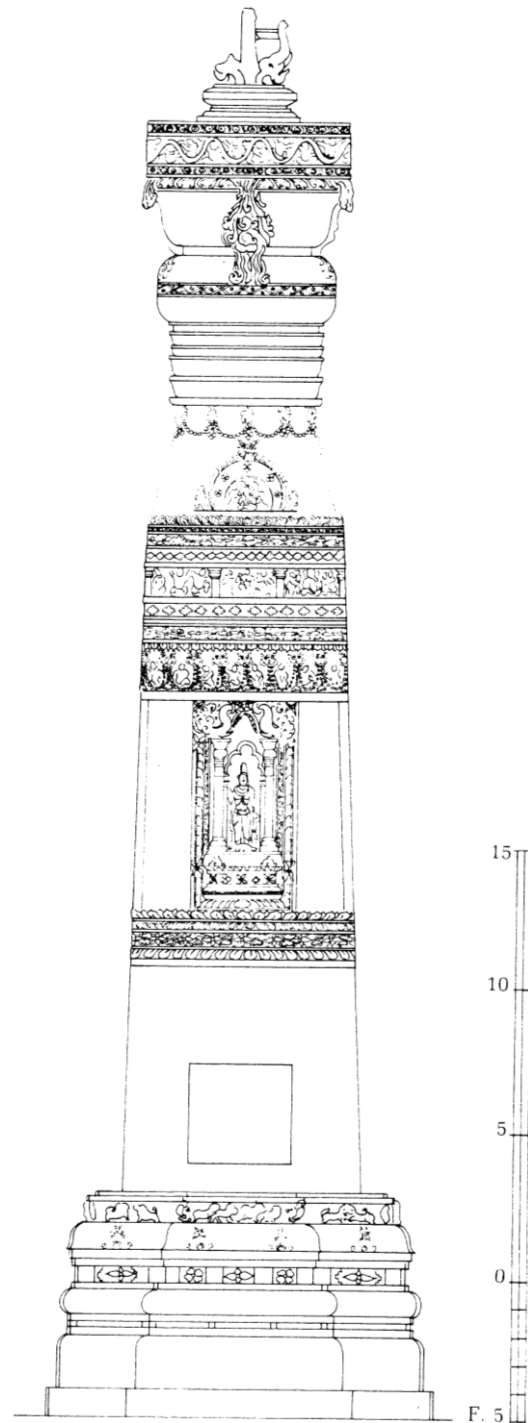


Figure 106: Dhvjastambha, Kailasa Temple, Ellora (After Burgess)

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

¹⁰⁹ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.

¹¹⁰ Dhavlikar, M. K., *op. cit.* pp. 56.

Panels of Ramayana and Mahabharata

On the northern wall of the *sabha-mandapa* has been carved with the scenes from Mahabharata. These panels are in seven rows. The lower two rows depict the childhood exploits of Krishna and the above five rows scenes of Arjuna's penance, the Kirata-Arjuna fight, and episodes from the Mahabharata war.



Figure 107: A panel depicting Scenes from Ramayana on the southern side of the porch

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

The Ramayana panel in the southern wall of the *sabha-mandapa* is portrayed a number of scenes again in seven rows. The scenes of Rama's departure from Ayodhya, Bharata trying to persuade him to return.¹¹² In continuation, the forest scenes of Shurpanakha, depiction of abduction of Sita by Ravana. Rama meeting Hanumana, Hanumana crossing the ocean to reach Lanka, the *Ashokavana*, the scene in the court of Ravana, and the last row the monkey army building a bridge of stones to reach Lanka.¹¹³

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 57.

¹¹² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 34.

Sacrificial Hall (*Yajñashala*)

A cave is below, under the scarp on the south side, and measures 37 feet by 15 feet. It consists of two square pillars and pilasters in front. Each pillar has a tall female warder with hair hanging in loose folds towards her left shoulder. There are two dwarf attendants behind and the pillar is a low square pedestal.¹¹⁴

The mothers of creation are sculptured round the three inner sides of this sacrificial hall. The first being Wagheshvari is on the west. She has been depicted four-armed, holding a *trisula*, and with the tiger under her feet. The second is a somewhat similar figure. The third is Kala, a grinning skeleton, with Kali and another skeleton companion behind. Kala has been adorned with a cobra girdle and necklace. He is shown seated on two dying men, and a wolf gnaws the leg of one.¹¹⁵

Second Storey

The veranda of the second storey is 61 feet by 22 feet, inclusive of the two pillars in front, and leads into a dark hall 55 feet by 34 feet, with four heavy plain pillars. A staircase at the west end of the veranda leads to a third storey. It is almost identical in dimensions and arrangements, and with a similar veranda and hall. The provision of sunlight has been provided by a door and two windows.¹¹⁶

The fronts of the second and third storeys are protected by thick eaves. These are quadrantal on the outer surface and the inner sides carved in imitation of wooden ribs. It bears a rafter running horizontally through them. In the third storey, the four pillars which support the roof are connected by something like arches. The roof of the area within the pillars is considerably raised by a deep cornice.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 66.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 67.

¹¹⁶ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-459.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 460.

The roof is similarly elevated by a double architrave surrounding it. The pillars are about three diameters in height, and this proportion is suited for rock-cut architecture than any other that has been adopted in India. They have bold capitals and brackets. The inner side of each of the pillars on the south face is connected by a low screen. The western entrance is adorned with sculpture.¹¹⁸

The right side of the entrance to the *pradakshina* has Siva and Parvati, with Ravana below, and a maid running off. The same gods are in the north entrance playing at *chausar*. A tree is behind them, and the Nandi and *gana* are shown below. A female is on each side of the shrine, one standing on a *makara*, and the other on a tortoise. The *salunkha* inside the shrine has been destroyed.¹¹⁹

The back wall has a grotesque Trimurti, or Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva in very low relief, each four-armed. Brahma has three faces, and the goose as his *vahana* or vehicle and Sarasvati his consort are by the side of him. The central figure is Siva holding up his *trisula*. A snake with Nandi and an attendant are by his side. The third is Vishnu, with the discus and a great club, attended by a male and a female.¹²⁰

Saptamatrikas:

Saptamatrika worship probably symbolically began as early as the Harappan period. However, Saptmatrikas takes its final form in the *Puranic* period¹²¹. They have significantly been mentioned in classical Sanskrit literature such as

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 461.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 76.

¹²⁰ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 341-48.

¹²¹ MCP Srivastava, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

Daridra Charudatta by Bhasa, *Mrichhakatka* of Shudraka, *Harshcharita* and *Kadambari* of Banabhatta.¹²²

The chapel of Saptamatrikas is located on the south west corner of the temple complex. The *Puranas* as well as the epics furnishes enough material. Saptamatrakas are the Shaivite goddess because they are flanked the Shaiva deities Ganesha and Virabhadra. The seven mother-goddesses are: Brahmi holds a rosary and a water pot, 2. Maheshwari is seated on a bull, holds a trident, and wears serpent bracelet and adorned with the crescent moon, 3. Kumari: created from Karttikeya, rides a peacock and holds a spear, 4. Vaishnavi: is seated on Garuda and holds a conch, wheel, mace, bow and sword, 5. Varahi: has a boar from 6. Narsimhi is lion-woman, 7. Aindri: holds a thunderbolt and is seated on a charging elephant¹²³. These divinities consist of six Deva Shaktis and one Devi Shakti¹²⁴. In each of these Matrikas, the attributes of male deities can easily be noticed. The Matrikas are armed with the same weapons as their respective gods and also have the same mounts.¹²⁵

It has been mentioned in folk narratives that after defeating the demons they resume back into the great goddess Devi. The associated myth states that male gods create *Shaktis* or female counterparts of themselves to help the Devi on the battlefields. Saptmatrikas have significantly been mentioned in classical Sanskrit literature such as *Daridra Charudatta* by Bhasa, *Mrichhakatka* of Shudraka, *Harshcharita* and *Kadambari* of Banabhatta.¹²⁶

¹²² Shivaji K. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

¹²³ Margaret Stutley, *The illustrated Dictionary of Hindu Iconography*, p. 124.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 170.

¹²⁵ Margaret Stutley, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹²⁶ Shivaji K. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.



Figure 108: Saptamatrikas chamber © Archaeological Survey of India

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

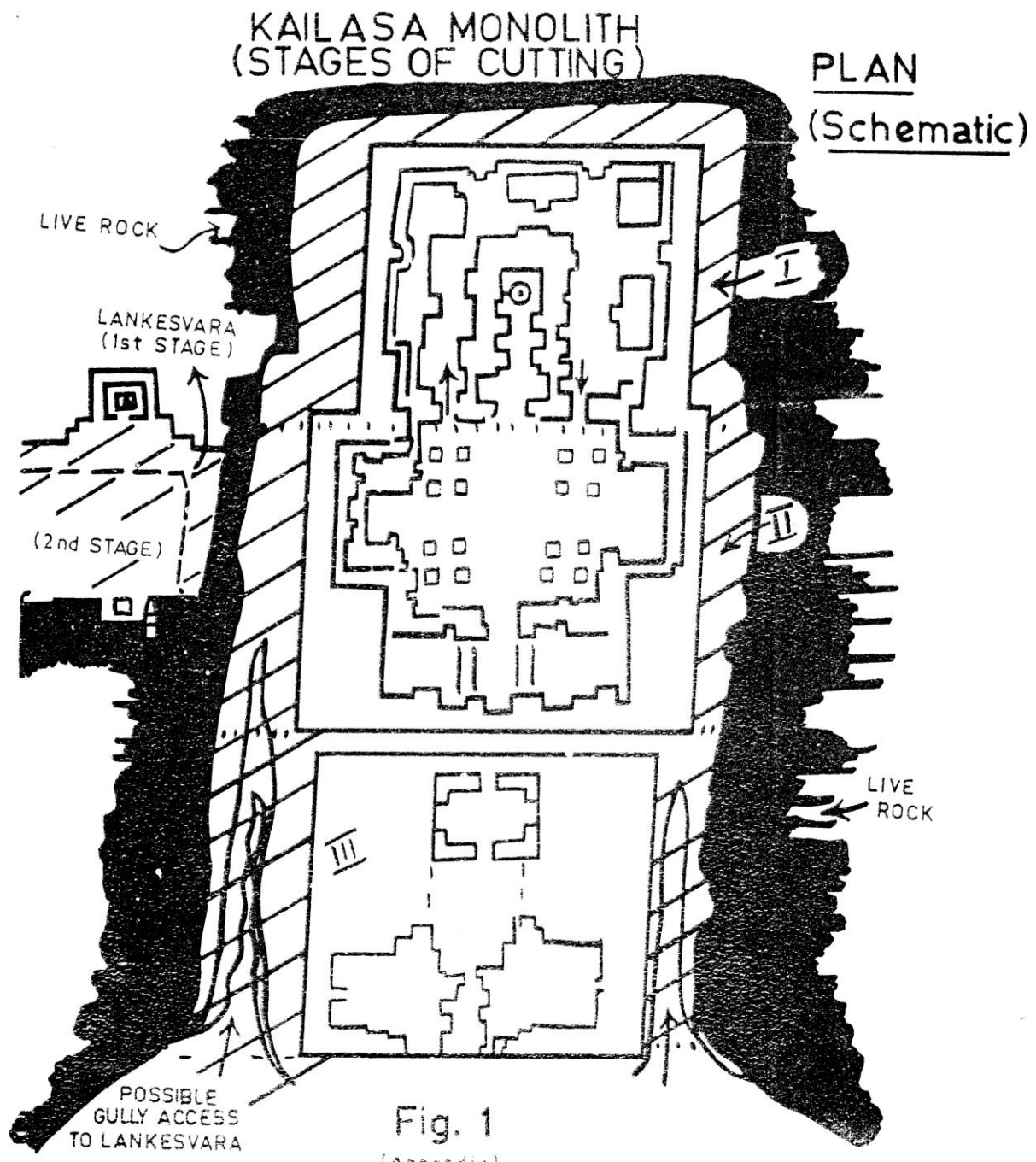
Hypothetical method of carving of Kailash Temple

Several scholars had given various suggestions including Dhavalikar who had specifically dealt with his view of the *modus operandi*, which opts for a facial attack in stepped phases, to put it briefly. It is inevitable that the excavation of the magnitude of the 'Kailash' should evoke not merely wonder and confusion but also attempts at the possible reconstruction of the technique and methodology. However, Soundara Rajan¹²⁷ has pointed the fact that “*temple building had certainly revealed certain first principles of architecture, of its own which could not but have been brought into play in such enlarged endeavour, through the knowledge of the sthapati and his knowledgeable associates.*” The manifested familiarity with the measureable geometric and symmetric principles of massing, besides the necessary principles of down-cutting are evident the process of carving.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Rajan, Soundara K. V., *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93.

¹²⁸ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

It is can be surmised from the part of the sculpted architecture and the uniform common level that firstly the rock should have been cut down in three parts. These parts contain the primary part of the *Vimana* up to the porch of the *sabhamandapa* and the *nandimandapa*, and the secondary part of the entrance with its *dvara-sala* tower.¹²⁹



Courtesy: Rajan, K.V. Soundra. (1988). *The Ellora Monoliths*

¹²⁹ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

It is also inherent from the part of the sculpted architecture and the uniform common level to which the primary part, of the *Vimana* upto the porch of the *sabhamamndapa* and the isolated *nandimandapa*, and the secondary part of the entrance with its *dvara-sala* tower, that they should have been separated into three successive blocks before setting about shaping them into the required individual organic and traditional temple parts, with a solid surbase in the case of the main first phase and with hollow under-passages for the remaining axial parts.¹³⁰

In the first step, either a possible eroded rain gully cutting or on deliberately provided from the front. The excavation was conducted 300 feet by 175 feet to create an isolated piece of 200 feet by 100 feet. On either flank for access to the transportation of men and materials. It should have been worked out to the level at which the architects and artisans had to work for a reasonably long first phase. At the upper most surface of the hill also would have been cut out. The corresponding deep shaft which would broadly have been as wide as the outer circumambulatory open court between the cloister and the main complex should also have been cut at the same time.¹³¹

Further, towards the west, a ramp cum steps would have been cut down to the outer front entrance. On that area, the scarp would have been vertically cut and the base part of the front hill eliminated to form an open ground level-front court to the complex. Thus, a marginal shaft all around the intended monolithic design area would have been provided. It might have been done precisely and effectively reduced to the ultimate layout.¹³²

The actual work of the cutting down might not have been undertaken at the same time. Indeed the 'fixed points' of each solid mass required for the proposed

¹³⁰ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

¹³¹ Mahajan, Malti. (2004). *A gate to Ancient Indian Architecture*. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. pp. 92-93.

