BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

The places connected with the four principal events of Buddha's life, viz. his birth, enlightenment, first preaching and decease, which took place respectively at Lumbini, Bodh-Gaya, Sarnath and Kasia, were looked upon with greatest sanctity. To these were added four other places also intimately associated with his life, viz. Sravasti, Sankasya, Rajagriha and Vaishali, which together with the first four were regarded as the eight holy places (astamahatmyamaha), celebrated alike in Buddhist lore as well as art. At Sravasti and Sankasya (modern Sanka, District Farrukhabad) Buddha is believed to have performed great feats of miracles. At Rajagriha the Master tamed the mad elephant which had been let loose on him by his cousin Devadatta. Vaishali witnessed the memorable event of the offer of honey to the Master by the monkeys. There were several other places in the present States of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, such as Nalanda and Kaushambi which were also hallowed by Buddha's visits during his ministry extending over nearly half a century. It is but natural that those places should be adorned by devout Buddhists with shrines, stupas and monasteries. Further, according to tradition, king Asoka (273-232 B.C.) opened the eight of the ten original stupas enshrining the body relics of the Master and distributed them into eighty-four thousand stupas, which he is said to have erected throughout the length and breadth of his vast empire. This explains why sites like Sanchi and Taxila (Pakistan) have such fine Buddhist monuments, even though they were not visited by Buddha.

The earliest Buddhist monuments in India are attributable to Asoka (273-232 B.C.) who exerted his energies and resources of his empire to the propagation of Buddhism. He is credited with the authorship of three principal types of monuments, viz., (1) pillars, (2) stupas, and (3) rock-cut caves, of which the first two have Buddhist associations. Asoka set up at least thirty pillars including ten inscribed with his edicts on sites which are scattered in Districts Champaran and Muniaharpur of north Bihar, in the Nepal Tarai, at Sarnath near Varanasi and Kaushambi near Allahabad, in the Meerut and Amala Districts and at Sanchi in central India. Made of Chunar sandstone and bearing a highly lustreous polish, the pillars are tapering monolithic shafts, between 10 and 15 m. high, with an ornamental capital, surmounted by powerful animal-sculpture of symbolic significance. Distinguished by dignity, exquisite finish and monumental quality, these free-standing columns probably formed part of larger architectural schemes on sites like Sanchi and Sarnath. The best-preserved pillar is that at Lurit-Nandgargh (District Champaran), which is complete with the Asokan edicts and a capital crowned by a stately figure of lion.

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1. STUPA—ARCHITECTURE

The stupa originated as a piled-up burial-tumulus and constituted the most characteristic monument of Buddhist religion, although stupas of other faiths are not unknown. Symbolizing the deccase (parinirvana) of Buddha, the stupa came to be looked upon as an object of Buddhist cult-worship by the time of Asoka, who, as stated above, is believed to have erected an enormous number of stupas over Buddha’s relics which had originally been enshrined in eight or ten monasteries. Stupas were of three types and were built either to exhibit the body-relics (stūrika) or the personal effects (parīthakya) of Buddha and Buddhist saints or to commemorate spots and events of religious significance (adaksha).

The stupa was a solid structural dome (caña), usually raised on one or more terraces and surrounded by a raised pavilion (harmika) from which rose the shaft of the crowning umbrella (echatra). The stupa had one or more circumambulatory passages (praṇadakshina-pathe) which were usually enclosed by railing (relka). The earlier stupas were hemispherical in shape with a low base, while the later ones assumed an increasingly cylindrical form with a well-developed drum. In the later examples, which tended to be more ornate, the base-terraces and the umbrellas were multiplied.

The only brick stupa of a probable pre-Asokan date is that at Piprahwa in Ballia District of Uttar Pradesh, which yielded among its relics a vase, inscribed in characters believed to be pre-Asokan, and a figure in gold relief, representing the mother-goddess in a frontal pose. The stupa, built of large bricks, has a diameter of 116 ft. and an exant height of 21 ft., indicating a low ratio of height to diameter, which is a sign of antiquity. According to the inscription on the relic-casket, the relics found in the stupa pertained to Lord Buddha himself.

