

Temple Architecture II

Detailed Course on Ancient Indian History - UGC NET June 2024

IMPERIAL CHOLAS

(c. 850 – 1279 CE)

- i) Sangam Cholas
- ii) Interregnum (Cholas → feudatories)
- iii) Imperial Cholas (875 - 1070 AD)
- iv) Later Cholas (1070 - 1122 AD)
 - ↳ Kulothunga onwards

Introduction

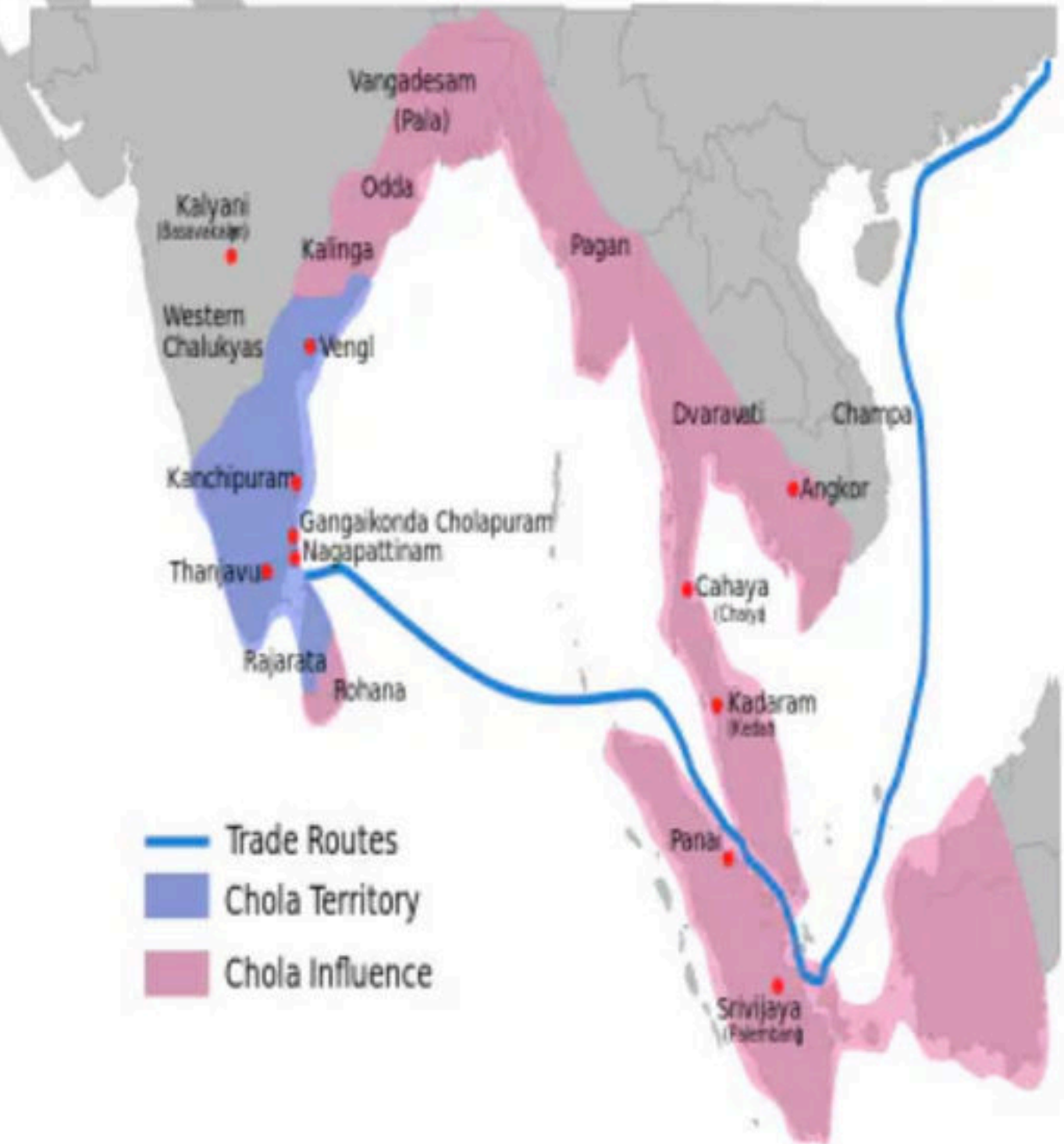
The Cholas belonged to one of the **three mighty dynasties** that ruled the Tamil country in the early Sangam period (300 BCE to 300 CE).