¹³² Fergusson, James & Burgess James, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-456.

design of the temple. It would have done by taking a series of datum lines on the hill top. After it had been cleared of its defects and slopes in the area which would verily be the architectural zone. This process would be based on the same principles as of a structural temple, horizontally and vertically for the required basal plinth area, which would have marked out on the cleared hill slope.¹³³

This downward cutting thereafter would also have been *tala by tala* and to start with for executing the *sikhara*, *griva* and the entablature of the uppermost *tala* proposed. Axially, this work would go for the main *vimana* separately and the *sabhamandapa* with its triple projecting porches. Similarly separately for the *nandi mandapa* block and the *Dvara gopura* roof level parts. However, all the datum lines fixed in a series and work simultaneously overseen for proper level and component correlations.¹³⁴



Figure 109: View from South West, Kailash Temple Ellora
Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

¹³³ Mahajan, Malti, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-94.

¹³⁴ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, 192-93.

It means that the level of the upper axial series from the main shrine to the *gopura* roof level was kept at a firm horizontal datum. Almost until this entire work was completed. For this the horizontal level would place the projecting porches or the *sambhamandapa* would have been at the same plan as the Lankesvara cave temple on the northern flank (upper level) of Kailāsa complex. Similarly the cornice and *vedi* of the ground floor of the triple storeyed cave on the southern flank, however been conceived of towards the later stage of completion of the monolith.¹³⁵

The earlier of these two would have involved only the main circumambulation sanctum, its *linga* and Mahesa panel on the sanctum rear wall. The vestibule ends one bay more into a south-facing veranda façade. It faces possibly into an access that had been taken out from the western part of the hill. At one time of the main temple down-cutting, it would have been linked with the Lankesvara shrine. Most possibly, in the same way as we find a link bridge vestiges on the south side of the projecting porch.¹³⁶ At that stage, the façade of the main Kailash complex, fixing out the boundary wall and entrance point would have been organized so that the clear axial orientation of the temple complex could be constantly before the eye of the artisans.¹³⁷

It is relevant at this juncture to note that:¹³⁸ (a) in the entire range of Rashtrakuta cave temples or others at Ellora, Lankesvara alone shows a cella with

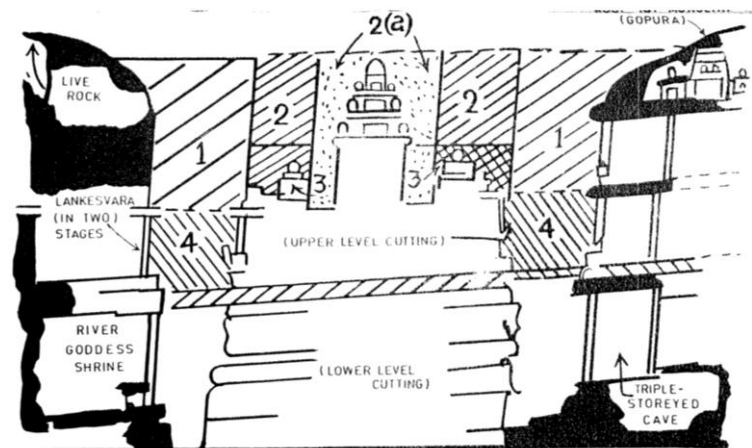


Fig. 3. KAILASA-STAGES OF CUTTING (TRANSVERSE) -Schematic- NOT TO SCALE
 Courtesy: Rajan, K.V. Soundra. (1988). *The Ellora Monoliths*

¹³⁵ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-36.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 37.

¹³⁷ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 76.

circumambulation, all the others being *nirandhara*; (b) similarly, in no Rashtrakuta creations at Ellora, a square *linga pitha* has been seen, all the others being of circular type; (c) the innermost wall flank leading from the *antarala* of Lankesvara towards the edge of the outer *prakara* court pit of Kailaśa, contains a large *Tandava* Siva panel. It is distinctively different in style from all the rest of the inner northern wall panels flanking the *sabhamandapa* of the present Lankesvara layout. It can be said coeval in style in the latter with the inner pillars *vedi* carvings. The nandi also at the western end in a scooped chamber.¹³⁹

The shrine would have then been *nirandhara*, the *lingapitha* circular if the main Lankesvara cave had been carved in one continuous effort much later to the completion of the Kailaśa monolithic. All the above features, (a) to (c) would not have obtained or been even stylistically relevant. It would not have had the Mahesa panel. Also, the carvings would have all been of the same type as the tale carvings around Kailash complex.¹⁴⁰

The Siva *tandava* mentioned is indeed equivalent in style to the Narasimha panel on the outer *prakara* wall of Kailaśa entrance exterior. It shows that this single



Figure 110: Upper view from south west

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

¹³⁹ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93.

¹⁴⁰ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James *op. cit.*, pp. 452-58.

Siva *Tandava* panel on the edge of the floor had been executed when the main temple cutting had been operating in that level, in the porch of the *sabhamandapa*. Hence, it was part of the central stage of Kailāśa execution and the *garbhagriha* and *antarala* of Lankesvara had then been pre-existing.¹⁴¹

All these factors are sufficient to draw the inference that the main Lankesvara cella and *antarala* were early Rashtrakuta or perhaps even pre-Rashtrakuta. The rest of Lankesvara might have been contingent upon the completed Kailāśa complex. It can be deduced that the stairway, the *nandi mandapa* and the *sabhamandapa* were all of a piece in a much later addition. On the other hand, the fact that the cloister showing some remarkable range of ritual iconography. It has been commenced from the very point of the ground floor periphery where the Lankesvara cave sanctum above is located, showing that the latter was pre-existing.¹⁴²

Once the work of the main temple had been completed at the upper level horizontal plan held at the axial line. The rest of the part would have commenced of down-cutting further to the level of the present courtyard pit. While cutting the massive sub-base or *upapitha* up to the point of the main upper level porch, the ground floor level below the *nandi mandapa* and the *Dvara gopura* have been carved below the lower than the *prakara* court.¹⁴³

The under passages for the above two axial units were designed. It could also provide solid north-south screen walls for display of the magnificent Gajalakshmi panel. The provision of the covered flights of steps one on the north and south leading to the porch of upper entrance. Its side walls were ultimately to be embellished with the narrative story-telling rows of miniature panels from Ramayana and Mahabharata.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-36.

¹⁴² Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.

¹⁴³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-36.

¹⁴⁴ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, 193-94.

Thus, the main upper complex of temple parts was cut down and finished in three stages:

Firstly, for the main *vimana* proper which was designed as an *astha-parivara* scheme. After that the *sabhamandapa* with its three porch projections and subsequently for the *nandi mandapa* and the *dvara gopura*. It must have been commenced and mostly carried out during the time of Krishna I, uncle of Dantidurga. Most probably was completed by the time of Govinda in the 9th century AD.¹⁴⁵ Hence, it can be surmised that, the Kailash monolithic complex was most plausibly cut downwards. It was certainly not a stepped progression but the execution was a fully pre-mediated strategy of action by architects.



Influence of Kailash Monolith on Later Jaina Cave Architecture at Ellora and Kazhugumalai

The founder of Jainism, Mahavira (599 BCE-527 BCE) was a senior contemporary of Buddha. He was one of the 24 Tirthankaras, among whom Parshvanarh (23rd Tirthankara), who lived 350 years before Mahavira, is also said to be a historical personage. Among the 24 *Tirthankaras*, the first 22 are supposed to be mythical. Rishabha or Adinath and Parshvanath are the most important of the Tirthankaras, and so also is Shantinath to a lesser extent.¹

The image of Mahavira, is often represented by the Digambaras. He and Parasvanath are frequently figured in Digambara cave sculpture, both naked. They are depicted with creeping plants growing over their limbs but Parasvanath has also a polysepalous snake overshadowing him with its hoods.²

The Jain Caves at Ellora occupy the northern spur of the hill. They consist of five caves of various ages, dating probably from the 8th to the 13th century.³

There are five Jaina caves from cave no. 30 to 34.

¹ Dhavalikar, M. K. (2003). *Monumental Legacy: Ellora*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 86-87.

² Huntington, Susan L. (1985). *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York and Tokyo: Weather Hill. pp. 31-32.

³ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, p. 87.

Cave 30: Chhota Kailash



Figure 111: A View of Chhota Kailash

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

The Chhota Kailasa is the most southerly cave of the Jaina group. It is a free standing monolithic shrine, in imitation, on a small scale, of the great Brahmanical temple of Kailasa. The hall is 36 feet 4 inches square, and has sixteen columns arranged in four groups. The porch in front is 10 feet square, and the shrine at the back, 14½ feet by 11¼ feet.⁴ The whole temple is situated in a pit, 80 feet by 130 feet, with a small excavation in each side. The exterior of the shrine is in the Dravidian style. It is only single storey but the spire is low and unfinished. It is quite possible that this and the larger Kailasa are not far distant in date.⁵

The gopura is not well decorated. On the interior of the side walls sculptures of Tirthankaras have been carved. The figure of the twelve-armed Chakreshvari, the yakshi of Rishabhanath has become more interesting. She holds a lotus, a

⁴ Burgess, Jas. (1883). *Report on Elura Cave Temples and The Brahmanical and Jaina Caves in Western India*. London: Trubner & Co. and Ludgate Hill. pp. 26-27.

⁵ Dhavalikar, M. K. Dhavalikar, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

discus, a conch, a mace and even a sword, and wears elaborate jewellery. Her mount, an eagle, is seen below her seat. There are two dancing figures of yaksha Sourandhendra over the portico. A small image of Mahavira with his attendants have been decorated above. There is another six-armed yaksha on the left of the portico. A loose sculpture of a female in the portico is dated Saka 1169 (1247 CE), which evidently is much later than its date.⁶ There are traces of paintings on the ceiling. In the hall are several images of Tirthankaras. They are also carved on the entrance gateway.

Cave 31

Cave 31 is an unfinished cave. Its porch is hewn out entirely on three sides. It stands in a deep excavated pit. The pillars have been carefully chiselled, and have compressed cushion capitals. The porch stand on a screen supported by elephants, and are ornamented with water jars in compartments.⁷



Figure 112: Entrance of the cave 31

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies,
Gurgaon

Cave 32: Indra Sabha

Cave 32 or sometimes known as 33. It is really a group of excavations, consisting of two caves with double storeys and a single-storeyed cave, with wings and subordinate chapels. The first is the Indra Sabha proper, and the second is the Jagannath Sabha. Cave 32 is known as Indra Sabha. The court of

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 89.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 90.

the cave is entered by a screen wall facing the south. On the-outside of this, to the east, is a shrine 19 feet by 13 feet, with two pillars in front and two more at the back. The pillars are square below, and octagonal above, including the capitals.⁸

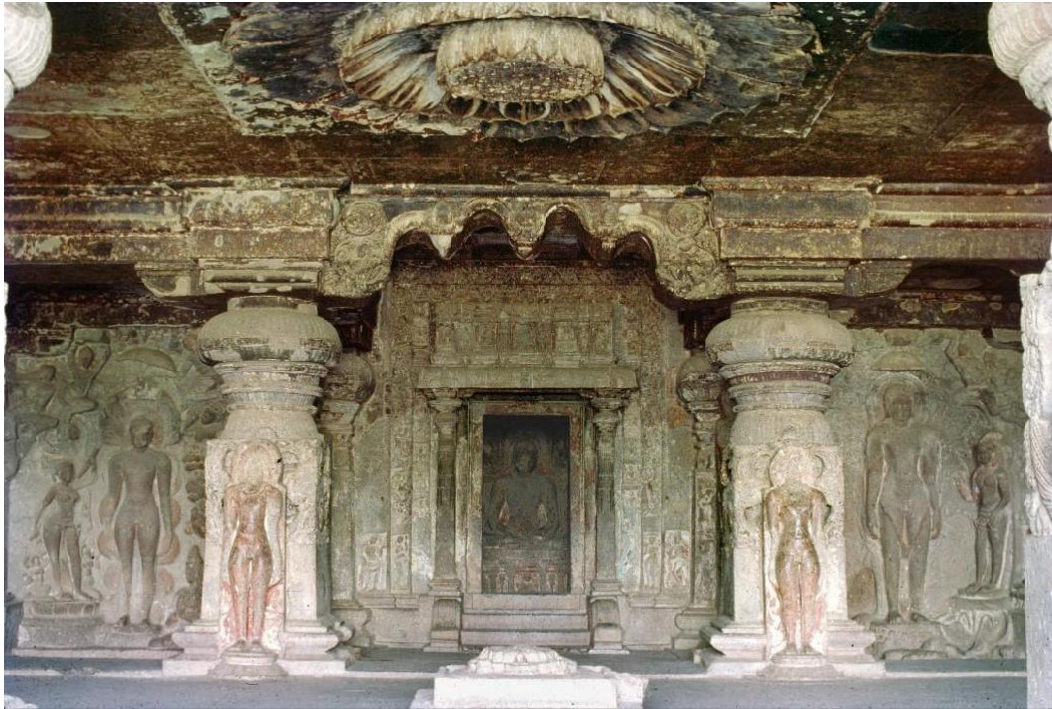


Figure 113: Frontal porch of the cave

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

The sculptures on the walls represent Parasvanath's temptation on the north end. In this panel a nude figure of the saint is overshadowed by a seven-hooded snake. A female attendant, with a snake-hood, holds a *chhatra* (umbrella) over him. On each side are Hindu divinities, and below are two Naga maidens. A male figure is above riding on a buffalo, with *gandharvas* and another figure is blowing a conch.⁹

The demon Kamatha has been depicted riding on a lion to the right of the sculpture and below him are two worshippers. On the south end, the tapas or asceticism of Gautama Rishi has been depicted. A creeper is twining round his

⁸ Burgess, James. (1972). *Elura Cave Temples*. Varanasi and Delhi: Indological Book House. pp. 48-49.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 50.

limbs. He is surrounded by female attendants and worshippers. The shrine contains Mahavira, and nude figures like Buddha in the meditative attitude, with a drummer and other musicians over their heads.¹⁰

On the back wall is Indra on an elephant with two attendants. He is shown seated under a tree with parrots in it and Indrani to the right. A screen wall left in the rock, terminates the court on the south side. It is pierced with a doorway with a Dravidian roof. This court is 56 feet by 48 feet. A large elephant on a pedestal is inside on the right. A fine monolithic column, 27 feet 4 inches high, with a quadruple image on the top is on the left. In the centre of the court, a pavilion 8 feet 5 inches square inside, is over a quadruple image of Mahavira.¹¹

It has been raised eight steps above the level of the court. It has a door on each side with ascents only from the north and south sides. Each door has two advanced pillars. The throne of the image is supported by a wheel and lions. The style and details of the pavilion and the gateway leading into the court are Dravidian.¹² These caves were probably made after the decadence of the Rathod dynasty in the ninth or tenth century CE. The Rashtrakuta kingdom seems to have been divided in the time of



Figure 114: Mahavira's sculpture in the shrine

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

¹⁰ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James. (1969). *The Cave Temples of India*. Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation. pp. 495-498.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 499.