Lauriya (District Champaran) contains, besides as inscribed Asokan pillar, fifteen stupa-mounds. Four of them were excavated in 1904-05 and as two of them yielded a deposit of burnt bones with charcoal and a gold leaf with a mother-goddess figure (akin to the one from Piprahwa), they were regarded by the excavator to be Vedic burial tumuli. As a result of their re-examination in 1937-39 they were definitely recognized to be stupas of mud or mud-bricks with baked-brick re-entries (in two cases with actual brick-lining) and were regarded as roughly contemporary with the Piprahwa stupa on account of the analogous find of the mother-goddess figure on the gold leaf.

Nandangarh, about 2 km. from the Asokan pillar, represents a fortified habitation-site. At one end of the site was excavated a large brick-stupa reared up on multiple polygonal terraces with numerous
re-entrant angles. This edifice, of the early centuries A.D., is the earliest example of a form of terraced stupa which culminated in the celebrated monuments of Paharpur in Bangladesh and Borobudur in Java, both dating from circa A.D. 800.

Vaisali (District Muzaffarpur), which was a favourite resort of Buddha and one of the eight holy places of Buddhism has an uninscribed Mauryan pillar, besides extensive remains of ancient shrines, stupas and habitations including a fortified citadel (giri). A stupa was excavated here by Dr. A.S. Altekar in 1927-28. It was seen to have started as a mud stupa of unpretentious size (7 ft. in diameter) in the pre-Mauryan age and was enlarged four times, the first enlargement being executed in next brickwork during the Mauryan times. From the find of a relic-casket within an ancient breach inside the core of the stupa, the excavator surmised that this was the stupa built by the Lichchhavis over their share of the body-relics of Lord Buddha, which, according to tradition, were opened up by Asoka for redistribution of the relic-contents.

Sanchi was a flourishing Buddhist settlement teeming with temples, monasteries and stupas, dating from the Mauryan to the medieval ages. The original nucleus of Stupa 1, Plate I.
attributed to Anoka, was a low brick structure, of almost half the diameter of the present stupa, in the core of which it is now concealed. This structure, built of large bricks, was much damaged when excavated. Presumably it was hemispherical in shape with raised terrace at the base, enclosed by a wooden railing, and a stone umbrella at the summit, of which pieces were recovered from the site. The only other structure which went with this was the Anokan pillar which stands at its original place near the southern gateway.

About a century later, the original brick stupa was enveloped in a stone casing and was enlarged to its present dimensions (diam. over 110 ft., Ht. 54 ft) to form an almost hemispherical dome, truncated near the top. At the same time a lofty terrace, approached by a double flight of steps on the southern side, was built against its base to serve as a processional path. The masonry of the dome and terrace was originally covered with plaster decorated with colour. At the summit of the stupa was built a diminutive squareailing barnika (barnika) with a pedestal, from which rose the shaft of the triple umbrella that crowned the superstructure. Another paved processional path was provided on the ground-level which was enclosed by a plain and massive stone balustrade. This balustrade, consisting of carved uprights, triple cross-bars of a lintorial section and coping with sacrificial pans, was obviously copied from wooden prototype and formed the gift of individual donors.

It was in the latter half of the first century B.C. that the four lavishly-carved gateways were erected, one in each cardinal direction, as magnificent entrances to this imposing monument. These were manifestly conceived in wood and executed in stone, and each of them, over 10 m. high, wooden in design and composed of two square uprights, surmounted by capitals, which in their turn supported three carved architraves with a row of sculptured balusters in between. Each of these was carved on both faces with the Jataka tales, scenes from the life of Buddha and miscellaneous motifs, the entire composition being significantly crowned by the symbol of dharmachakra.

Remains of Mauryan brick stupas of a unique type have been recovered at Bhit (Jajpur District). Of the stupa only bits of foundations have survived together with pieces of a stone umbrella and a bowl, bearing the distinctive Mauryan polish, the former being probably the crowning member of the stupa. The main interest of the monument lies in the enclosing circular shrine (diam. 12 ft.) which was made of lime-plastered panels of brickwork alternating with twenty-six octagonal pillars of wood. The shrine was entered from the east through a small portico, supported on two wooden pillars and was surrounded by a 7 ft. wide circular processional path with an opening on the east, the whole being enclosed at a later date within a rectangular compound

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containing an open space for assembly in front of the entrance. This stupa-shrine resembles on plan and in design a circular chaitya-cave in the Tulaja-lena group at Junnar.