Karikala Chola was the most important ruler of the Early Cholas. The Cholas underwent the **domination of the Kalabhras** during the 3rd to 9th century. The Kalabhras were defeated by the **Pallavas, the Pandyas, the Cholas, and the Cheras**. Under the Pallavas, the **Cholas were reduced to a feudatory**.

It was **Vijayalaya** who revived the power of the Cholas, to make them one of the most powerful states in the deep South.

He built the **capital city of Thanjavur** and laid the foundation of the independent Chola kingdom in 850 CE.

Cholas became prominent in the ninth century and established an empire comprising a significant portion of South India. They also extended their sway in **Sri Lanka and the Malay Peninsula**. Therefore, they are called the **Imperial Cholas**.



Sources of the Chola Dynasty

Archaeological Sources

- The primary sources for the study of Chola history are over **10,000 inscriptions** engraved on copper and stone. The inscriptions primarily **record rulers' and other individuals' endowments and donations to temples.**
- **Land transactions and taxes** (both collections and exemptions) are significant components of their content.
- **Later inscriptions mention social differentiation, giving an account of castes and sub-castes** and thus providing us with information on the social structure.
- **Copper plates**, in addition to stone inscriptions, contain royal orders. They also include information on **genealogy, wars, conquests, administrative divisions, local governance, land rights, and various taxes.**
- **Uttarameruru Inscription** issued by Pranthaka Chola gives details of election to local self-governance bodies.

Sources of the Chola Dynasty

Literary Sources

- Literary sources, such as Tamil literature, flourished during this period.
- The rise in bhakti saints and compilation of hymns reflect sociocultural features of that period.
- Codification of the Saivite and Vaishnavite canons is one of the most important religious works in Tamil.
- During their reign, they wrote the quasi-historical literary works Kalingattupparani and Kulotungancholan Pillai Tamizh.
- This period is represented by Muvarula and Kamba Ramayanam, the great epic. Grammatical works such as Neminatam, Viracholiyam, and Nannul are well-known.
- Other significant literary works written during this period include Pandikkovai and Takkayagapparani.

Vijayalaya Chola (848–871 CE)

- ❑ **Founder of Chola Empire:** He captured Tanjore from Muttaraiyars in 815 CE.
- ❑ He broke away from Pallavas, and built the city of Thanjavur, and established the **Chola kingdom** of the imperial line in 850.
- * ❑ **Sources:** Kanyakumari inscription mentions the renovation of the city of Tanjore by Vijayalaya.

Aditya I (871 – 907 CE)

- ❑ Followed "attack and invasion policy".
- ❑ He conquered the Pallavas, the Pandyas, and the Western Gangas territories.
- ❑ He ended the Pallava kingdom by defeating Aparajita and annexing Tondaimandalam.
- ❑ He maintained cordial relations with Cheras.

Parantaka Chola I (907 – 955 CE)

- ❑ He invaded Madurai in 910CE, and assumed the title of Madurain-konda (Capturer of Madurai).
- ❑ The combined armies of Pandyas and Sinhalese were defeated by Parantakas forces at the Battle of Vellore between 926 and 942 CE.
- ❑ Uthiramerur inscriptions belong to his reign, which gives a detailed account of the village administration under the Chola.

❑ Military conflicts:

- Battle of Vellore: He defeated the Pandya ruler Rajasimha II and the Kassapa V of Ceylon in the Battle of Vellore.
 - Battle of Vallala: He defeated Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna II in Deccan in the Battle of Vallala.
 - Battle of Takkolam: He was defeated by Rashtrakutas in 948, and his eldest son Rajaditya was killed in the battle.
- ❑ He maintained friendly relations with Cheras (Perumals) and married Chera's princess.

Period of rapid ascension (955 - 987 CE)

From the death of Parantaka I to the ascension of Rajaraja I, this period of thirty years was marked by the rapid ascension to the Chola throne.