¹² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Govinda III. It is most probable, when his younger brother, Indra, established a separate kingdom in Gujarat, about the end of the eighth century CE.¹³

Exclusive of the veranda, the lower hall must have been intended to be about 72 feet wide by 56 feet deep. Beyond this, there are two free standing pillars, and two in front of the vestibule to the shrine. The vestibule is 40 feet wide and 15 feet deep, inclusive of the pillars. The shrine alone has been completed, and is 17½ feet wide and 15 feet deep. It is sculptured much like the rest, with Parasvanath on the right and Gautama on the left. Indra and Ambika at the back, and Mahavira on a lion throne in the shrine, with the wheel or chakra in front.¹⁴

The stair lands in the verandah of the grand hall. The verandah is 54 feet long by 10 feet wide by 14 feet 6 inches high. The hall is 55 feet deep and 78 feet wide, and contains some fragments of painting on the roof. The veranda is supported in front by two pillars of the "broken square"¹⁵ pattern, with their pilasters connected by a low wall.¹⁶

It is divided from the hall by two other pillars, having boldly moulded square bases, and sixteen-sided, shafts and capitals, with a low parapet wall between, from the back of the verandah. The inside of the hall has twelve pillars of five different patterns, resembling those in the Lankesvara cave.

In each end of the verandah is a colossal image, the male in the west, and the female in the east, usually known as Indra and Indrani. The former being seated on an elephant and the latter on a lion, with a tree behind the head of each, and small figures of attendants beside them.¹⁷

¹³ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 341-345.

¹⁴ Fergusson, James & Burgess James, *op. cit.*, pp. 497-98.

¹⁵ The pattern is so called due carving on main face of the pillar.

¹⁶ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁷ Bhattacharya, B. C. (1939). *The Jaina Iconography*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasisdass. pp. 12-18.



Figure 115: Indra sitting on an elephant

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

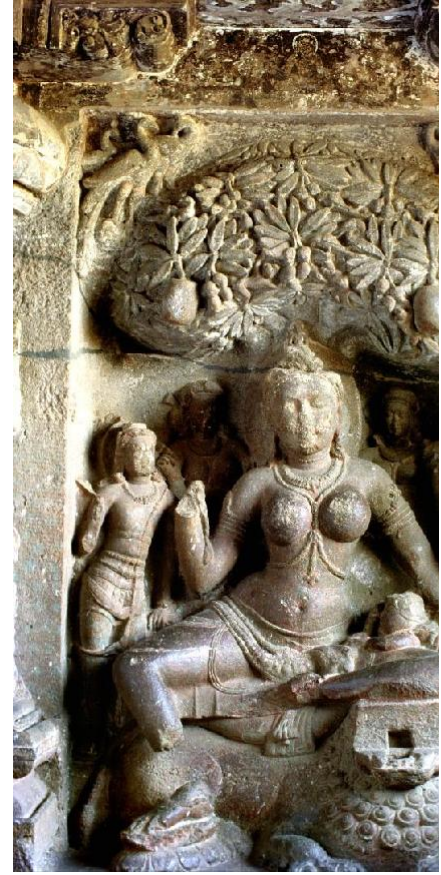


Figure 116: Indrani sitting on a lion

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

Behind each of these figures, but entered from the side aisles of the hall, is a small room about 9 feet by 11 feet, by which access is obtained to the shrine on each side of the front area. The walls of the sides and back aisles are divided into compartments with Tirthankaras sculptures. The centre space on each end has a large Jina seated cross-legged on a *simhasana*. The space on either side of the shrine door is devoted to Parasvanath and Gomatesvara.¹⁸ The others have two Mahaviras each. They are shown seated under different trees, except that between the trees is a figure holding up a garland. Above him is another blowing the conch, while at the outer sides are *gandharvas*.¹⁹ A tall nude

¹⁸ Gosh, A. (Ed). (1974). Jaina Art and Architecture. New Delhi: Bhartiya Jnanpith. pp. 75-86.

¹⁹ Mahajan, Malti. (2004). A gate to Ancient Indian Architecture. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. pp. 92- 94.

guardian is on the pilaster on each side of the shrine door, and a squatting Mahavira is on the pilaster next to it. The door is richly ornamented, and has a mass of carving over and around it. Conspicuously, there are two slender advanced pillars, called *damru* or the drum of the idol, because they resound when beaten. The shrine is 12 feet 3 inches high, and is occupied with Mahavira. A quadruple image was in a sort of salunkha in the centre of the great hall. An immense lotus is on a square slab on the roof over it. It has been provided with holes in the four corners and centre as if for pendant lamps.²⁰

A door in the south-east corner passes through a cell containing a kind of a trough. A natural hole in the roof leads into a small court on the east side of the cave. The few steps leading down to it, occupy a small lobby carved all round with Jinas. The hall, 25 feet wide by 23½ feet deep, has a veranda in front. There are four square pillars with round capitals inside the hall.²¹

On each side of verandah is a deep recess. On the right is a naked figure of Gomatesvara. On the left Parasvanath, also nude, has been depicted with attendants. In similar recesses are figures of Mahavira seated cross-legged. The shrine door is flanked by nude *Jinadvarapalas* on pilasters. The architraves are carved with numerous small figures. Inside the shrine, a cross-legged Mahavira is seated on the throne. On the east, the verandah has two pillars in front. Two are rising behind from low screen walls. Ambika is in the south end facing the entrance. On the right side Indra is represented with a bag in his left hand and a cocoanut in his right.²²

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 96.

²¹ Brown, Percy. (1956). *Indian Architecture* (Buddhist and Hindu Periods). Bombay: D. B. Taraporewala Sons and Company. p. 75.

²² *Ibid*, p.76.



Figure 117: One of the paintings in cave

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

Some scraps of painting still remain on the roof of the hall. A door in the north-west corner of the great hall. It leads through a small room into the temple on the west side which corresponds to the last described. This temple has a carefully carved façade. On the right of the entrance is a four-armed Devi with two discs in the upper hands, and a *vajra* in her left on her knee. To the left of the entrance is a figure of Sarasvati, eight-armed, with a peacock.²³

The hall is exactly similar to that on the east. The four central pillars have capitals with looped drooping ears as in the great hall. The designs have been finished more elaborately and sharply. The two pillars on the inner screen have sixteen sides, and correspond to those on the screen in the great hall. Ambika is seated at the right side of the steps, and a four-armed Devi is opposite to her. Indra is seated on the west end of the verandah facing the entrance. Mahavira occupies the shrines and several compartments in the walls. In deep recesses

²³ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

again, Parasvanath is placed on the left and Gomatesvara on the right side of the hall. Pairs of figures in coquetry fill the compartments of the low inner screen. On the ceiling are some fragments of painting.²⁴

The facade of the side cave is covered with sculpture. The right half of the rock is excavated in two storeys. The upper of the two storeys on the right and the one on the left has a vertical belt of carving. At the bottom is a representation of a fight. Over this two females kneel on the left, and two males kneel on the right of a stool. Over this again is Parasvanath seated cross-legged on a lion-throne, with the wheel in front. A small worshipper at the right corner along with a chauri-bearer with high cap on each side.²⁵

The great seven-hooded snake behind him canopying his head. Above on the left is a chaitya or dagoba. The lower storey has two neat pillars in front. On the back wall are figures of Indra and Ambika. Parasvanath occupies the left end and Gomatesvara the right, with deer and dogs at his feet. In the farther back a seated cross-legged Tirthankara has been depicted.²⁶



Figure 118: Tirthankara inside the Fhrini

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

²⁴ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 498-99.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 500.

²⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara. (1988). *The Ellora Monoliths*. Delhi: Gian Publishing House. pp. 80-81.

In the shrine Mahavira with chauri-bearers has been depicted. A triple umbrella and foliage has been nicely carved behind his head. Over this is another shrine with Prasvanath on the left side. Two small figures of cross-legged Tirthankaras on the upper half of the right side have been depicted.²⁷ Indra and Ambika are in recesses on each side the shrine door, and a Jina is inside, with chauri-bearers seated cross-legged on a *simhasana* and the wheel in front.²⁸



Figure 119: Mahavira seated in a Meditative Pose

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies,
Gurgaon

Gomatesvara is carved at the front between this shrine and the facade of the principal cave. A hall 30 feet wide by 25 feet deep, having a screen wall in front to the left. A pillar rises on each side of the entrance. The upper part of this screen is carved with water vases in small panels. Each is separated by two colonnades and the lower portion. It has been carved with elephants' heads separated by slender pilasters, and each playing with or feeding on flowers.²⁹

Inside are four pillars with high square bases and cushion capitals. Only the front pillars are having much carving. In the central compartment, on the west wall is Parasvanath, with female *chhatra*-bearer. The snake has been depicted behind overshadowing his head with its hoods. At his feet there are two Naganis and two richly dressed worshippers. There are numerous demons trying to disturb his meditations.³⁰

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 82.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 83.

²⁹ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96.

³⁰ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 498-500.

In the next compartment is a repetition of the same on a smaller scale, with a cross-legged Jina above. On the east wall, Gomatesvara is represented in the central compartment, with deer and perhaps a dog at his feet, and with female attendants. Above him are *gandharvas*, one with a large drum just over the umbrella, and others with cymbals and garlands. In the compartment to the right of this is a smaller figure of Parasvanath. A standing figure half-split off, accompanied by deer, *makara*, elephant and ram has been depicted to the left. Above this, there is a small figure of cross-legged Jina.³¹



Figure 120: Frontal part of the Cave

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

On the back wall were Indra and Ambika, with an ascetic bearing a chhatra, and holding up one hand to Ambika's left. Two stiff Jain *dvarapalas* guard the shrine door. Inside the shrine is a Jina on a *simhasana* with the wheel in front. He has two attendants and a triple umbrella, with *gandharvas* making music to

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 82.

him and bearing garlands.³² The facade over these rooms forms a parapet in front of the hall above. There is a compartment in the centre carved with a male and female, attended by two smaller females. Each of these figure holding the stalk of a flower. At the sides are pilasters bearing *makaras* holding a *torana*.³³

On each side, the wall is divided by small pilasters into panels. It contains alternately an elephant's head playing with or feeding on flowers, and a rampant *sardula*, trampling on a small elephant. Above this is a frieze of water-jars. A drip projects covered with florid carving of flying figures have been depicted above the hall. Along with that curious little dwarfs hanging over with garlands have also been depicted. The next moulding is carved with numerous animals. Over this moulding, there is a broad frieze, broken vertically by pilasters into representations of little shrines each containing a figure.³⁴

Indra is in the centre on the left, Ambika is on the right, and Gomatesvara, Parasvanath, and other Jinas are in the remaining panels. The middle portion, representing the side of a building with an arched roof upheld by four kneeling figures, has a Jina seated cross-legged on the side, and another in a chaitya-window shaped recess just above him.³⁵

Cave- 33: Jaganath Sabha

A little beyond the Indra Sabha is the Jaganath Sabha, with a court in front 38 feet square. Much loose sculpture has been found about the cave, and the screen and the chaumukha mandapa have disappeared. A hall on the west side of the court is 27 feet square and 12 feet high, with two heavy square pillars in front and four in the middle area. It is sculptured with Parasavanath on the left,

³² Pereira, Jose. (1977). *Monolithic Jinas: The Iconography of the Jain Temples of Ellora*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. p.7.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 8.

³⁴ Dhavalikar, M. K., op. cit. pp. 94-96

³⁵ Gosh, A., op. cit., pp. 34-38.

Gomatesvara on the right, and Mahavira on the shrine with other Jinas in the pilasters and in a few recesses.³⁶



Figure 121: Ambika sitting on the lion

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 39.

Indra occupies the left end, and Ambika the right end of the cave. A few letters of some inscription in old Kanarese are legible on some of the pillars, and may belong to the 9th century. The shrine is 9½ feet by 8½, and is 9 feet 1½ inches high; and on each side of it is a cell, the left one breaking into the next cave. On the other side of the court are two more small chapels, the walls of which are covered with Jain sculpture.³⁷

The lower floor on the main cave is on the model of that of the Indra Sabha, but smaller. The hall is about 24 feet square and 13¾ feet high, with four pillars on the floor. It has a narrow verandah in front with two square pillars on the screen wall. The parapet has been finished only on the left of the entrance, with elephant heads below and jars above.³⁸



Figure 122: Shrine Door flanked by Indra and Indrani
Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

³⁷ Bhattacharya, B. C., pp. 45-48.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 49.

The carving on the portion to the right of the entrance has only been begun along the upper portion. Two more pillars on a low partition, separate the verandah from the hall, which has two recesses. One on the left side containing a standing Parasvanath with the snake hoods over him, and attended by figures, and another on the right containing Gomatesvara and attendants.³⁹

Figures of Jinas seated cross-legged fill the other six wall-areas between the pilasters. In the verandah, Indra occupies the left and Ambika the right end. The shrine is entered through a small ante-chamber with a fine *torana* over the entrance. It is 9 feet by 7, and 10 feet 8 inches high, with a cross-legged Mahavira on the throne.⁴⁰

A rude stair at the light corner of the court leads to the upper storey, which consists of a great twelve-pillared hall 57 feet wide by 44 feet deep, and varying in height from 13 feet 10 inches to 14 feet 6 inches. Two columns in front, and as many in the back row, have square bases, and round shafts with florid shoulders. The others have massive bases, and except at the neck are square, with round cushion capitals, which are not well-proportioned.⁴¹

Two more pillars on the bench screen wall in front of the cave, form three openings in a length of 38 feet, to light the interior. Outside, the screen wall is sculptured with a large elephant head at each end. In front of each pillar, smaller human figures in the central division, and animals in the two side divisions have been depicted. Over them is a rail of small colonnettes and water-jars, the body of each of the latter being carved with human and other figures.⁴²

The front of the drip above was carved with forty little *gana*, and other sculptures were above them. Over this, but removed back a few feet, are the remains of a frieze richly sculptured with elephants, *makaras* and human

³⁹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴¹ Dhavalikar, M. K. pp. 94-96.