Sarnath, where Buddha first preached the Law, was among the four holiest places of Buddhism and developed as one of the greatest Buddhist establishments of India. Excavation at the site conducted between 1904 and 1928 uncovered numerous temples, stupas and monast-erries, the earliest attributable to the time of Asoka. The nucleus of the brick-built Dharmanjika Stupa at sarnath, comprising a hemispherical dome (diam. 60 ft.) with a low terrace at the base, was probably built by Asoka. A monolithic railing bearing a Mauryan inscription and polish, found near the stupa, presumably formed its base. The inscribed Asokan pillar with the celebrated Lion-capital, which was recovered not far from the stupa, appears to have formed part of its architectural scheme. The original stupa was encased in six successive ones, each larger than the other, which range in date from the second to twelfth century A.D.

Of the Bharhut stupas in Central India the surviving remains mainly consist of portions of the enclosing stone railing, dating from c. 125 B.C., and the eastern gateway, erected fifty years later. These are of the same design as the Sanchi railings and gateways and are richly carved with bas-reliefs. The stupa, of which all traces have now disappeared, was constructed of plastered brickwork. It had a diameter of 67 feet and contained recesses for lamps at the base.

Pauni in District Bhandara (Maharashtra) has recently revealed the remains of two stupas built during the pre-Christian period. One of the stupas, built of bricks with an original diameter of 38.75 m. and enclosed by wooden railings, was enlarged by 5.76 m. in diameter. In a subsequent reconstruction which was effected during the 2nd century B.C. the wooden posts were replaced by piers and an outer railing with cardinally placed gateways in stone. Some of the railing pillars are inscribed and carved with figures of yakhas, yaksis, nagas and symbolic and decorative designs in the typical Sunga style. The other stupa, built partly of baked and partly of mud-bricks and subsequently strengthened by a brick-revetment, measured 41.6 m. in diameter and was a plain structure, though it yielded in the centre a painted reliquary pot containing bone-fragments within a kunda surmounted by a wooden post. The latter stupa is assignable to circa 1st century B.C.-A.D.

Between the first century B.C. and third century A.D. were built numerous stupas along the Krishna in South-east India on sites including Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in Guntur District and Jaggayyapeta, Guntakula, Gudivada and Bhadradri in Krishna District. These
mapas consisted of brick-built hemispherical domes on a low base and were characterized by rectangular projections from the base of the dome at the four cardinal points. The projections supported a row of five ornamental pillars (ayaka-kumbhas). The earlier examples at Sattipura and Gaujivasa were of solid brickwork, while those at Amaraavati and Ghantasala had in the interior radiating brick walls with a rib and spoke, the spaces between the walls being filled with earth-packing, before the outer brick casing was constructed. The mapas were finished with plaster and most of the larger ones were embellished at the base with sculptured marble panels, the example at Amaraavati being particularly noted for them. The superstructure of the mapas is invariably missing, but it can be visualized by contemporary plastic representations on the Amaraavati marble friezes. As regards dimensions, their diameter ranges from 31 feet for the smallest example at Jaggayapeta to upwards of 100 feet for those at Bhatripura, Gaujivasa, Ghantasala and Amaraavati, the last having an approximate diameter of 175 feet for the mapa and 197 feet for the encircling sula with a circumferential height of about 100 feet. The examples at Nagajunakonda, definitely datable to the second-third centuries, range in diameter from 37 to 106 feet.

Ter (District Osmanabad), is yet another site which yielded, during recent excavations, a mapa with ayaka and an aṣṭād charu-ganda, both of brick and of the second century A.D. The brickwork within the core of the mapa is in the form of an eight-spoked wheel. The carved limestone slabs and copings, found at the site, bespeak the influence of the Amaraavati School.

Like plastic art, architecture also had a peculiar regional development in ancient Gandhara, or the north-west region of Pakistan, during the first five centuries of the Christian era. This region is studded with numerous Buddhist sites, like Taxila and Mathikaya in Rawalpindi District; Takht-i-Sialk, Shri Nahl and Jamalgah near Mardan; and Charanda in Peshawar District, which have both mapas and monasteries, the latter built on the plan of an open rectangular court enclosed by cells and corridors on four sides with an annexe comprising assembly-hall, kitchen and refectory. The mapas, which, like the monasteries are executed in stone-cuts and finished with lime or stucco-plaster, are embellished with Buddhist images and designs of Indo-Parthian pillars which are typical of the Gandhara art. The earlier mapas, represented by the example at Mathikaya and the Dharmanagaha-mapa at Taxila, are characterized by a hemispherical shape. But the remaining Gandhara mapas are distinctive tall structures, raised on lofty square terraces, the drum consisting of several diminishing tiers crowned by multiple receding umbrellas. The top of the square platforms, approached by flight of steps, was utilized as a processional path. The mapas are generally surrounded by a large number of votive mapas or small chapels which, like the main
monument, are usually decorated with Buddhist images in niches framed with Indo-Corinthian pilasters. A representative and well-preserved example of the Gandhara-stupa occurs at Tikht-i-bahi, which, though small, has retained all essential architectural features and is situated in the centre of a court enclosed by chapels. An example of exceptional plan and dimensions (diam. 256 feet) was unearthed at Shihjiki-dheri near Peshawar which yielded the celebrated relic-casket of Kani-bka. This monument has a cruciform base with circular tower-like projections at the four corners, though its superstructure is of the normal Gandhara type.