Rulers after Parantaka I:

- Gandaraditya Chola (955 – 956 AD)

1. Known as "Merkey elundarulina devar" - the king who was pleased to go west.
2. He had written a Tamil hymn on Siva of the Chidambaram Temple.
3. He was a reluctant monarch and focused more on religious work and not on empire building.

- Arinjaya Chola (957- 958 AD)

1. He was also referred to by the names Arikulakesari, Arikesari, or Arindama.
2. There is some debate among a group of historians regarding whether Arinjaya succeeded Gandaraditya or whether Arinjaya ruled on his right.

- Parantaka II Chola (958 – 973 AD)

1. Known by the name Madhurantakan Sundara Chola and Parantaka Chola II.
2. He defeated the Pandyas and Ceylon and then recaptured the Tondaimandalam from Rashtrakutas.

- Uttama Chola (973 – 985 AD): He was the son of Gandaraditya, who ascended the throne after the assassination of Aditya II (son of Parantaka II).

Rajaraja Chola I (985-1014 CE)

- ❑ The peak of Chola power was reached during the reign of Arumolivarman who assumed the title of **Rajaraja** on his accession.
- ❑ **Titles:** Kandalur salai kalamarutta, Jayankonda, Sivapadasekara, **Mummudi-Chola** (the Chola king who wears three crowns – the Chera, Chola, and Pandya), Pandya Kulashani (Thunderbolt to the Race of the Pandyas).
- ❑ During his reign, the texts of the Tamil poets **Appar, Sambandar, and Sundarar** were collected and edited into one compilation called **Thirumurai**.
- ❑ He constructed the famous **Rajarajeshwara temple** or **Brihadeshwara temple** at Tanjore in 1010 CE. *
- ❑ He developed an advanced revenue system wherein the land was surveyed and then revenue was assessed. He was referred to as "**Ulagalanda Perumal**" (the king who measured the earth).
- ❑ **Religion:** He was a devout follower of **Saivism** but tolerant towards other faiths. |

first trade Mission to China

Valanadus

Rajaraja Chola's military expeditions

His military conquests were:

- **Against Cheras:** He defeated the Chera ruler **Bhaskararavivarman** in the naval battle of Kandalursalai in 994 AD.
- **Against Pandyas:** He defeated the Pandya ruler, **Amarabhujanga** and established the Chola authority in the Pandya country.
- **Against Ganga:** He conquered the Gangavadi, Tadigaipadi, and Nolambapadi in the Mysore region.
- **Western Chalukya wars:** He defeated Chalukya ruler Satyasraya and captured the Raichur Doab, Banavasi and other places.
- **The invasion of Sri Lanka:** He annexed northern Sri Lanka from Sri Lankan king Mahinda V. The capital was shifted from Anuradhapura to Polanaruva where a Shiva temple was built 993 AD.
- **War against Telugu Chodas:** He restored the Vengi throne to its rulers **Saktivarman** and **Vimaladitya** by defeating the Telugu Chodas. Rajaraja gave his daughter **Kundavai** in marriage to Vimaladitya.
- **Naval conquests:** Rajaraja's last military achievement was a naval expedition against the Maldiv
Islands which were conquered.

Rajendra Chola I (1012-1044 CE)

The process of Chola territorial expansion continued under Rajaraja's son and successor Rajendra I (1014 A.D).

He also followed **a policy of conquest and annexation** adopted by his father and further raised the power and Prestige of Cholas. To commemorate the occasion Rajendra I assumed the title of **Gangaikondachola** (the Chola conqueror of Ganga).

Titles: Mudikondan, Gangaikondan, Kadaram Kondan and Pandita Cholan.

- **Religion:** He was a devout **follower of Siva**. But he was also tolerant towards the **Vaishnava** and **Buddhist** sects.
- **Matrimonial relations:** He gave his daughter **Ammangadevi** to the Vengi Chalukya prince and further continued the matrimonial alliance initiated by Rajaraja I.
- **Contribution to architecture:** To commemorate this successful north-Indian campaign, Rajendra Chola I:
 - 1) Founded the **city of Gangaikondacholapuram**.
 - 2) Constructed the famous **Rajesvaram temple** in that city.
 - 3) He also excavated a large irrigation tank called **Cholagangam** on the western side of the city.