⁴² Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.* 49-50.

figures. The roof has been painted in large concentric circles. Mahavira has been sculptured on the walls fifty or sixty times. Parasvanath has been depicted nine or ten times.⁴³

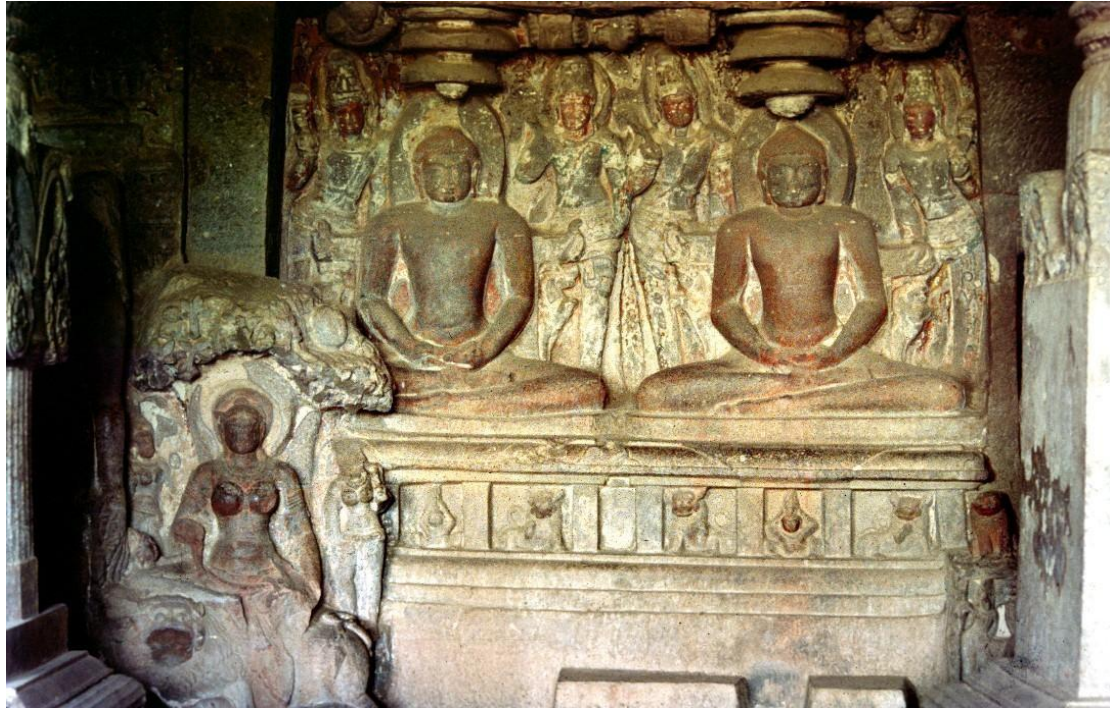


Figure 123: Tirthankaras seated in meditative pose

Courtesy: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

The space over the heads of the Jinas has been painted with more Jinas and worshippers. Indra and Ambika are on the back wall outside the dvarapalas. In the shrine is a Jinendra with four lions on the front of the throne, and a wheel upheld by a dwarf.⁴⁴

Over the Jina, there is a triple umbrella, with dogs and deer lying at the foot of the throne. A low cell is in the right side of the shrine; and a square hole is in the floor. A door on the west end of the front aisle enters a low cell; and through another cell at the opposite end of the same aisle, a hole in the wall leads into the west wing of the Indra Sabha.⁴⁵

⁴³ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop. (2011). *Jaina Art and Aesthetics*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International. p. 167-69.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 70.

⁴⁵ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 500-502.

Cave 34

Cave 34 is a small cave. It is located to the west of the preceding and is the last in the series. The verandah had two square columns and pilasters, and the front is pierced for a door and two windows. The hall is 20½ feet wide by 22 feet deep, by 9 feet 8 inches high. It is supported by four short pillars. These are square below with moulded bases. It has a flat triangular shield on each side.⁴⁶

There are corresponding pilasters on the wall. The spaces between the pilasters have been covered with rich sculpture. The back wall has Indra and Ambika have been depicted in compartments. The remaining figures in the hall are repetitions of those in the other Jain caves. The Tirthankaras are represented in pairs on the side walls. They have been adorned with rich florid sculpture over their heads. The wall on the right cuts into a cell of the west wing of the Jaganath Sabha.⁴⁷

On the slope of the spur below are some small caves all Jain but much ruined; and near the summit is a plain cave with two square columns in front.

The influence of monolithic architecture on Jaina cave

'Chaumukh' in front of Indra Sabha

Chaumukh (Cave No. 32) is a fine adaptation of the southern style for the *pancharatha* lay-out. It has a high *adhithana* comprising *upana*, high, *jagati*, *padma*, a *kantha* a *tripatta kumuda*, another bolder *kantha*, *kapota*, and *prati*. The disposition of the pillars and pilasters of the shrine proper on it is just well within the *parati* on a minor *pitha*, itself comprising *padma* and *jagati*.⁴⁸

The *pitha* has projecting porches on their cardinal directions and supported by a pair of free standing pillars on each side, while the main shrine is supported on

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 503.

⁴⁷ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

⁴⁸ Dhavalikar, M. K., *op. cit.*, 92-96.

four corner cantoning pilaster. The pillars show an evolution similar to the Chalukya-Rashtrakuta idiom.⁴⁹

The pilasters are nearer the unified southern idiom and are square-sectioned and the free, standing pillars are circular sectioned in all their members. Over the intersecting *patikas* of the pillar scheme run the *uttira* following the contours of the projections of the corbels followed by a *vajana* and a *kapota*, whose inner curvature shows the *kodungai* ribbings.⁵⁰

The central part is entirely depicting the bold *nasika* fronts in the form of a *sukanasa*, complete with the multi-foil barge board and *sakti dhvaja*. The way in which the *karnarathas* are shown as slightly projecting beyond the central or *bhadra* part and the way in which its own central part is showing a rectangular carved piece suggests that it was the *khandottara* type.⁵¹

The *kapota* itself is further supported by rearing *vyalas* with their feet placed upon the *kumbha* and had resting against the inside of the *kapota* in the case of the free-standing pillars and with their *padas* resting upon the *phalaka* and head resting against the corner *kadungai* of the *kapota*. The superstructure shows *kantha* followed by *valabhi* and another *kapota*, forming the architrave.⁵²

Over this rafter composition rises, with a series of basal frame work. The projecting rafters followed by the end framework of projecting ends as well as transverse beams. The ends decorated by *makara* terminals or other figure work. This is visible only on the *karnarathas*.⁵³

⁴⁹ Prasad, B. Rajendra. (1983). *Chalukyan Temples of Andhradesa*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publication. pp. 15- 20.

⁵⁰ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 77.

⁵² Pereira, Jose, *op. cit.*, 37-40.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 41.



Figure 124: Chaumukha in front of Indra sabha

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The monolithic structure in front of Indra Sabha (Cave 32) going by the name 'Chaumukh' owing to its ritual function in a Jain temple unit, has a well splayed outline in relation to the gate-way entrance leading into it and the further cave temples excavated on the rear.⁵⁴

The unified character of these four units, namely, the Chaumukh the Gate-house, Flag-staff and the elephant. In addition, the two other monolithic features, namely, the now broken *manastambha* representing the pillar 'order' cognate to this excavation. The elephant in the round which are located on either side of the Chaumukh along its diagonal points in front court-yard between it and the gate.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop. pp. 72-78.

⁵⁵ Bhattacharya, B. C., *op. cit.*, 75-76.

Thus, it is obvious that notwithstanding the possibility of simultaneous excavations going on in the rear alongside the cutting of the monolith to the front a clear design in the mind of this monolithic model and the appertaining features mentioned above should have existed with the architects at the time the work was started.⁵⁶

The Chaumukh for all practical purposes, was an independent entity by itself. Although that it was to become an ancillary feature to a larger complex to come.⁵⁷

It is quite interesting that after Kailasha had been excavated in the first half of the ninth century CE. The excavators of the Chaumukh and the so-called Indra Sabha should have thought in terms of a monolithic creation only for the Chaumukh but not for the main unit behind it.⁵⁸

There might be two reasons- firstly

the importance already gained by the Chaumukh structure in Jain temples which called for a clear monolithic character for it in the courtyard of the temple. This monolith should take the place of a perfect model of a *dvitala* temple of the Dravida style.⁵⁹ It is itself of some consequence and pre-supposes that deep-rooted predilection of the Rashtrakuta architects in favour of the Dravida

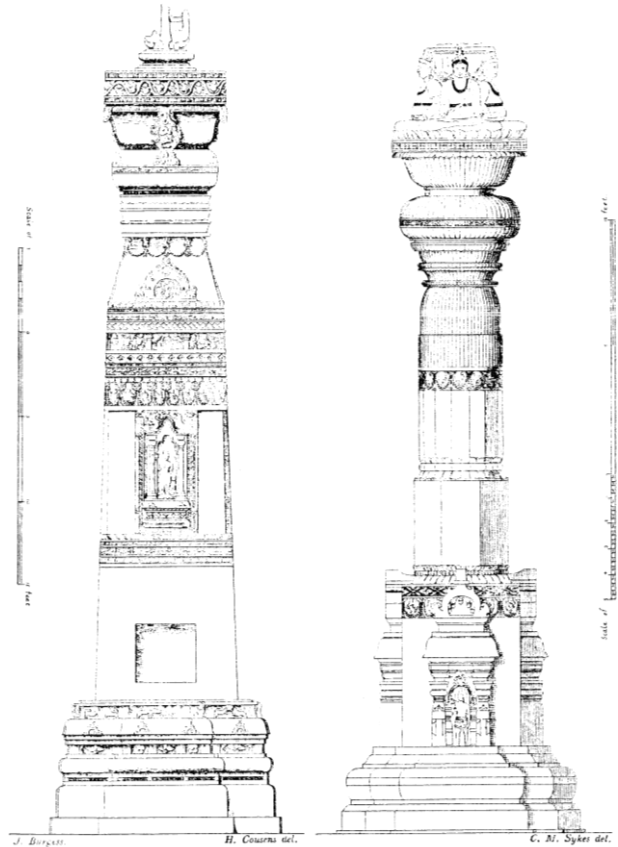


Figure 125: Dhwajasatambha in Kailash Temple and Indra Sabha Monolith Column (After Burgess)

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

⁵⁶ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop. pp. 85-92.

⁵⁷ Rajan, Soundara, K. V., op. cit. pp. 78-82.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 83.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 84.

vimana, as already at Kailasa and as further continued, somewhat later, in the Chhota Kailasa.⁶⁰

The second reason would be that at the time when these excavations were going on, structural temples had been the norm so emphatically. Hence, excavation of another larger monolith to represent the main unit to the rear of the Chaumukh was perhaps considered a shade too tedious and unnecessary. Concurrently, the very excavation of the cave temple type in storeyed form was essentially in multiple shrines of almost the same type.⁶¹

It seems that it was intended to serve mainly as a balancing main backdrop for ritual iconography detailed. The painted scenes on the walls and ceilings for the Jain faith, complementary to the effort already manifest for the Brahmanical faith as in the Kailasa and Ganesh Lena groups. It is no less interesting thus that these logically led subsequently to an urge to carve out a monolithic temple exclusively of Jain character as is found in the incomplete Chhota Kailasa.⁶²

Therefore, the Chaumukh of the Indra Sabha can be said as a significant predecessor to the Chhota Kailasa, and it is in this light as a monolithic that its creation was envisaged by the architects.⁶³

The Structural innovation

From the interior of the court access to the Chaumukh shrine proper has been given by a flight of six steps on the western and eastern sides. The other two directions, enforcing the *parikrama* of the image slab within has not been provided with. The monolithic pillar shaft to the north of the Chamukh has a plinth which is similar to the Chaumukh in its being of *triratha* type. The corner portions much narrower than the *bhadra*. The mouldings show an *upana*, a

⁶⁰ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop. pp. 72-78.

⁶¹ Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁶³ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-82.

jagati, a *padma*, a *kantha*, *vritta-kumuda* followed by another *padma*, and a heavy *prati*.⁶⁴

The base of the shaft proper is continued again in *triratha* form. The *bhadra* showing prominent pilasters which themselves would have represented in miniature the monolithic shaft. Within the pilasters, individual figures are shown one in each carrying objects like flower-buds with the lower stalk.⁶⁵

The figures are themselves placed within a *makara-torana*. The *makara* having their mouths gaping upwards from which *toranas* rise. They have been carved leading to the terminal *makaras* facing each other at the top. Below the *makaras* the pilasters show details such as: square-sectioned shaft part, an undifferentiated *kalasa*, *tadi*, *kumbha*, *padma*, *phalaka* and *virakanda*. Above this the main monolithic shaft had been badly mutilated and had fallen in three parts.⁶⁶

This fall took place due to natural phenomena, about a century ago. The reconstruction of the full shaft from this base. It shows that a part (basal part) just described rose the main shaft represented by an octagonal *pattai* surmounted by a *padma bandha*.⁶⁷

It has been followed by a sixteen-side shaft, circular *malasthana* and telescoped *kalasa*. This style depicts very weak ribs and of two equal parts, one fixed into the other, ending with the neck of the *kalasa*. The design of drooping in and flaring out in a beaded rim is quite impressive. Above this, the next piece with the ribbed *tadi* in double unit with multiple ribbed *kumbha* with equatorial *ratnapattai* band. A circular recession on left plain with a flaring and ribbed

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 83.

⁶⁵ Preira, Jose, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-35.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 36.

⁶⁷ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, p. 500-502.