A series of brick stupas were built in Sind (Pakistan) during the fifth-sixth centuries in the characteristic Gandhara style, the only difference being of the building material. These monuments show a liberal use of moulded bricks for mouldings and designs which include the Indo-Corinthian pillar of Gandhara. The most notable of these is the stupa at Mirpurkhas which is embellished with sculptured terracotta panels in the best Gupta style. While sharing the general plan and design with other monuments of the group, it is unique in having three arched cells in the basement, each being treated as a sanctum with an image of Buddha in it.

The recent excavation at Dernomor in District Sabor-Kantha of Gujarat has exposed the remains of large Buddhist establishments, comprising a brick stupa and monastery. The stupa with a cupola, resting on two square platforms, is a massive edifice measuring 26 m. square and is more than 16.4 m. high. The lower platform, which served as a processional path, was divided into eleven bays by twelve Indo-Corinthian pilasters, while the upper platform was adorned by ten similar pilasters on each face. The central bay on each face contained an ornate arch, while each alternate bay appears to be adorned with a Buddha image in terracotta. Thus the facades of the stupas were elaborately embellished with statuary and decorative patterns including pot-and-foliate, scrolls and dentils. This monument resembles the brick stupa at Mirpur-Khas (Pakistan) in design and style and elegance of terracotta sculpture. The discovery from the heart of the stupa of an inscribed relic-casket recording that the 'great stupa' was built near the 'great monastery' during the reign of (the Western Kshatrapa) king Rudrasena (IB) in the year 173 (A.D. 175) probably dates it to the second half of the fourth century. There is evidence to show that the stupa underwent reconstructions later on.

In the North Indian plains the stupas were made principally of bricks and continued to be built till the twelfth century. They occur on Buddhist sites like Sarnath, Sanchi-Mahabodhi (Gonda-Bihar Districts), and Kaśa (Dwarta District). the earlier nuclei of the Dharmarajika at
Sanathkathas, exhibiting a hemispherical form, have already been referred to. Most of the existing monuments date from the Guptas and later times and are of a definitely cylindrical shape with a high base, usually consisting of more terraces than one. The cylindrical type is best represented by the Dhauchal stupa at Sarnath, dating from the Gupta period. It is a massive towering structure (diam. 31 ft., extant ht. 123 ft. excluding foundation) with 166 feet high base made of solid masonry, while its foundation and 56 cylindrical drums are built of bricks. The basement has eight projecting faces with niches for statues. The monument is further adorned with delicately carved arabesque and geometrical patterns. The maor of the post-Gupta period, while retaining the cylindrical form, tended to be even more ornate in design and with their multiple terraces and umbrellas it inspired the maor architecture of Greater India including Tibet, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and the islands of Indonesia.

The development of the stupa in Western India generally followed the lines identical with other parts of the country, as evident from a study of the rock-cut stupas which were but replicas of the stupa form. We shall see in the following section how the earlier type with a low drum and few or no ornaments evolved through successive stages into a lofty drum with an elongated dome, decorated with a wealth of imagery, and finally culminated in a kind of shrine.