Rajendra Chola's military expeditions

His military conquests were:

- **Conquest of Sri Lanka:** Rajendra defeated Ceylon king **Mahinda V** and seized **southern Sri Lanka**. Thus the whole of Sri Lanka was made part of the Chola Empire.
- **Against Western Chalukyas:** He defeated **Jayasimha II**, the Western Chalukya king, and the **river Tungabhadra** was recognised as the boundary between the Cholas and Chalukyas.
- **Vengi expedition:** He restored the throne of Vengi to King **Rajaraja Narendra** by defeating **Vijayaditya**.
- **Expedition to North India:** Rajendra defeated **Mahipala I** of Bengal.
- **Naval expedition:**
 - 1) Rajendra's naval expedition to **Kadaram** or **Sri Vijaya** kingdom of **Sangrama Vijayatungavarman**.
 - 2) He assumed the title **Kadaramkondan** after its success.
 - 3) He sent **two diplomatic missions to China** for political as well as commercial purposes.
 - 4) Conquest of Southeast Asia Led to the expansion of Indian culture like Language, sculpture, temple architecture etc. to Southeast Asia.

Rajadhiraja Chola I (1044-1054 CE)

- ❑ He was called **Jayamkonda Chola** (the victorious Chola king), as he fought with his men on the front.
- ❑ **Titles:** Jayamkonda Solan (The Victorious Cholan), Kalyanapuramkonda, Vijaya Rajendra Cholan.
- ❑ He destroyed the **Chalukyan cities such as Kalyani** and planted a Jayastambha at Yadgir. Cholas were known for plunder and they massacred the people of the region they conquered.
- ❑ He was killed on the battlefield while fighting in **the battle of Koppam** against Someshwar – the western Chalukyan king. He earned **the title of Yanai-mel-thunjina Devar** (the king who died on the back of an elephant).

Rajendra Chola II (1054-1063 CE)

- He ascended the throne after the death of Rajadhiraja in the battle of Koppam in 1052.
- **Military achievements:**
 - He defeated the western Chalukyan king **Someshwar** in the **Battle of Kundal-Sangamam** in 1062.
 - He undertook expeditions to the Kalinga Kingdom (Kalinga King **Vira Salamegha**) and Sri Lanka (Vijayabahu I).
- Contribution to architecture:
 - **Ulagalantha Perumal Temple** (Tamilnadu) and **Veetrirundha Perumal Temple** were expanded during his reign
 - Rajendra granted the town of **Ulakkaiyur** gold to build the **Agastheeswar Temple**, which was dedicated to Shiva.

Kulothunga Chola I (1070-1122CE)

- Succession:** He succeeded the Chola throne after the Athirajendra Chola.
- Military achievements:**
 - He united the **Vengi** kingdom with the Chola Empire.
 - He defeated Kalinga king **Anantavarman Chodaganga**.
- Contemporaries:** The classic writers **Kamban** (who wrote Ramayana in Tamil) and **Jayamkondar** who wrote a Tamil Poem (Kalingattuparani) were the scholars in his court.
- Foreign relations:** Kulottunga I sent a large embassy of **72 merchants to China** and maintained cordial relations with the kingdom of **Sri Vijaya**. He maintained diplomatic relations with the rulers of **Burma and Cambodia** in Indo-China. He directly ruled the **Kedah province in Malaysia**.

Later Cholas:

The later rulers like **Kulottunga II**, **Rajaraja II**, and **Kulottunga III** tried to maintain the Chola rule but it gradually suffered a downfall and came to an end in the 13th century. The Cholas were replaced by the Pandyas and the Hoysalas in the south and the later Chalukyas by the Yadavas and the Kakatiyas.

Rajendra Chola III (1246–1279CE)

He was defeated by the Pandya king **Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I** in 1279. With his defeat, Chola rule came to an end.