Padma which expanding as wide as *kumbha*. The tips of the ribs worked out as the outturned petal ends.⁶⁸

On this *padma* had rested a *phalaka* square in section decorated by a band showing a series of rosettes within squares. On the *phalaka* over a *padmapitha* formed of the *urdhvapadma* petals. It was caved with the *padmasana* postured feet of the *yakshas*. The body and the remaining part of the shaft itself being found in the lowest disunited piece.⁶⁹

The way this piece has detached itself from the lower in such a smooth horizontal plane would seem to suggest that it was never intended as a monolithic part. Conspicuously, at the same time the absence of any dowels or binding-mode like iron nail holes etc., would show it was just a natural lamination that has resulted in this cleavage.⁷⁰

Influence on Chhota Kailasa

This imitates the Kailasa in the method of a free standing monolith with an inner shrine complete with *ardha mandapa*, *maha mandapa*, and *mukha mandapa*. A *dvara mandapa* separated from it within which around the main shrine the *prakara* runs. Though not carved at the same level, owing to the incompleteness of the composition.⁷¹

The composition has been only brought down to the top level of the *adhithana* of the shrine proper. In contrast, the *adhithana* of Kailasa shows a very high *upapitha* of the whole *tala*. The main walls have not been completed excepting for the projecting porch *mandapas* to the south and to the north. It shows dwarf pillars on the parapets different from that of the corresponding *kankanas* in the Kailasa cave.⁷²

⁶⁸ Preira, Jose, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-40..

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 41

⁷⁰ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, 50-52.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁷² Burgess, Jas, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.



Figure 126: Vase and foliage design on the pillars

Courtesy: Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi

On the roof above the *kapota* over the rafter frame work is simply shown in blocks of projecting rafters. It carry transverse beams above them is a *hara* of *kutas* and *salas* with *nasikas* coming in between. Above this the roof of the projecting *mandapa* is plain carrying only a *triratha* top parapet. It forms the centre of the main *hara* of the *maha mandapa* roof just comprising *salas*, *kutas* and *nasikas*.⁷³

The projecting porches have their own parapets which, however, do not project out in their end *hara* in *triratha* pattern. The centre of the roof of the *maha mandapa* has a square *sikhara* unit mounted upon the *vyalavari*, *vedi* and *griva* limits, *triratha* projection. On each side it forms a *nasika*, with an upper step, upon which apparently the *kalasa* and *stupi* were placed originally.⁷⁴

The main shrine shows on the ground *tala kutasikharas* at the corners of the *prastara* and very bold *nasika* which is actually the end on projection of a *sala-sikhara*. This *nasika* is rising higher than the *kutasikharas* of the first *tala* and is

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁷⁴ Preira, Jose, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-28.

actually at the lowest part of a composite series of *nasikas* rising one above the other without any relationship to the *tala* levels on three of its sides.⁷⁵



Figure 127: Adhithana like Kailash

Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon

On the fourth side, above the *ardha mandapa* and above the first *tala* ending with the *kutasikharas* at the corners. There is a transversely rectangular *pada* part. It has a central projection which is decorated with a very bold *nasika kudu*. The *kudu* showing a *stambha torana* giving access to an upper shrine chamber within the *ardha mandapa* roof.⁷⁶

The *pada* part of this shrine chamber is surmounted at the corners by regular *kutasikhara*. In the centre, it has another bold *nasika*, a little behind the fronton over the *kapota* of the *pada*. Thus, while the composition is the same on the four sides, the front side has been elevated in its dimensions much more on the other sides.⁷⁷

Inside of the upper shrine chamber and within a *mukha mandapa* and *maha mandapa* is a transverse rectangular chamber carrying the figure of a seated *Jina*. The figure has been depicted with the *asana*-back supported by *vyala* pilasters and *makarabalustrades* and carrying a *prabhavali* above them. Over

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 29.

⁷⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 55.

the *prabhavali* is the *trichhatravali*. The figure is flanked by two *chamaradharinis*.⁷⁸

This shrine is a variation to the Brahmanical temple pattern adapted to Jain usage and showing evolved architectural forms and idioms in the composition and superstructure, involving a composite unit of the typical southern style of receding tiers of *haras* and the provision of bold *nasikas* on the cardinal directions rising one above the other as in the northern style.⁷⁹

It is nearer in style to the composition of the Chaumukh of the Indra Sabha. The composition is in its extant stature a *tritara vimana*, although the top of the three *talas* is abruptly ending in an incomplete character.⁸⁰

The *maha mandapa* on the exterior wall shows a pilastered composition in between the main pilasters which is of the *vritta sputita* type. It has been embellished with a *kapota* composition much below the main *kapota* and with its own *prastara* and *nasika kudu* above. The top of which is just below the *uttara*. The *potikas* of the main wall are of the *taranga* type with a scroll work median band. These *taranga potikas* have not been shown in Kailasa.⁸¹



Figure 128: Kamalbandha on the cieling like Kailash temple

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

⁷⁸ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-85.

⁷⁹ Preira, Jose, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-28.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 28.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 29.

The technique and sensitivity of carving out the monumental Kailasa temple are unique and unparalleled in the art history of India. All the architectural components are very systematically integrated. It is obvious that the architects have adopted the Dravidian forms of vimana pattern. There is no confusion in incorporating the *Dravidian* temple form.⁸²

In fact the southern temple complex in its utilitarian and functional aspects is reflected in the Kailasa temple. It is need less to go into geo-political factors for this phenomenon. Suffice it to say that the later Jain monoliths at Ellora have literally adopted the Kailasa temple format.⁸³

Mention may be made here that the overhanging eaves seen at different points of the monolithic architecture have also been incorporated into the Jain architecture. Cave 30, popularly known as the Chhota Kailasa, is not a successful effort of imitating the great Kailasa temple.⁸⁴

However, their sincere effort of carving a reduced version of Kailasa is above the board. This was done irrespective of the religious needs and the monastic compulsions of the followers of Jainism. The only departure seems to be a avoiding a raised podium as seen in Kailasa temple.⁸⁵

The *sukanasa* portion in Chhota Kailasa has been scopped further to make room for housing one of the Tirthankaras. It is a *dvitalavimana* with a *hara* of *kutas* and *salas*. It consist of *mukha* and *mahamandapa* and a *dvimandapa* placed axially. Lieke the Kailasa temple, there are side *mandapas*. The architects for the Chhota Kailasa have also attempted to carve cut side adjuncts, not as ambitiously as those for the former.⁸⁶

⁸² Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁸⁴ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-95.

⁸⁵ Pereira Jose, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58.

⁸⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara., *op. cit.*, pp. 50-54.

In spite of its unfinished state of condition, we may assume that this monolithic temple is the outcome of a strongly prevailing architectural trend of creating cut out temples.

It is well known that the Jain temples are comparatively later than the Hindu cave temples at Ellora. Yet the excavators of cave 32 have adopted the plans and the technique of the Hindu temples. The *chaumukha* in the courtyard of Cave 32 is a *tritara vimana*. The entire *vimana* also resembles the *vimana* of Kailasa temple.⁸⁷

The above observations are sketchy and synoptic and require further elaboration and systematic documentation based on grounds-plans, photographs, etc.

The Influence on Kazhugumalai

Location and Introduction: Kazhugumalai is twelve miles west of Koyilpatti on the Madurai—Tirunelveli highway in Tamil Nadu. The rock-cut temple is called Vettuvankoyil, 'a cutters' temple', suggesting the technique-followed in it. A portion of a small hill, a monolithic rock, was copped out from the top and a trench was made leaving about 90 centimeter width of space on three sides as circumambulatory passage. The remaining solid rock in the middle was chiseled from the top resulting in the present beautiful temple.⁸⁸

Only the upper portion of the Vimana is finished but the lower portion as well as the façade portion, were roughly cut and left unfinished. The reason for this is not known, though a local folk tradition tries to give an explanation for this status. According to this tradition there was a rivalry between a father and his son, who followed different styles of architecture and in the feud the father killed his son. Hence the name. What one may surmise from this is that a new

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 55.

⁸⁸ Rajan, K. V. Soundra. (1998). *Rock-cut Temple Styles: Early Pandyan Art and the Ellora Shrines*. Mumbai: Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1998), pp. 99-101.

tradition was adopted whilst there existed an older tradition. As a result the older tradition saw that the new tradition was not established.⁸⁹



Figure 129: Unfinished Vimana of Vettuvankoyil

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

The older tradition may be the tradition of bas relief work and the new tradition may be the new rock-cut tradition, not the cut-in/cut-out tradition, but the cut-from-the-top tradition. On the same hill, one sees near this rock-hewn temple a huge panel for bas-relief depicting Jaina deities, belonging to a slightly earlier period.⁹⁰

Description: The Vimana consists of three-tiers, square in shape and has an octagonal sikhara at the top immediately reminding one the Dharmaraja and Arjuna *rathas* at Mamallapuram. It contains chaitya windows or kudus, "cages" embellished by alternating shovel heads and lion-heads from above. In between

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 102.

⁹⁰ Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad & Sinha, Shanti Swaroop, op. cit. pp. 105-107.

the *kudus*, the sculptor has used a beautiful decorative border running up to the top of the *sikhara*.⁹¹

This type of ornamentation is called '*karukkuvelai*' in Tamil. On the top of the kudu a lion's head is portrayed and from its mouth hangs a tassel and its joins with two *makara* faces on either side. This again expands and links with the wide open mouths of two *makaras* engraved below.⁹²

The top of the *sikhara* does not have anything on top of it now; but the hole found there indicated an earlier existence of Kailash which was subsequently broken. Just under this *sikhara* one finds four Nandis in the corners and in between them four beautiful sculptures facing the four cardinal points. 'One finds Siva' Parvati in a seated posture in the east, *MridangaDaksinmurti* in the south, seated Narasimha in the west and seated Brahma on the north.'⁹³



Figure 130: Shiv and Parvati on the Shikhara of the Vimana

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 108.

⁹² Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-102.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 103.

Siva is portrayed with four hands. The back right hands is holding the axe (Parsu) and the back left hand is holding the deer. The front right hand is broken and the front left hand is kept on the left thigh keeping the palm up. He wears the *jatamukuta* on his head and appears with a smiling face. He wears a *rudraksamala* around his neck and snake armlets on his shoulders. The earlobes are dropping due to the weight of the ornaments.⁹⁴

The yajnopavita, with the bell-shaped clasp which falls from his left shoulder, turn left near his navel. The slightly projected naval region suggests the tight *undarbandha*. His right leg is folded. Parvati, who is seated near him, has a slightly tilted face towards Siva, showing the dropping earlobe. Her right hand rests near her folded right leg. She is wearing *kuchabandha* on her breasts. The lion cloth is flowing beneath her navel. She sits with ease with her folded left leg and showing up the knee. Based on the physiognomy, it can be observed that affinities between this art and that of the late Pallava dynasty and the last phase of the early Western Chalukyan.⁹⁵

Beneath these beautiful sculptures one finds a *vyala* freeze. On the southern side, just beneath the *chaitya* window, one sees an unusual Daksinamurti Siva playing a mrdanga of the *ankya* type. His right leg is folded and the *mrdangam* is placed on his lap. His left leg hangs down and rests on Muyalaka (*apasmara*) who is holding a hooded snake in his right hand.⁹⁶

Just above him and on the sides, the running *vyala vari* is depicted. Siva is shown with four hands in the two upper hands he holds the axe and *aksamala* respectively. He holds the *mridanga* with his left hands and plays on it with his right hand. His *jatabhara* is shown with curly hair encircling his smiling face.⁹⁷

Usually in the Tamil country one finds *Daksinamûrti* playing a veena, thus acquiring the name Vinādhara Daksināmurti playing a *veena*. Hence, acquires

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 104.

⁹⁵ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, pp. 319-21.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 322.

⁹⁷ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

the name Vīnādhara Dakṣināmurti. But here one notices a Dakṣināmurti playing a mrdanga. This is noteworthy feature.⁹⁸

Narasimha is shown on the west, in the seated posture. His right leg is folded and his left leg is resting on a lotus *pitha*. He wears a crown like a lotus bud, a feature that we find in Badami in the huge Narasimha there. He is shown with four hands, the back ones hold chakra and *sankha*. In the front the right hand is in *tarjani* mudra and the left hand rests on his lap.⁹⁹

On the northern side, one observes Brahma seated in *padmasana* on a lotus. He is shown with two profile faces looking sideways, and four hands. The two back hands hold the *akṣamala* and *kundika*. In the front the right hand is in *abhaya* mudra and the left hands holds a book. He is portrayed as a youthful type and not with a beard as in the north. He wears a *vastra jaynopavita*, and ornaments adorn his neck. Two nicely chiseled small elephants, facing each other, are standing below.¹⁰⁰

Beneath the *Vyala vari*, one finds an arched roof running on all four sides. In the middle of the arch one observes a beautiful decorative *karukku* work flanked by *kudus* on either sides. The *kudus* are embellished above and around by the usual lion face, tassels and *makras*. The *kudus* contain peeping faces of young men, who look like princes with crown-like head-gears. They are peeping at young ladies carved up to their waist.¹⁰¹

This portrayal suggests that the *kudus* were windows linking with the *chaityas*. The damsels are shown in different situations. One is shown as if she is just coming out from a pool. The artistic portrayal makes one to forget that it is made of rock, one is made to believe that there is water. The rock becomes so pliable in the dexterous hands of the sculptor. Beneath this arch and side by side

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 101.

⁹⁹ Huntington, Susan L., *op. cit.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-21.

¹⁰⁰ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-01.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 102.

the damsels, *bhutaganas* are portrayed in their gay moods, some dancing in ecstasy, some holding the roof quite scrupulously.¹⁰²

Amidst the *bhutaganas* some dwarfish sages are also depicted. Some sport beards, and are wearing *rudraksas*, *yajnopavitas* and *jatas*. These contrasting figures were probably carved here to juxtapose the sacred and the profane. Along with these *ganas*, dwarfish monkeys are also delineated.¹⁰³

Coming down to the lower tier, one notices small pavilions on all the four sides and wagon-roofed *salas* in the middle. The usual decorations viz., the lion head, the *makaras* and tassels are repeated. Dwarfish figures are shown supporting these roof. Sometimes lions are also portrayed. Similarly the *salas* are also shown with two dwarfs at the corners and in the middle. Beneath the *kudus* one finds seated figures of deities.¹⁰⁴

Under the *kudus*, shallow niches are carved and under them seated figures were shown. On the extreme ends young damsels are portrayed. Thus one gets four central figures under the *salas* such as- *Daksinamurti* in the south, seated Visnu in the west, and seated Siva in the form of *Visapaharana* in the north.¹⁰⁵

On either side of these central figures and in between the figures of the damsels at the extreme ends, one observes two divine figures in the south, Surya and Chandra are placed in the west and another divine figure together with Subrahmanya in the north. Beneath these the *Vyala vari* is repeated.