2. CAVE ARCHITECTURE

The earliest rock-cut caves in India are attributable to Aoka (293-232 B.C.) and his grandson Devanatha both of whom excavated a group of seven caves on the Nasik and Nagurami hills in Gaya District of Bihar. All of them bear the distinctive Mauryan polish and, with the exception of one cave, are adorned with inscriptions of Aoka and Devanatha, which testify that they were excavated for the recitals of the Ajivika sect. The remarkable examples of the group are the Snhita cave, dedicated in the twelfth year of Aoka's reign, and the Lounah Raki cave, the only excavation with a full inscription. Both are prefatory copies of structures in wood, their plan consisting of a rectangular antechamber leading to a circular cell. The antechamber (16 ft x 10 ft) in the Snhita cave has a door-entrance and is vaulted, while in cell (diam. 18 ft.; ht. 12 ft.) has a hemispherical domed roof with an overhanging cave representing thatched and parallel grooves on the walls imitating wooden planks. The Lounah Raki cave is even more notable and shows an ornamental entrance-porch, paved to represent the gabled entrance of a wooden building with sloping uprights, jointed beams and rafters, an eave-such of laminated planks crowned by a finial and performed lattice-work all features of wooden architecture. Below the lattice-work occurs a beautiful carved frieze depicting elephants worshiping maors.

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The rock-cut architecture, initiated by Asoka in the third century B.C., blossomed from second century B.C. onwards into a powerful and popular architectural mode, as is evidenced by nearly twelve hundred excavations, scattered throughout the country from Kachwad and Rupnath in the west to Orissa in the east and down in the south to the tip of the peninsula. This architecture has three definite phases, the earliest dating from the second century B.C. to second century A.D., the second from the fifth to seventh century and the last from seventh to tenth century. All the phases developed primarily on the Western Ghats, the triple formations of which were particularly suited for excavations, while they occur only secondarily in other parts of the country. The greatest centres of excavations in western India are Bhaja, Roha, Jumur and Karla in Poona District; Elephanta and Kanheri near Bombay; Nasik; and Pataliota, Aurangabad, Ajanta and Elora in Aurangabad District. Ajanta has twenty-nine Buddhist excavations ranging in date from second century B.C. to seventh century A.D., while Elora has as many as thirty-four excavations, dating from fifth to eighth century, of which the earlier are Buddhist followed by Brahmanical and Jaina caves in the chronological order.

**EARLY BUDDHIST CHAITYA-HALLS OF WESTERN INDIA (6700 B.C. A.D. 1007)**

The first phase of excavations in western India was exclusively devoted to the earlier form of Buddhism which worshipped Buddha in a symbolic form. The excavations took the shape of (1) chaitya-hall and (2) monastery and copied in rock the structural forms practised in less permanent material like wood. The chaitya-hall is more important of the two constructions and consists of vaulted congregation-hall with an apsidal and containing a stupa (also cut out of the living rock), the hall being longitudinally divided by a double row of colonnades into a central nave with two side-aisles. In its elementary form this plan is directly derived from the Sudama cave at Barabar by eliminating the barrier between the antechamber and the cell of the latter and providing a circumambulatory passage round its circular cell which is substituted by a stupa. These chaitya-halls were copies of timber structures is evident not only from the servile adaption in rock of many designs and details peculiar to wood-architecture, but from the actual presence in many cases of woodwork in the roof and the entrance arch, etc.

The most attractive and carefully designed part is the facade which consists of a screen with a doorway or doorway below and a prominent arch-window above, through which light is admitted into the hall. The facade is relieved with designs of arcade and railing and occasional sculpture and in some cases has a front portico or vestibule, usually of timber, attached to it.
The more important chaitya-halls occur at Bhaja in Poona District, Kondane in Kolaba District; Pissalkhora and Ajanta (cave no. 10) in Aurangabad District; Beda in Poona District; Ajanta (cave no. 9) at Nasik (Pandharen); Junnar and Karle in Poona District; and Kadheri on Salsette Island near Bombay. They are mentioned in an approximate chronological order which is largely determined by stylistic development based mainly on the degree of imitation of wooden prototype, the earlier examples being closer to the latter with a liberal use of actual timber. The evolution of the shapes of the window-arch from a simple to elaborate curve, of the pillar from a plain to decorated form, and of the stupa-dome from a hemisphere to a cylinder are other guiding principles.