IMPORTANT BATTLES FOUGHT BY CHOLAS

Battle of Donur

**Battle of
Kandalur Salai**

**Battle of
Koppam**

**Battle of Kudal-
Sangamam**

Battle of Nettur

**Battle of
Takkolam**

**Battle of
Thirupurambiyam**

Battle of Venni

**Battle of
Vijayawada**

Chola Administration



Central Administration

Provincial Administration

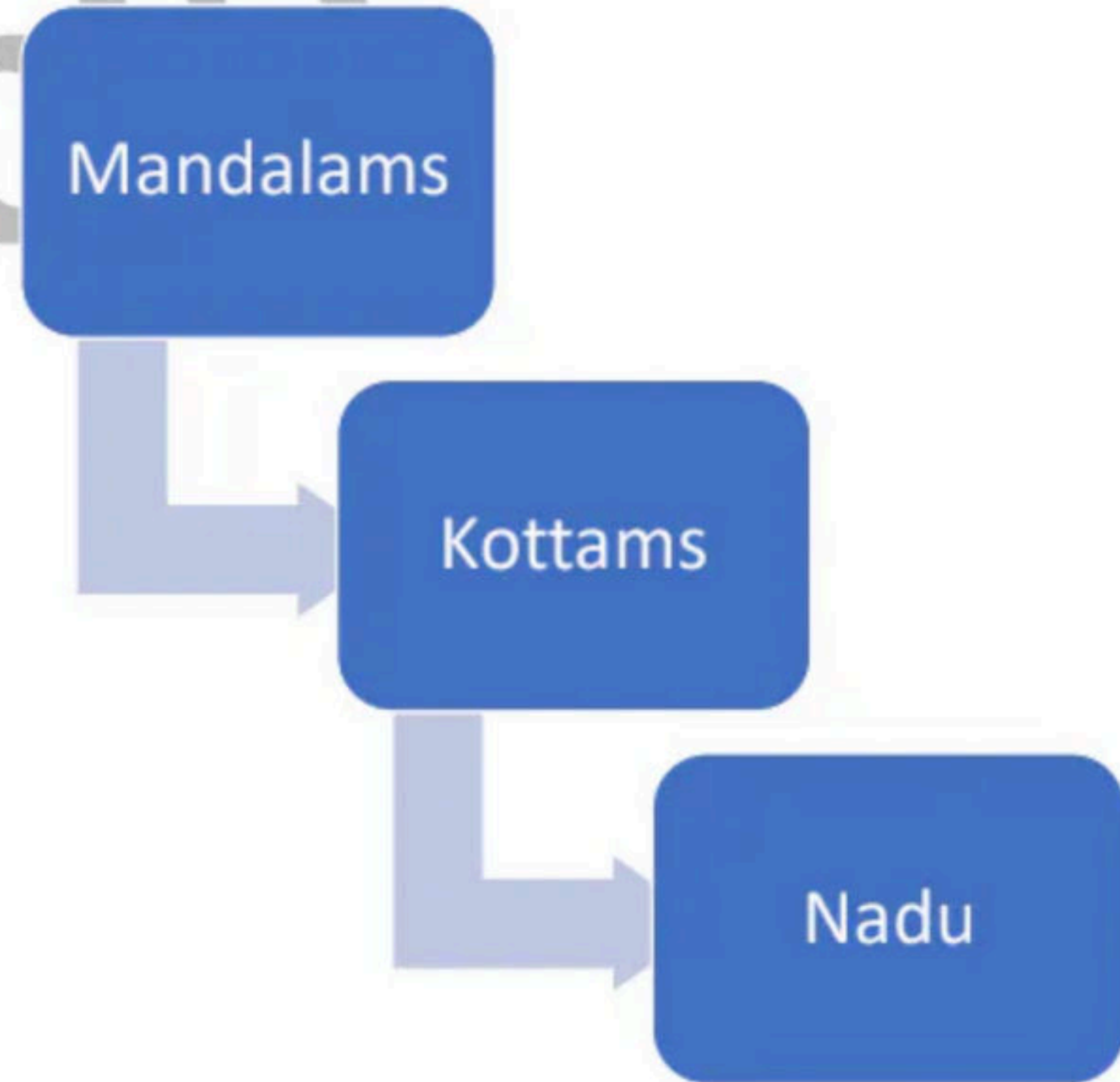
Local Administration

Central Administration

- The administration was headed by the king.
- Chola inscriptions generally refer to the king as **Ko (King), perumal, or Peruman adigal** (the great one). He was also given more grandiose titles signaling paramountcy e.g., **raja-rajadhiraja and ko-konmai-kondan**, both of which mean the king of kings.
- Inscriptions present the king as endowed with an attractive physical appearance, a great warrior and conqueror, a protector of varnashrama dharma, a destroyer of the evils of the Kali age, a generous giver of gifts (especially to Brahmanas), and a great patron of the arts.
- Kings were often **compared with the gods**, sometimes directly, at other times through the use of double entendre. For example, **Rajaraja is referred to as Ulakalanda Perumal**, (the great one who measured the earth). This could apply to the king, who is known to have ordered a great land survey for revenue purposes.
- The **Chola kingship was hereditary in nature**. As per the Chola royal family tradition, the eldest son succeeded the king to the Chola throne. The apparent heir was called **Yuvaraja**.
- The tiger was the royal emblem of the Chola kings.
- The king was assisted in his work by a Council of Ministers (known as Udankuttam), the lower officials were called Siruntaram while higher officials were called Peruntaram. Cholas appointed Brahmins as spiritual preceptors or rajagurus.

Provincial Administration

- ❑ Chola ruler followed the system of feudatories.
- ❑ The Chola empire had been divided into **nine provinces called mandalams**. Each province was headed by a viceroy who received orders from the king. Each **mandalam** was divided into several Kottams or Valanadus (under **periyannattar**), which were further subdivided into Nadu (under **nattar**).
- ❑ In each Nadu, there were several autonomous villages.
- ❑ **Town**: The town was known as **Nagaram**, and it was under the administration of a council called **Nagarattar**.
- ❑ **Naattukanakku and nattuviyavan** were the functionaries for recording the proceedings of the **Nattar**.



Local Administration