Usually on the western side of a Dravidian temple somaskanda is depicted. But the presence of Visnu on this die is an interesting feature of this early period, for, it is replaced by the figure of a Lingodbhava in the later period. Similarly

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 103.

¹⁰³ Huntington, Susan L. *op. cit.*, pp. 318-320.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 321.

¹⁰⁵ Fergusson, James & Burgess, James, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-87.

the presence of Daksinamurti in the southern side is quite unconventional in the Vettuvankoyil.¹⁰⁶

On the southern side Siva is depicted as Daksinamurti against the niche in the central *sala*. He is shown in the sitting posture, the right leg folded and the left leg hanging down in *ardhaparyanka*. He is shown with four hands, the upper hands with fingers in *Kartari mudra* hold the deer (right) and aksamala (left), respectively. The front right hand (probably in *Vyakhyana mudra*) is broken and the front left hand slightly raised, is shown pressing his left lap. The *yajnopavita* is delineated with three thick threads flowing down gently. He is also wearing the *hara* and *keyura*.¹⁰⁷

On the western side below the central sala one finds the seated figure of Visnu in the *maharaja* lila pose. His right foot lifted and rested on the seat and the left foot resting on a lotus *pitha*. He is shown with four hands, the upper ones carrying *chakra* in *prayoga bhava* and *sankha* respectively.¹⁰⁸

The front right hand (probably in the *abhaya mudra*) is broken and the left hand rests on the throne. He wears the characteristic *kirtitamukuta* and appears majestic. There is a projection on his back suggesting a cushion behind him. His throne is flanked by two lions characterizing it as a *simhasana*. On either side of him both Surya and Chandra images are placed with halos behind their heads. This is another of the characteristic feature one finds on this temple.¹⁰⁹

On the northern side Siva is carved in a sitting posture with a seemingly sliding snake in this right hand. His jata is heaped in the form of a *kondai* 'bun'. In the right ear the *patrakundala* is dangling and the left ear empty. He is shown with

¹⁰⁶ Rajan, K. V. Soundara, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-102.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁸ Vijayavenugopal, V. (1988). 'Kazhugumalai Vettuvankoyil, in in *Ellora Caves: Sculptures and Architecture*. Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannel and Shivaji Panikkar (ed. all). New Delhi: Books & Books. pp. 447-48.

¹⁰⁹ Prasad, B. Rajendra, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-57.

four hands, the back ones holding the *Parasu* and the deer, whilst the front right hands hold the snuous snake and the left hands rests on the seat. The right leg is folded and the left leg is hanging down and rests on a *pitha*. This *Visapaharana-murti* is unique, for nowhere one comes across such a sculpture in the Tamil country.¹¹⁰

On the northern side Subrahmanya or Skanda's figure is carved. With the *channavtra* on his chest he appears as a warrior. He is shown with four hands, the back ones carry the *sakti* weapon and *aksamala* respectively. The front right hands in *abhayamudra* and the left hand is resting on the lap. The right leg is folded and the left leg is hanging down and resting on the *pitha*. Since he is holding the *aksamala* the figure is also identified as Gurumurti.¹¹¹

Architectural Interactions with Kailash: Thus the unfinished temple at Vettuvankoyil furnishes us certain characteristic features. It contains some unusual sculptures like the Mrdanga Daksinamurti, the Visapaharana Siva, Visnu in maharaja lila pose, Skanda in partially Gurumurti form, Umasahitamurti in casual posture, and the peeping princes and the bathing damsels together with an interesting *mithuna* portrayal.

It is the only type of temple in Tamil Nadu that is rock-hewn and chiseled from the top. Obviously it is dedicated to Siva though no *linga* is found inside the cella. (Instead an idol of Ganesa is found installed there now).¹¹²

Through this temple is situated in the Pandya country, it has striking similarities with Dharmaraja and Arjuna *rathas* of Mamallapuram, suggesting the influence of the Pallava art. But why the temple is unfinished is still a mystery. It is true

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 158

¹¹¹ Vijayavenugopal, V., *op. cit.*, 448-89.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p. 449-50.

that quite a few cave temples were found in the Pandya country modeled on Pallava lines.¹¹³

These were due to the influence exerted by the bhakti movement that was spreading through the Pandya country at the time. It is interesting to note that all these cave temples were cut more or less on the same hills where one finds the earlier Jaina Monuments and rock-cut beds. These conversions of the hills into abodes of Hindu gods may be a reflection of their conversion from Jainism to Hinduism.¹¹⁴

There is another motive in the construction of temples one notices in south India. Temples were built as a mark of Victory over a king or a region. The famous Virupaksa temple at Pattadakal was built by the queens of Viramaditya II as a mark of his victory over Kanchi. According to the inscription in Pattadaka, the temple was built by the *acharis* brought from the Pallava country.¹¹⁵

It is here becomes important to consider and collect proofs as to whether similar intention motivated the Pandyas in constructing Vettunakoyil. If it symbolizes their victory over the Pallavas of Kanchi. There were frequent wars between the Pandyas and the Pallavas, besides there were marriages too. But why the temple was left unfinished? Perhaps a subsequent war might have prevented the completion of the temple.¹¹⁶

Another reason, perhaps it might be a monument cut as a victory memorial based on Kailasanatha temple at Ellora by the Rastrakuta king, Govinda III (who came to throne in 794 CE), who conquered the Pallava king Dantivarman and went up to Rameshvaram in Pandya country issuing a copper plate from

¹¹³ Taddell, Christopher. (1990). *The History of Architecture in India from the Dawn of Civilization to the End of Raj*. London: Phaiden Press. p. 46-50.

¹¹⁴ Sharma, Krishna. (1987). *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement A New Perspective*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. p. 110.

¹¹⁵ Vijayavenugopal, G., *op. cit.*, pp.451-52.

¹¹⁶ Huntington, Susan L. *op. cit.*, pp. 315-21.

there. These are all only speculations and strong evidences are yet to be traced.¹¹⁷

With regard to the Kailash temple at Ellora, it is pointed out by many art historians that it is modeled after Virupaksa temple of Pattadakal. The Virupaksa temple in turn is built in imitation of Kailasanatha temple of Kanchipuram by the artisans brought from Pallava region. Similarly an inscription from Papanatha temple at Pattadakal refers to the artisans from the Tamil country.¹¹⁸

Thus there is a continuous interactions between Chalukyan and Pallava artisans. The *sikhara* of the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora is octagonal. The octagonal *sikhara* style is typically a Dravida feature, which is found in Dharamaraja *ratha* and Arjuna *ratha* at Mamallapuram and also in Kazhugumalai Vettuvankoyil. The similarities between these obviously point out to the Tamil origin of this phenomenon.¹¹⁹

Hence, the direct Pallava influence on the Ellora temples is quite possible in view of the recorded alliance, at about the time when they were made, between the Rastrakutas and certain members of the Pallava royal family against their common foe, the Chalukyas.

Percy Brown also points out that the Kailasanatha temple "is clearly an illustration of the normal development of the Dravidian temple type, adopted to conform to the particular technique involved".¹²⁰

The rock-cut techniques followed in both the places are same the *Vimana* and *sikhara* styles are same. Kailash temple at Ellora is unique because that is the only type found in that region. Similarly Kazhugumalai Vettuvankoyil is the

¹¹⁷ Vijayavenugopl, G. *op. cit.*, pp.451-53.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 54.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹²⁰ Brown, Percy, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.

only type found in Tamil Nadu. Both follow the Pallava art traditions of monolith carving.

Rulers might have waged wars against each other, but they also admired arts and architecture. They provided the resources and encouraged the artists. But the artists developed their own idioms. They evolved certain patterns, modified and integrated several ideas obtained from different places. It is might not be proper to label these artistic idioms on the basis of empires but rather on artistic styles of the artisans.



Conclusion

The great Kailash monolithic complex at Ellora is undisputedly one of the most ambitious rock-architectural projects ever undertaken anywhere and brought to successful conclusion. Considered by any standards of temple modelling, it deserves the prime place by its aesthetic balance, formal majesty and iconographic profundity. It should have been conceived and carried out at a time when structural architecture in the stone medium had already been developed to an impressive stage makes this *magnum opus* of the rock-art of the Rashtrakutas. It is also to be noted that except for the Pallava monoliths at Mahabalipuram there was no contemporary achievement to take immediate inspiration from. The unspeakable power of creativeness at Ellora of the Chalukyas and of Dantidurga Rashtrakuta, tried out for a bold and novel experimentation of a free-standing model frozen in rock. Krishna, the second monarch to sit on the throne of the Rashtrakutas, in the capital, perhaps located near Ellora itself. The craft potential of the place should have already reassured him of the success of the venture. But it is certainly indisputable that a new spirit of religion and resurgent art was invoked by the royal patronage in creating this miniature Kailash. The body mass of Deccan trap rock had thus been preservingly reduced by a mysterious vision of the royal patron to a sanctuary of impeccable rhythm. It resulted into the vesture of legend, mythical and canonical iconography that clothed the shrine model was the expression of the unsurpassed god-mindedness of the craftsmen.

In its architecture and the spirit underlying it, the Kailash temple had not merely to be different from the residence of ordinary men but had also to dominate its surroundings. The upward thrust of the sanctum tower was symbolic of its

Conclusion

spiritual eminence. Nevertheless it stood solidly and firmly on the ground like a

broad-based pyramid amidst supplementary structures enclosed within a high wall. While the tower loudly announced the presence of God, at close range the temple over-whelmed the faithful by the variety and wealth of carvings on its walls, pillars and ceilings. The temple itself became one enormous piece of sculpture and its architectural features were often subordinated to the carver's skill. Figures of gods and goddesses, lovely maidens, floral motifs, elephants, horses, chariots, battle scenes, dwarfs and demons, stories from legends and myths and often enough provocative erotic themes. All these sought to picture before the faithful the righteous ways of the gods and the sins of evil-doers. In short, the religious faith that the architecture of the temple evokes does not spring from a cynical denial of life but from its warmest depths. In the presentation of this idea the Hindu temple-builder was content to be governed by established conventions rather than his inventive genius.

Long conditioned by a philosophy of self-abnegation, the men who built these temples and carved their details rarely announced their names. So most of these structures have remained anonymous. To these temple-builders art was neither purely secular nor religious. It was all one, basically religious and symbolic. The architecture of the temple only sought to convey, in spatial terms, the intensity of their longing to identify the divine with the real.

The temple of Kailasa at Ellora is not only the most stupendous single work of art executed in India, but as an example of rock-architecture it is unrivalled. Standing within its precincts and surrounded by its grey and hoary pavilions, one seems to be looking through into another world, not a world of time and space. But one of intense spiritual devotion expressed by such an amazing artistic creation hewn out of the earth itself. Gradually one becomes conscious of the remarkable imagination which conceived it, the unstinted labour which enabled it to be materialized (a work of a hundred years), and, finally, the sculpture with which it is adorned. This plastic decoration is its crowning glory

something more than a record of artistic form. It is a great spiritual achievement, every portion being a rich statement glowing with meaning. The Kailash is an illustration of one of those rare occasions when men's minds, hearts, and hands work in unison towards the consummation of a supreme ideal. It was under such conditions of religious and cultural stability that this grand monolithic representation of Siva's Paradise was produced.

Kailasa was not certainly born in a day. It shows the assimilation of the most notable trends in formal architecture, both functional and ritual, and anticipates the creations of Indra Sabha and Chhota Kailasa (Jain caves). The atypical precursor and successor were Dantidurga's *mandapa* in front of Dasavatra cave, carrying the inscribed record of that kind and the *panchayatana* lay-out displayed on the southern upper ledge of the Kailasha pit. But the distinction in style between the two aforesaid specimens and Krishna's Kailasha is well taken because they show between a convincing familiarity with the 'northern' as well as 'southern' architectural modulations, the parallel developments of which had been the most notable events of the art under the Chalukyas gone by. Together, thus, with the two Jain monoliths mentioned earlier, they form a most substantial contribution in the monolithic rock art of free-standing temple style and would deserve a separate and detailed attention. It is needless to add that the compressed architectural and plastic idioms, themes, and motifs that represent the otherwise inert rock-mass of these creations would stand close scrutiny. If the medium adopted - namely a monolithic rock-scoop was a shade regressive for the age. The magnitude of sculptural vigour and planimplicit in it could not have been more convincingly presented against a less colossal back-drop. As the finite expression of an unshakable faith and resolute action in the religious plane of contemporary Deccan.

At the time of the inception of the Rashtrakuta monoliths at Ellora, as already stated, there were only the '*Rathas*' of the Pallavas at Mamallapuram, as the

fore-runner. But a fairly well distributed patronage favouring monolithic models was observed by the late eighth century CE, and the one following, and these largely followed the prevalent local composition in style. The earliest of these, would be Vettuvankoil at Kalugumalai in the Pandyan country, datable around 800 CE; followed by Dhamnar in Madhya Pradesh (displaying a reasonably complex *Astaparivarashrine*-complex of the curvilinear northern type, datable of mid-ninth century CE). The *Charbhuj*a Vishnu temple on the brim of Gwalior hill, of the late ninth century CE. The series of seven monoliths at Masrur in Kangra valley of about the same time; and the small but variant rectangular shrine (unfinished) with wagon-top *sikhara* at Coglong in Bihar, of perhaps the same time, or somewhat later. Ellora's contributions thus, alike in quality as in quantity, were more than adequate. Its reasonable homogeneity in style and contemporaneity with stylistic modes elsewhere would seem to make them form a compact Rashtrakuta *milieu*, and thus of intrinsic importance. That they should have been so equally divided between Hinduism and Jainism in their affiliation would also tend to show the discerning art-patronage of the Rashtrakuta monarchs and the competitive role of Jainism in the then Western Indian scene.

If we see from the architectural point of view, the cave art at Ellora has many sidelights. Its ritual framework is reasonably elaborate and well sustains an integrated god-consort pattern. It presents purely Shaiva contexts as well as mixed Shaiva and Vaishnava nexus, often predicated in context to a basic Shiva shrine. The one example prior to it is presented only at Badami, the parent zone, a purely Vaishnava situation in cave no.3. Rashtrakutas also initially continued the Shaiva-Vaishnav nexus in its creation at Ellora.