The earliest chaitya-hall at Bhaja, which dates from roughly 200 B.C., betrays its initial character in many features including a pronounced slope of the pillars, wooden roof-girders, a free use of timber in other parts, and an undeveloped ogee window, closely approximating the form of the Lomah Rishi Cave. The hall measures 35 feet x 36 feet x 20 feet high, each side aisle being 3 1/2 feet wide. The Kondane example, which is a little larger and later than Bhaja, differs from the latter in having the facade-pillars of stone instead of wood. In the Pissalkhora and Ajanta (cave no. 10) chaitya-halls the roof ribs over the side aisles are set of timber but are cut out of rock. The latter is a more ambitious production, measuring 300 feet x 40 feet x 33 feet, and its stupa has a double tier at the base and a slightly elongated dome. The Beda cave shows elaborate facade with pillars and pilasters in the front decorated with bell-capital crowned by spirital human and animal sculptures. Cave no. 9 at Ajanta and the Pandharen at Nasik have no timber attachments to their frontage. The former has the distinction of containing a rectangular hall with flattopped stiles and an elaborately designed facade with a minaret gallery. The latter shows a two-storied ornamental facade characterized by a carved lunette above the doorway and an arcade with repeated stupa motif and with bell-capital pillars flanking the arch-window. The pillars of its interior are almost perpendicular and better proportioned and have a porthole and a square abacus, while its stupa has a tall cylindrical drum. The Mmonda chaitya-hall at Junnar is contemporary with the previous example and shares many of its features including a carved lunette on the facade and the absence of a front portico. There are four other roughly contemporary caves at Junnar of which the chaitya-hall known as the Yula-lesa is remarkable for its circular plan (diam. 23 1/2 feet) with a stupa in a domed aisle of twelve pillars.

The chaitya-hall at Karle is the largest (124 feet x 46 1/2 feet x 45 feet) and most evolved example of its class, showing truly perpendicular pillars and a well-developed screen. It has an ornate two-storied
facade with an enormous sun-window surmounted by structural woodwork in the upper storey and three doorways with the intervening space decorated with fine sculpture of donocouples and indifferene Gupta palm-leaves of Buddha-figures in the lower storey. The sides of the outer porch are sculptured with architectural storeys, the lowest one showing grand elephant figures. In front of the facade stood two free-standing pillars with bell-capital, surmounted by a vivid group of adorning lions, originally supporting a dharma-chakra. But more impressive than these are the pillars dividing the nave from the aisles, which show a portico, octagonal shaft and an elaborate capital, crowned by split statuary, consisting of two kneeling elephants, each bearing a noble couple in front, and caparisoned horses with riders at the back.

The shikha is of the tall cylindrical variety with two tall courses, and with the original wooden umbrella intact. Datable to the close of the first century A.D., this is indeed one of the most magnificent monuments of India.

The chhitya-hall at Katheri is the latest example of the phase dating from c. 150. Architecturally it is an inferior copy of the Karle change, though it maintains the quality of the sculptural decoration below.

LATER BUDDHIST CAVES OF WESTERN INDIA (C. A.D. 500-647)

After a lapse of more than two centuries of inactivity started the second phase of the rock architecture of western India in the fifth century. This phase is characterised by a practical elimination of timber constructions or imitations thereof and by the introduction of the Buddha statue as a dominant feature of the architectural design. Nevertheless, the plan of the excavations, particularly the chhitya-hall, remained essentially identical with that of the previous phase. This is exemplified by chaitya-hills nos. 19 and 24 at Ajanta which are the earliest products of this phase. The former, which is the earlier (c. 490) and finer of the two, has precisely the same plan and dimensions as Ajanta chaitya-hall no. 16. Its facade has only one doorway instead of the usual three, but in front of it is an elegant pillared portico which opens in an attractive entrance-corv with side-chapels. The pillars of the interior have decorated shafts with cushion-capitals and massive bracket which support a broad panelled triformium or frieze running round the nave. Over this triformium rises the vaulted roof, the ribs of which are now hewn out of rock. The brackets and the triformium, like the facade, are richly sculptured with figures of Buddha and attendants in niches or panels. But the focal point of the entire composition is the large canopied figure of Buddha, occurring in a recessed niche on the shikha which is of a very ornate and elongated design with tall finial, consisting of a hemispherical triple umbrellas and a vase, the last touching the roof above.
Chaitra-hall no. 16, which is a little larger and later (c. sixth century), resembles hall no. 10 in the general architectural design. It, however, lacks the grace and dignity of the preceding, as its style is second-rate and encumbered with an excess of sculpture which is particularly evident on the pillar brackets and the trilobes of the interior. The elongated drum of its stupa is richly laced with plastic carvings of which the central one is a seated image of Buddha in an elaborate pilastered niche.