The village administration was carried on effectively by variyams who used to be the male members of the society. There were types of variants. For example, **justice was administered by the Niyaya variyam** while **temples were looked after by the Dharma variyan**. The **control of the finance was given to the pon-variyaam**.

- **Sources: Uttamerur inscription** provides details of the formation and functions of village councils.
 - **Ur:** It was a general assembly of the village
 - **Urar:** They were the landholders in the village entrusted with the upkeep of temples and maintenance of the tanks.
 - **Agraharams:** It was the gathering of adult men in Brahmin villages.
- **Village council:** Each village was divided into thirty wards, and each was to nominate its members to the village council.
 - **The qualifications to become a ward member were:** Ownership of at least one-fourth veli of the land, own residence, above thirty years and below seventy years of age, and Knowledge of Vedas.
 - **The Kudavolai system** was the system of nominating the persons for each ward for a year.
 - **Division of wards into six variyams:** samvatsaravariyam, erivariyam, thotta variyam, pancha variyam, pon variyam and puravuvari variyam.
 - **Variyapperumakkal:** They were the committee members who usually met in the temple or under a tree and passed resolutions.

Economy of the Cholas

Agriculture

The economy was mainly agrarian – reclamation of forest land, construction of irrigation tanks, and expansion in the variety of crops led to agricultural prosperity. It was the period of the **expansion of agriculture** that led to the production of food grain surplus.

Valangai: Group of agricultural castes.

Kudi Nikki: The local peasants

Land Revenue

The **Chola government** depended mainly on land revenue as the **main source of income**. 1/6 of the land produced was collected as tax. Besides land revenue, customs, and tolls were the other source of income for the empire. Moreover, taxes on ports, forests and mines contributed to the treasure of the king.

- They undertook extensive land surveys and revenue settlements.
- Cholas did the collection of land tax out of the agrarian surplus for its revenue.
- The tax rates were **fixed** depending on the soil's fertility and the landholder's status.
- **Exemption:** Temples and Brahmins were **exempted** from paying taxes.
- **Various taxes:** Irai, kanikadan, iraikattina-kanikadan and kadami.
 - **Kudimai:** A tax paid by the cultivating tenants to the government and the landlords, the bearers of honorific titles such as udaiyan, araiyan and kilavar.
 - **Opati:** It was levied and collected by the king and local chiefs.
 - **Iraikattina-nellu:** tax paid in kind.