In monolithic stage, this becomes less and an exultant Shaiva domain is revealed. But one element which spotlights the monolithic mode of the Rashtrakutas is the provision not only for both extra-Vindhyan and south Indian

usages in layout, but also in a meticulous of a *prakāra* (surrounding wall) wall for the temple complex. Thus it may be stated that the Rashtrakutas, in their monoliths, desired to present the whole temple panorama and transplanted the scene available at Pattadakal in Karnataka region.

Throughout, the Jaina workmanship is of a high order, yet the planning, at Ellora, is inclined to be haphazard and improvisatory. Moreover, as in many of the productions of the Jains, in spite of the beauty of the embellishment, or perhaps in some obscure way on account of it, there is a cold and impersonal feeling in these rock-cut halls. It is not found in those of the Buddhist or Hindus, a circumstance of some irony in view of the pronounced humanitarian character of the creed that inspired them.

The culmination of monolithic architecture at Ellora not only represent Kailash as a temple but it is more like a museum of the sculptures of Hindu deities.



Glossary of Technical Terms

Abhasa : See Cchanda and Vikalpa.

Achalalinga : This would mainly signify a rock-cut linga on its own

pitha, both of which are immovable. Achalalinga thus is not necessarily svayambhulinga.

Adhishthana: Plinth part, below the wall part, in a southern context.

See also table under section IV (a) (i).

Alindra : The deliberately left perambulatory space between the double walls of the sanctum, both the walls usually carrying elevational features on their respective exterior. It has a relationship to the thickness of the cella wall and cella width.

Alpavimana : The implies according to text a temple model which

has only one tala and one hara. There are representations of such at Mahabalipuram in Arjuna's penance Bas-relief, as also at Penamaga, near Undavailli, (Krishna Dist.) of a similar kind.

Amalakasila : The topmost important feature of a northern temple over the rekha sikhara. It is in the form of the ribbed myrobalan fruit or its flattened variants...

Anarpitha : See ardhamandapa.

Ardhamandapa : The antechamber immediately adjoining the garbhagriha; essentially forming the entrance framework for the

main shrine; known as antarala in the north especially in sandhara temples; generally rectangular transversely and leading immediately to the

mahamandapa in the southern temples; in early forms, however, both in the north and in the south, the temple unit contains only cella and ardhamandapa, which in such cases would be called the mukhamandapa, or when very narrow, a praggriva.

Arpita

: Signifies in a southern temple, the hara units over each tala, and prastara, not of free-standing nature forming regular parapets for the pradakshina passage of successive talas, but rather applied to the next following tala. Its counterpart is anarpita which is generally an earlier form, indicating rudimentary provision for pradakshina at each tala level. the passage involved is actually the alindra of the southern architectonics.

Arshalinga: A type mentioned in the early texts to represent a linga shaft which has only a square-sectioned lower half and a cylindrical-sectioned upper half, the latter of which is thinner at the base and bulging at the top. Typically noted only in the Chalukyan early caves of the Deccan, as at Ellora, Elephanta etc.

Ayatasra : Rectangular in plan.

Bandhna : Signifies a horizontal patti or band running across the exterior wall of the temple, more than once in some cases as in the Central Indian Chandela temples, where the vertical registers by such divisions are in harmony with the horizontal lay-out of the rathas.

Barandika : Represents the topmost part of the bada of the orissan temple, showing cornice above and occurring over the bada in an Orissan temple.

Bhadra : Essentially means the cardinal opening or projection. In northern or southern temple plan it represents the cardinal ratha, and signifies a temple open on all the four sides, when used as a sarvatobhadra. In south such a projection is also called mukha bhadra.

Bharani : Represents the capital part of a pillar in northern usage, corresponds to the padma and phalaka of the southern usage.

Bhitti : Represents the wall part of a temple and corresponds to pada of the southern usage, jangha of the northern usage, bada of the eastern and Kalinga usage and mandovara of the western Gujarati usage : is found in this form in the earliest northern texts.

Bhumi : Literally, a vertical division of the super-structure, but essentially employed in non-functional storeyed forms as in the Nagara rekha sikhara, where it roughly stands for each of the nodes of the vertical profile, delimited by a karnamalaka.

Cchanda : A term used in relation to other terms like jati, vikalpa and abhasa and generally meaning certain gradations of the super structural units, and probably also divisible in the form of free standing temples, full relieved temples, partially relieved niche models, and painted specimens respectively.

Chalalinga: It is different from the svayambhu as well as achala. This represents the category of all the lingas which are detachable from the pithas and are not fixed naturally.

Chaturasra : Square in plan, representing one of the three major fundamental architectural plans of temples, the other two being astasra (octagonal), and vritta (circular). There are also ayatasra or rectangular and Vrittayata or apsidal forms, the square essentially pertaining to the northern temples. Ashtasra (octagonal) plan relates to a Dravida temple in its pure form, but relates mainly to the form of its sikhara and griva.

Chatushki : A complete mandapa unit found integrated with the balcony porch of the sabhamandapa the pillars being four in number and carrying decorative forms on the ceiling above.

Chitra : Generally meaning a picture or engraving, but in architectural texts intended essentially to mean a sculpture in the round.

Chitrabhasa : See chitra and chitrardha. The terms means a depiction,

in paint, of a divine form.

Chitrardha: It is different from Chitra. This means carving in relief—a bas-relief.

Devakoshtha : Stands for the niches containing shrines of divinities in

stipulated form and directions, as enjoined in the texts.

Dharalinga : One of the early linga forms in the south. It represents

a shaft with multi-faceted or multi-fluted exterior meeting at the top which is usually mildly flattened. In such cases, it does not have any pitha or any visible

pindika. Later dharalingas show divisions of the vertical part into lesser and greater flutes. Dharalingas are considered to be the best form of the lingas.

Dravida : One of the three major divisions of temple styles often used in Silpa texts, the other two being Nagara and Vesara; it is essentially restricted in texts to designate the octagonal diagonal sikhara feature, but has considerably more component features, for identifying a temple as Dravida in a clinching way.

Dvara

: Means gate-way, and it is divided into many forms in early texts, such as dvarasala, dvarasobha, etc., and contains the germs for latter day gopuradvaras. One of the earliest dvaras in south India will be seen around Kailasanatha Shrine at Kanchi and the Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram facing east.

Dvarapalas : These are the door keepers or pratiharas as known in northern usage and could sometimes be dvarapalikas as for Durga, corresponding to pratiharis. They are generally found on the door frame of the cella in Deccan, and North where they are also accompanied by Ganga and Yamuna along side on their respective mounts, namely, the makara and the kurma. In the south they are generally placed outside the main temple units, be it arhamandapa or mahamandapa in its most original lay-out and, as a result serve to indicate the original limit of the temple, by their location. They wear ayudhas reflecting and personifying the Sivaite or Vaisnavite or Vaisnavite main deity.

Dvarasakhas : These are the overdoors of the main doorway entrance into the cella. While these sakhas vary from a single one to elaborate panchasakha units, they also differ in their layout and details, and are slightly offset in Deccani usage, while they are horizontally spread out elsewhere. The important sakhas of the southern door frame are nagasakha, patrasakha, stambhasakha and pushpasakha. They are usually encased in a framework of padmakosa. The lower southern Indian practice is that of a plain featureless door frame.

Dvyasra : A term used apparently to denote a rectangle ending with an apse. It could thus be well called a vrattayata, although the latter could equally well mean the elliptical form. It is a prevalent view that dvyasra has become 'vesara' in the terminological jargon.

Gajatalu : A component element of vitana decoration consisting of integrated depressions at successive courses forming a series of kosas or coffers, relieving the projections in between the two.

Gavaksha : Pierced window-openings for ventilation and light.

Ghanadvāra: The represents a large grill-window or a pilastered niche provided on the cardinal points of the main shrine on its outer walls. It implies essentially a false door. It is flanked on the outside by two free-standing pillars. Such types are generally seen in the Nagara prasadas of the North and the Deccan.

Ghantasamavarana : Miniature turrets running along the radial limbs of the exterior roof over the sabhamandapa and the chatushki,

of a northern temple; shaped in the form of a ghanta or a bell complete with a thin amalaka and a kalasa on top. A host of such is a samvarana, receding courses of such rise in a stepped form on a roof of the ancillary walls of the temple.

Griva : The nick of the super structure. See also table under section IV (a) (i)

Hara : A string, literally, and connotes the string of shrine- miniatures that runs over the parapet of each tala (generally excluding the last, except in very early contexts) and comprising kutas at the corners, and salas in between. Sometimes panajara units are also displayed in the hara. See under panjara.

Harantara : The recession between kuta and sala in the southern context and the bhadra, anuratha and kurna in the northern where it is also called the salilantara, since it facilitates storm water drainage.

Jagati : See under padma. It is a recurrent form in southern temples at the base of the adhishtana above the upana and is plain vertical right angular moulding; it is different from the jagati of the northern temple where it signifies a spacious structural terrace upon which the main temple is erected.

Jangha : See bhitti.

Jativimana: It is a type differentiating it from jatitara types and from a mukhya vimana, and representing temple model which has upto four talas.

Kailasa : A primary form like Vairaja etc., and representing a circular plan.

Kakshasana : A seat-back provided above the vedi on the inner side of the sabhamandapa along its outer limit, particularly in the cardinal projections of the balconies.

Kalasa : The most important and topmost part of a temple structure; showing a properly consecrated pot form usually encased in copper metal. No temple is fit for or deemed as in active worship without its being in position.

Kani : Known also as Karnika. This northern term is essentially depicting a flattened kumuda-like moulding rising above the padma on the plinth. It is very typical in Gujarat architecture.

Kapotabandha : An adhishtana form whose top member is a kapota; unlike that of padabandha and pratibandha, which have a patika. A kapotabandha further should normally have a vrittakumuda, but occasionally tripatta; typical of Chalukyan region and used early only once in the south, in Dharmaraja ratha.

Karna : Signifies the corner unit of the plinth and wall carrying its on superstructural elements in harmony with the main temple style.

Karnamalaka : Represents the end of each bhumi on the super structure of a nagara rekha sikhara.

Karnatilaka : Represents a miniature Nagara sikhara unit placed at the joinery between the main sikhara and the antarala on the side profile; not found in the southern usage.

Kati

: The term employed to represent pada or bhitti or jangha or slightly later usage and is so mentioned in Visnudharmottara.

Kshipta : A vitana type wherein the designs are cut-in an integrated mode, the patterns laid one within the other.

Kudyastambha : The pillars which additionally support a pada and are placed at regular intervals on the exterior of the wall over the plinth.

Kumuda : An important moulding of the adhishtana; see under pattika. It has two classes, the vritta kumuda and the tripatta kumuda, which are self explanatory. In Chalukyan country, we have a multi-faceted kumuda also, in early usage, as at Aiholi, Nagaral etc.

Kuta

: A 'sikhara' unit in the 'southern' style, which has a square plan nad is basically capping an alpa vimana or single-storeyed unit, but stands for miniature or kshudra alpa vimana part of the multi-storeyed temple. In these, it occupies the corner (karnakuta) of the parapet, above the entablatures, of each storey or tala.

Kuta-chhadya : Essentially northern in connotation. It represents the

plain projecting externally ribbed chajja-like cornice overhanging main beam on the top of the jangha. Temples without kutachhadya are often found in the north, particularly in Eastern India.

Lalatabimba: This represents a small ritual carved tablet located in

the centre of the lintel of the cella door. It is popularly taken as a cognizance of the religious affiliation of the deity within, but could indeed be a merely auspicious

common motif, employed more on a regional pattern than anything else. The usual *lalatabimba* devatas are *Gajalakshmi*, *Ganesa*, *Garuda*, *Lakulisa*, *Anantasayi* etc.

Latina

: A term found in some northern texts to represent the highly intricate and over-lapping *Jalaka* patterns on the *rekha sikhara* of the northern temple.

Linga

: Originally meaning a mere symbol or a formal criterion, having the same sense as *chinha*, later appropriated to *Svaite* usage and taking the form of a vertical shaft of stone either plain or faceted. It is also relieved with figure work in the earliest instances. In such a case, it is called a *mukhalinga* and may have a single *mukha* or five *mukhas*. These are mounted directly on the square base and thus vertically support the originally iconic character of *Siva* turned into the symbolic pillar form subsequently.

Manasutra: The vertical plumb-line delimiting the projections of the *kapota* or cornice and essentially coalescing with the projection of the *upana* of the lowest moulding of the plinth in southern temples, but not necessarily so, in the northern temples. In northern temples, particularly in early medieval stages, the plinth flares out much wider off than the drip line of the cornice.

Manchabandha : An *adhishtana* type of the simplest kind in the form of

a high *kantha*, with an *upana* below and a *pattika* or *kapota* above. A very popular *chalukeyan* usage here it has a *kapota* top.

Mandovara : See Bhatti.

Manika : Of the same group as Vairaja and Kailasa. It represents an elliptical form.

Mulabhera: The main deity, usually of stone (Sila), brick and stucco (Sudha) or in wood (daru) or in paint (Abhasa), and both in iconic and aniconic forms.

Mulamanjari : The main tower found within the encircling urashrin

gas or miniature half-turrests applied to it. In the earliest northern usage of the term as in Visnudharmottara, in the form of manjari, it represents the superstructure itself.

Mukhapatti : Horse-shoes shaped or trefoil barge board of sukanasa or even smaller nasikas. These are decorated in the former with side cusps bearing nagas and with resette series along the border, representing nail heads.

Mukhya vimana : Signifies a temple which has more than four talas. The

text prescribes that a maximum number of talas for most of the mukhya vimanas is between 12 to 15 and in any case, could not be more than about 200 ft. in height. The term is essentially of southern usage. The Great temple at Tanjore is an outstanding expression of the highest example of the mukhya vimana with 13 talas.

Nabhicchanda : A major type of vitana in a northern mandapa consisting of receding annular rings on the ceiling, ending in a penentive and supported by brackets rising from the pillar corbels and decorated with mandanikas as bracket struts.

Nagara : Generally taken to mean 'northern' temples owing to their sharp divergence from southern or Dravida; stands for a square sectioned temple, whose sikhara is of the rekha type surmounted by an amalakasila sometimes. It is, rather obscurely, taken to represent any temple, in early Tamil literature.

Nasika : Representing small dormer windows on kapotas, prastaras and sikhara roofs; shaped essentially in the form of the original Buddhist chaitya dormer, owing to their peculiar projection forward, they are known as such. In the most significant and larger-sized projection at the base of the Sikhara on the main direction of orientation of the temple or all the four cardinal directions, they are called sukanasa or mahanasika respectively.