The last chaitra-hall of this phase and the best known of the Buddhist excavations at Ellora is the Visvakarma cave, datable to c. seventh century. Larger (85 feet x 54 feet) than the foregoing Ajanta chaitra-halls, it is not so lavishly sculptured as the latter, though its stupa is more evolved and shows exceptional projecting niche containing a large seated image of Buddha flanked by attendants and flying figures. The entrance to the hall lay through a large open court surrounded by a pillared corridor with a carved frieze above the pillars. Its most distinguishing characteristic, however, is the facade where the great sun-window now seen in Ajanta caves is here replaced by a small circular opening with an ornamental trefoil curvature, comprising the culmination of the original horseshoe openning.

While the rock-cut monasteries of the earlier phase (as exemplified by Ajanta caves nos. 8, 12 and 13) were essentially copies of structural dwellings, consisting of cells surrounding a courtyard, those of the later phase were combined shrines and dwellings and may be briefly noticed here. They are generally single-storied excavations, entered through a verandah, with a large central hall having a cela in the rear. The addition of a shrine-chamber to the monastic plan and the decoration of the mural surface by niches containing images were innovations brought about by the introduction of the Buddha statuary in the architectural scheme. The representative examples of this class are the Ajanta caves (all with the exception of nos. 8, 10 and 11-13), of which nos. 1 and 16 are the finest; they are of the same size and design, each having an outer verandah, 65 feet long; a main hall, 65 feet square, containing an aisle of twenty pillars; together with the usual group of cells and shrine-chamber. The monastic plan was developed still further at Aurangabad and Ellora, the latter site showing some enormous triple-storied monasteries of elaborate design like the Tin-thal and Do-thal, besides simpler ones.

3. Temples and Monasteries

Buddhist art and architecture is largely undistinguishable from the general run of Indian art and architecture in technique, style and form and differs mainly in its iconographical content. Since the same guilds of artists worked for all the religions, there is hardly any difference
in the treatment of Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Jain temples in a particular region at a given period.

The earliest structural Buddhist temple is Temple 17 at Sanchi which is also the earliest known example of the Gupta temple style. It is a plain, flat-roofed structure of cobler stones comprising a plan of a square sanctuary with a shallow pediment resting on four pillars in front. The decoration is confined to the doorway showing a pair of hands of Siva and two tridents and the pillars which are square below and eight and sixteen-sided above with a fluted bell-shaped summation by brackets. Considered as a classic example of lucid dictation, perfect articulation and restrained decoration, this temple lays the logical foundation of temple architecture in north India, which developed in due course a nobler form over its basic form.

Marking the holy spot of the enlightenment of the master, Bodh-Gaya is looked upon with greatest veneration and became a thinking Buddhist centre. It housed with numerous monasteries, stupas and monasteries. According to tradition a large number of relics and memorials were erected at the site to commemorate the incidents before and after enlightenment but only few can now be traced. Of the earliest shrine, traditionally attributed to Asoka, only the remains of the sandstone shrine with the characteristic Mauryan pillars and decorative design has survived and is seen beneath the holy Mahabodhi Tree. To the Sunga period belongs a portion of the existing stupa now covered with later relics, typical of the age. The remaining portion of the existing remains to the Gupta period. The main brick-built shrine known the Mahabodhi temple Plate II.
MAHABODHI TEMPLE, JODHIGAVA PLATE II

which appears to have been originally erected in circa second century A.D., is ennobled with heavy innovations, the two octagonal being an arbitrary addition of circa fourteenth century. Its central
tower is a 170 ft. high pancha-ratha sthāna of a straight-edged pyramidal design demarcated into 7 storvys by bhumi-amalaka and embellished with bold central windows and niches framed by pilasters. Its appearance substantially agrees with the following description left by the Chinese pilgrim Hsuen Tsang:—

"To the east of the Bodhi Tree was a temple (ching-te), above 160 feet high, and with a front breadth at the base of above twenty paces. This temple was made of bricks and coated with lime; it had tiers of niches with gold images; its four walls were adorned with exquisitely carved images of pearl-string and gems; on the roof was a gilt copper amalaka; connected with the east side of the temple were three holy halls one behind another; the woodwork of these halls was adorned with gold and silver carvings and studded with precious stones of various colours, and an open passage through them communicated with the inner chamber. On the left-hand side of the outside door of these halls was an image of Kao-te-cho Pusa, and on the right one of Tsush (Maitreya) Pusa, each made of silver and above ten feet high." The temple is built in two stages, the first stage being a terrace, 50 ft. square and 70 ft. high which encompasses the lower cells (now the main sanctum) with its porch and two flanking stair-ways leading to the terrace and the upper cells. Both the tower and the upper cells are vaulted. The great tower described above constitutes the second or the upper stage and rises immediately over the upper cells as a prominent landmark.

According to literary tradition, Nalanda, 10 kilometres north of Rajgir and a suburb of the ancient city, was visited by Lord Buddha, Asoka is said to have worshipped at the shrine of Sariputra, Buddha’s disciple, and erected a temple. But the excavations which were conducted here from 1916 onwards have not revealed any post-Gupta remains. By the time of Harsha (A.D. 606-47) Nalanda had become the principal centre of Mahayana learning and a famed university-town with numerous shrines and monasteries which attracted scholars from far and near. The Chinese pilgrim Hsuen Tsang and I-tsing studied at Nalanda and have left accounts of the settlement and its life.

Nalanda had a planned lay-out with an almost symmetrical row of monasteries facing a row of temples, with wide spaces in between. The temples were solid rectangular structures of two tiers, the sanctum being placed on the upper tier which was approached by a grand flight of steps. The facades of both the tiers were plastered and embellished with elegant pilasters and niches containing images. Temple 3 was more than 31 m. high and consisted of seven successive accumulations of which the two latest belonged to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
and the fifth one, dating from circa sixth century, was a pandyanstone
vihara with sloped earthen towers and façades adorned with
niches containing fine Buddhist stucco images of the late Gupta style.
The two stories were imposing multi-storied rectangular buildings, each
with an open courtyard, enclosed by a covered verandah which led
to cells, arranged on the four sides. The cell facing the entrance
served as a shrine.

Nalanda was also an important centre of Pala sculptures and bronzes
and has also yielded seals and sealings of great historical significance.

The Jetavana monastery at Savatthi, the capital of the Kosala
kingdom, was the scene of many a sermon of Buddha and has been
identified with the twin sites of Sheth-Nalich, located in Gonda and
Bhagalpur Districts of Uttar Pradesh. Excavations conducted between
1907 and 1911 has revealed at Sheth, representing ancient Jetavana,
a number of shrines, monasteries and stupas, the earliest of which, probably
of the Mauryan age, yielded a sandstone basket containing two relics
together with a gold leaf and a silver punch-marked coin. Nalich, representing Savatthi, is a fortified town with ruins of residential houses
as well as brick stupas and shrines, one of which contained more
than three hundred terracotta panels depicting scenes from the
Ramayana in the Gupta style.

Kusmbol (District Akhshar), the reputed capital of the ancient
Vata kingdom, is one of the oldest and richest historical sites of India,
claiming intimate association with Buddha. Following a small excavation
by the Archaeological Survey in 1937-38, the site is being continuously
explored by the Akhshar University since 1959. The excavations have thrown light on the age and character of the massive fortifications
which enclose the ancient ruins and of the connected habitation. In a
corner of the fortified city have been cleared the extensive remains of
the Ghurithana monastery, intimately associated with Lord Buddha,
which show continuous occupation from circa sixth century B.C. to
sixth century A.D. when it was destroyed by the Hunas.

The excavation conducted since 1953 at the Buddhist site on the
Ratnagiri hill in District Cuttack of Orissa has confirmed the testimony
of the late Tibetan traditions that Ratnagiri was a great centre of Mahay
nā and Vajrayāna learning and art.

The main stupa-like temple of 6000, had a base measuring 14.5 m.
square with six elegantly-modelled projections on each side and a circular
drum, the interior of which was inclosed as a wheel with twelve spokes
with the incisions packed with mud filling. Dating from circa eight
century, it was twice enlarged and enclosed by numerous viharas.
of brick and stone, including clusters of miniature monolithic ones. Facing the main stupa were two brick monasteries in a row, with the usual plan, the larger one measuring 34.8 m. square and the smaller one 19 m. square. One of them had a magnificent entrance-porch flanked by pylons and a shrine in the back wall with elaborately-carved stone door-frames, exhibiting a rich wealth of sculptural and decorative ornament. At least this monastery was multi-storied and was in occupation from circa eleventh to thirteenth century. The second one had also a shrine in the back wall.

The site has also yielded an eleventh century temple of Matakula in the typical Orissan style, besides a rich crop of Buddhist images of bronze and stone and terracotta sealings.