Nirandhara : As opposed to sandhara, this has a single wall for its main temple cella and the pradakshina is to be made around it on the open court or terrace. Generally a characteristic of southern temples.

Oma : Basal pitha of a pillar—generally found in the Deccani and Northern series, but not in a temple of Tamilnadu until mediaeval times. Its use is also noted in some texts only.

Pada : Wall part, above the adhishtana or plinth and below the cornice, in southern context.

Padabandha: One of the adhishtana types of early southern temples, differing from the other important form, namely,

pratibandha in the two features, having a vritta kumuda and often not having a prati.

Padma

: Standing for the cyma recta of western usage and usually found in the northern or Deccani usage and in the later southern temples. In the earlier ones its place is assumed by a plain jagati or rectangular high moulding.

Panjara : Meaning a cage and representing a nasika supported by pilastered frame work at the lower levels of the tala and generally located in the recessions of the harantara or salilantara portions of the wall face. Where it is having a regular sikhara miniature, as sometimes in evolved pre-mendieval Deccan usage, it is called sikhara panjara. Where it has the base of the pilaster a large kumbha and overflowing foliage on the top, as in the mediaeval southern usage, it is called a kumbha panjara, and so on.

Parvaradevata : A subsidiary deity, which is subordinate to and attendant upon the main deity or mulabhera of a temple, in a given sectarian context.

Pattika : Heavy oblong-sectioned topmost moulding of the adhishtana in the southern temples, the other parts being kantha, kumuda, padma or jagati and upana. It projects over the kantha. In Tamil texts called 'agrapattiyal'.

Phalakalinga : A form mentioned in the text suggesting a linga made out of a rectangular or flattish block or nodule of rock. Some of them are early. We have interesting specimens

of this kind, though slightly later, at Gudimallam, where, however, it is relieved with figure carvings.

Pindi or Griha pindi : The coping slab, single usually, that seals the superstructure below the griva level; also stands for the wall immediately surrounding the main deity in the cella.

Pindika : This is essentially the support or platform or pedestal, upon which either the linga or the image is placed. In the former case, it could be called a pitha where it rises fairly high; and where it is kept very low almost close to the floor and often in a single slab, it may be called pindika.

Pishtika : Stands for jagati of the northern usage and upapitha of the southern usage and is employed in Kalinga architecture.

Praggriva : Represents an incipient mukamandapa or antarala terminating the temple unit, the only other part being the cella. Not used in the south.

Prakara : The wall erected around the main temple unit, leaving open space around for perambulation of the deity as well as the devotee. It is intended as a measure of protection as mentioned in the texts and employed mainly in the south.

Pramala : This signifies the provision architecturally made for discharge of a abhisheka water from within the garbhagriha to the prakara both for drainage as well as for ritual utilization by the devotees. The earliest temples in the south upto the time of the early Cholas

generally do not have the pranala projections. In these instances it is just a water channel (where found) essentially cut on the topmost member of the adhisthana. In the Deccan however, there is a mixed usage of pranalas as well as plain slab-cut water channels or nalas, running at the level of the inner sandhara prasada and provided with a reception opening within the cella. The pranalas according to texts should be cut in the form of simha-vaktra (iron face) and should be ridden over the nandi or ganas. The terminal is either in the form of a makara or a vyala or an elephant trunk in the evolved cases. The pranala is essentially different from varimarga or ambuumarga.

Prasada : A term generally employed to signify palace in civic architecture in early times, but coming to mean temples

subsequently, of the northern type more commonly as a Nagara

Prasada. the southern usage prefers the word vimana although

Prasada is used.

Prastara : Entablature, namely, the parts above the pada or wall part and below the griva or the neck part in the southern context.

For equivalent terms in other regions see under section IV (a) (i).

Prati

: The topmost course, cut or placed on the pattika or kapota, as the case may be of the adhisthana; it signifies the level of the garbhagriha floor and is a basic level for compulation of elevational portions. It is from this word that the Tamil word padi for step is derived.

Pratibhandha : An adhishtana type of the southern temples generally having a tripatta kumuda and a bold prati; usually older in provenance than the padambandha type.

Pushpaka

: Of the same class as Vairaja, Kailasa, and Manika. It represents a rectangular form.

Rajasenaka : A relieved figure carving shown on a band immediately resting below the vedika of the northern usage; it shows animated scenes of royal army etc.

Ratha

: Graduated projections of a temple plan in the northern usage, where it could be triratha, pancharatha or saptaratha according to the evolution of the style. Each of the projections in such cases is also called rathaka.

Ruchaka : Square form as applied to pillar cross-section. Essentially employed in northern texts. The other forms of pillar sections are svastika (octagonal), vritta (circular), Bhadra (with pratirathas), Vardhamana or pancharatha, shadasraka, (hexagonal). It is interesting to note that these cover the Nagara, Dravida and Vesara forms also (respectively of square, octagonal or hexagonal and circular).

Sabhamandapa : Sometimes called the ranga mandapa. It is the most ornate outer vestibule of a northern temple, open on one, two or three sides and provided with a torana on the axial outer end; corresponds to the mahamandapa of the southern temple usually separate from the main unit; divided into nine compartments on plan by the pillar series and thus to be called a navaranga mandapa.

Sahasralinga : Evolved early mediaeval linga from wherein, tier after tier miniature lingas as picked out on the curved surface of the lingashaft. In the north or western India it goes by the name of Hazara linga.

Saktidhvaja : This signifies the upper part of the nasika face or front of a sukanasa; contains pennants and a simhalata or simha or vyala crest.

Sala : Similar in import and usage to kuta and is found in multi-storied shrines along with the kuta and alternately. It always occurs in the middle section in such cases, and never on the corners for the obvious reason of its being rectangular in plan.

Salilantara: Also known as Jalantara (northern term), it largely stands for the harantara recess of the southern usage. Its purpose is for the drainage of water from the superstructure roof through nalas, kept above the cornice in this recess, making them unobtrusive.

Samatala : A vitana type of a northern temple mandapa of almost level horizontal ceiling design.

Sandhara : A shrine which has a closed perambulatory circuit between the inner garbhagriha wall and the surrounding exterior wall. Essentially a feature associated with northern temples but rarely and not regularly found in the southern types.

Sardulas : These are the mythical leogriphs combining a lion and the gryphon and employed as an embellishment not only in the salilantara recesses of the temple wall, but

also on the roofs of the sambhamandapa and mahanasika, shown with one of their fore-paws raised.

Sikhara : In the 'southern' style denotes only the topmost major component of the temple elevation, above the griva or neck and below the stupi. In the 'northern' usage, it stands for those whose the superstructure of above the cornice level is.

Sringa : Miniature sikhara units placed all around the main superstructure at the lowest level, the corresponding upper units of similar character are called Urahsringas.

Stupi : The topmost ritual part of a temple elevation. It includes generally the kalasa and the finial proper.

Sukanasa : Also called Mahanasika. This shows the integral projection of the basal part of the superstructure forming the roof of the antarala (or ardhamandapa). It is of two varieties, depending upon whether the structure is a Nagara Prasad or a southern vimana. In the former, it is in the form of the mammoth trefoil nasika complete with the mukhapatti saktidhvaja and simahalalata. In the southern, it takes essentially the form of a front-on sala, reared upon a pada. The sukanasas are practically unknown in the temples south of the Andhradesa, but are a diagnostic feature of the Chalukyan genre.

Svayambhulinga : This signifies the natural form which have taken the shape of lingas and have been found fit for consecration and erection of temples in situ over them. Svayambhulinga, thus, is never planted.

Tala

: Storey and generally involving a plinth, a pada, a prastara, a griva, over which in a series occurs a sikhara, as in the southern style.

Tarangabodhika : Wavy corbel with or without a median band.
The caves

could themselves be in simple series or in paired volute forms or with the corner rolls in involute type, or in double roll one above the other, as in the chalukyan monuments.

Torana : This is an ornamental device used either in a free-standing manner or in relief. In the former mode, it is located in front of the mukhamandapa, at the very entrance into the temple unit, and in the latter mode it is to be found in niche shrines on the exterior walls. The free-standing citra torana could be very elaborate, as in Gujarat where it is provided with two massive full scale pillars surmounted by double architrave beams with makara terminals and bearing a makara torana on the upper architrave. Without the architraves and forming a continuous curved arch over the pillars, it is found in Kalingadesa as at Bhubanesvar (Muktesvar). In the form of relieved outer frame work of niche shrines, it consists of two broad types, the stambha- torana and the makaratorana. The latter would itself be either a patra-torana almost entirely or makara-torana. Engaged toranas are also utilized as part of the pillar frame work of the Sabha-mandapa in northern temples. In such cases they rise from the upper part of the pillar in the form of engrailed arches and are made to bear

partially the weight of the cross-beams and serve essentially the purpose of brackets.

Trivishtapa : Of the same group as Vairaja, Kailasa etc. It represents an octagonal form.

Upana

: The lowest and plain moulding of the adhishtana forming a basal preparation of the temple plinth.

Upapitha : The basal additional and optional functional part of the plinth below the adhishtana proper in a southern temple, often consists of a simple macha bandha; generally employed only in evolved temples or in special contexts, where the shrine does not have sufficient elevated position.

Urahsringa : Miniature semi-towers which are applied to the main

structure both in the bhadra part as well as on the ratha and are themselves receding backwards as they go up, and encase the mulamanjari—a typical character of the Central Indian Chandela and the Lata (Gujarat) temples of early mediaeval times.

Utsavabhera : The subsidiary to the image in the sanctum, and the main ritual image subjected to movement and abhisheka during festivals, and which is usually made of bronze and prevalent mainly in South India. It is placed either in front of the mulabhera in the sanctum, or in the mahamandapa or a portable mancha or table.

Uttaranga : The mouldings and architectural parts above the utara of the main door frame of the garbhagriha. They usually carry miniatures of temple vimanas or prasadas, and in the latter northern usage have, in

addition, the Saptamatras and Navagrahas, as in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Vairaja : A primary form, one among the five, representing a square, and mentioned in early texts like Visnudharmottara.

Valabhi : This is the zone located under the cornice known as the kapota. It is essentially an overriding course connecting the utara with the prastara and tying the cornice (Kapota) as a cantilever. It is usually decorated wither with a row of bhutas or ganas in which case it is called a bhutavari; or it is embellished with hamsa or geese. Usually in evolved contexts the valabhi is either having a simple padamatala motif or is left plain with mild curvature. Rarely, it is also of the bevel type. Etymologically, the valabhi would represent turret roof and it is probably in this context that this term is employed in the northern texts like Visnudharmottara.

Varimarga: This is a channel provided partially within the garbhagriha and projecting into the thickness of the wall meeting the pranala for the discharge of abhisheka water. Early temples show essentially a varimarga, but no specific pranala. By reference to a ban on the cutting of the top moulding of adhishthana for a varimarga, the texts imply their provenance earlier. Early Pallava temples have, one and all of them, only varimargas cut on the plinth top. In the southern tradition during the circumambulation of the cella either in sandhara types or in open prakara type a

varimarga is crossed to reach the front of the temple. In the evolved northern tradition, however the varimarga particularly in siva shrines is not to be crossed, but the devotee is to retrace his step backwards to the nandi mandapa. Usages as well as textual references uphold this.

Vedi

: Represents a parapetting mainly divided into a series of pilasters and intended to provide an outer walling over the plinth. In the north, it additionally serves the purpose of having a kakshasana and a chatushki borne over dwarf pillars forming open balconies in the sabhamandapa of the temples.

Vesara

: Notwithstanding the differences about its suggested connotation and its covering the circular cross-section, also the term probably stands for apsidal structure of *gajaprishtakriti* in elevation and having a chaitya pent-house front for its super structure, the area of its largest and prime incidence is the zone between Narmada and the Krishna rivers.

Vikalpa : See *Cchanda*.

Vimana : The full minimal shrine unit, covering from plinth to the spire (*upanadi stupita paryantam*). The term is used mainly to refer to a Dravida or southern temple type, as different from the word *Prasada*, which is used in the 'northern' context. (See under *Prasada*). It is used only in religious and never in a secular context.

Vimanadevatas : Figures of divinities placed in *koshthas* on the cardinal points and sometimes on the *vidiks* also on the

superstructure of the vimana at successive talas. The text prescribe a specific vyaha for such vimana devatas, appurtenant to Saiva or Vaishnava usage.

Vinyasasutra : An axial thread line indicated the norm of the plinth

lay-out, the nature of the projections and recessions of the madhyasala, karnakutas and the harantaras at plinth level. the vinyasasutra line is generally dead straight in most of the southern temples, while in northern temples the projection of the central (Bhadra) part beyond the lateral parts in various ratha off-sets results in ratha-from becoming the norm :

Vitana

: Literally a ceiling, either with free-standing pillars and canopy of part of the main structure or mandapa itself.

Vitanas : They are generally severely plain in southern temples. They are found with a navagraha grid and a central panel of god-head, in the Deccan, as in Chalukyan temples. But in the north, particularly in Gujarat, they are provided with infinite variations of patterns and are divisible into same-tala and nabhichchanda types. These in turn have themselves many varieties of the kshipta typ-e or kshipto-kshipta type, employing gajatalu or cusped teeth or moulds and pendentives in the centre.

Vyalavari : Literally the gryphon course; it is a conventional structural blocking-course or rafters running both longitudinally and transversely and forming a framework, upon which the pada of each tala including its cornice is sustained. Usually in early specimens, it

is embellished by showing the projecting rafter ends as vyalamukhas only or as vyalas in lateral full aspects, the corresponding cross rafters which tie them being shown as having makara terminals. The vyalavari is usually but not always found below the topmost member (pattika or kapota) of the adhish than and correspondingly in the subsequent tales as the upper member of the prastara below the vedi and griva of the hara. In evolved architectural stages, the vyalavari tends to follow strictly the original wood techniques, and displays only plain rafter ends and terminals.

Yoni : Generally taken as meaning Avudayar (Tamil) or the pindika or the pitha in mediaeval usage, in relation to the word linga, particularly when such a pitha is circular and with a water chute projection on the northern side. But its originally meaning in the Sipa texts is that of a specific ritual orientation of the main image and its platform to be fixed according to Ayadi shadvarga formula, yoni itself being one of the shadvargas, the others being aya, vyaya, tithi, etc.



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