Military Administration of the Cholas

The Cholas maintained a large army consisting of infantry, cavalry, and elephants which were called the three limbs of the army. The Venetian traveler Marco Polo says that all the bodyguards of the king burnt themselves in the funeral pyre of the dead king. The royal troops were called Kaikkolaperumpadai. King's troops were called Velaikkarar. The naval achievements of the Tamils reached their climax under the Cholas.

Military composition:

- Cavalry: **kudirai sevagar**
- Elephant corps: **anaiyatka**
- Bowmen: **villaligal**
- Sword-bearers: **valilar**
- Spearmen: **konduvar**

Other terms related to military administration:

- **Nilaipadai:** Military outposts in the conquered territory.
- **Nayagam:** The captain of a regiment, and later he assumed the title of **padaimudali**.
- **Senapati and dandanayagam:** The commander-in- chief.
- **Kaikkolaperumdai:** Royal troops.
- **Velaikkarar:** A personal troop to defend the king.
- **Kadagams and padaividu:** Army and military cantonments.

Trade

The industrial sector also witnessed a leap in the Chola period e.g, **Kanchipuram** emerged as an important weaving industry center, **Kudamukku** was an important center of betel nut and areca nut cultivation and it was also known for metal works, textiles, and coin minting. The Chola kings also maintained close commercial ties with Southeast Asia and China. **Arabian horses** were imported in large numbers to strengthen the cavalry.

Terms related to traders:

- **Garveras and Gaudas/ Gavundas:** Trading castes.
- **Anjuvannattar:** They were maritime traders comprising West Asians, including Jews, Christians and Muslims, who settled along the port towns of the West coast.
- **Manigramattar:** They were traders in the hinterland and settled in interior towns like Kodumbalur, Uraiyur, Kovilpatti, Piranmalai and others.
- **Ainutruvar, disai-ayirattu-ainutruvar, and valanciyar:** Common banner for Anjuvannattar and Manigramattar after both merged.
- **Maritime trade centers:** Munai-santai (Pudukkottai), Mylapore and Tiruvotriyur (Chennai), Nagapattinam, Vishakapattinam and Krishnapattinam (south Nellore).
- **Peruvazhis:** Trunk roads.
- **Items of export:** Sandalwood, ebony, condiments, precious gems, pepper, oil, paddy, grains and salt.
- **Items of import:** Camphor, copper, tin, mercury, etc.

The caste system was prevalent in the society and the condition of the Paraiyar (untouchables) was miserable. The higher orders like the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges. The Chola inscriptions mention the major divisions among the castes:

1. **Valangai** -mainly agricultural groups.
2. **Idangai** – mainly artisans and trading class.

Brahmanism (Shaivism and Vaishnavism) continued to flourish during the Chola reign. Apart from granting gifts to Brahmanas, gifts were generously given to temples by the royal families. Rich merchants also contributed to the temples. Under the patronage of Chola kings and queens, a large number of temples were built.

Women:

There was no improvement in the position of women.

- The **practice of 'sati'** was prevalent among the royal families.
- The **devadasi system**, or dancing girls attached to temples, emerged during this period.

Religion

- **Ardent followers of Shaivism:** The iconic form of Siva was Lingodhbhava, and the Nataraja idol was the human form.
- **Flourishment of Saivism and Vaishnavism:** Many popular saints called Nayannars and Alvars, who were devotees of Shaivism and Vaishnavism, respectively, flourished during this period.
- **Parantaka I and Uttama Chola (907–970)** made provisions and gifted the lands to promote religion.

Chola Art and Literature

- There was also the growth of literature during the reign of the Cholas. Alvars (devotees of Vishnu) and Nayannars (devotees of Shiva) composed a lot of literature in Tamil and other regional languages between the 6th and 9th centuries. This literature has been collected into eleven volumes and given the name Tirumurais in the early 12th century. They were considered to be the fifth Veda.
- The classic writer Kamban wrote Ramayana in Tamil.
- The famous trinity of Pampa, Ponna, and Ranna were the three prized jewels of Kannada poetry.
- **Periyapuramam or Tiruttondarpuranam** by Sekkilar.
- **Kalladam** by Kalladanar.
- **Nalavenba** was written by Pugalendi.
- **Kesava Swami** composed the Sanskrit work **Nannaranava Samkshevam**.

Village Economy

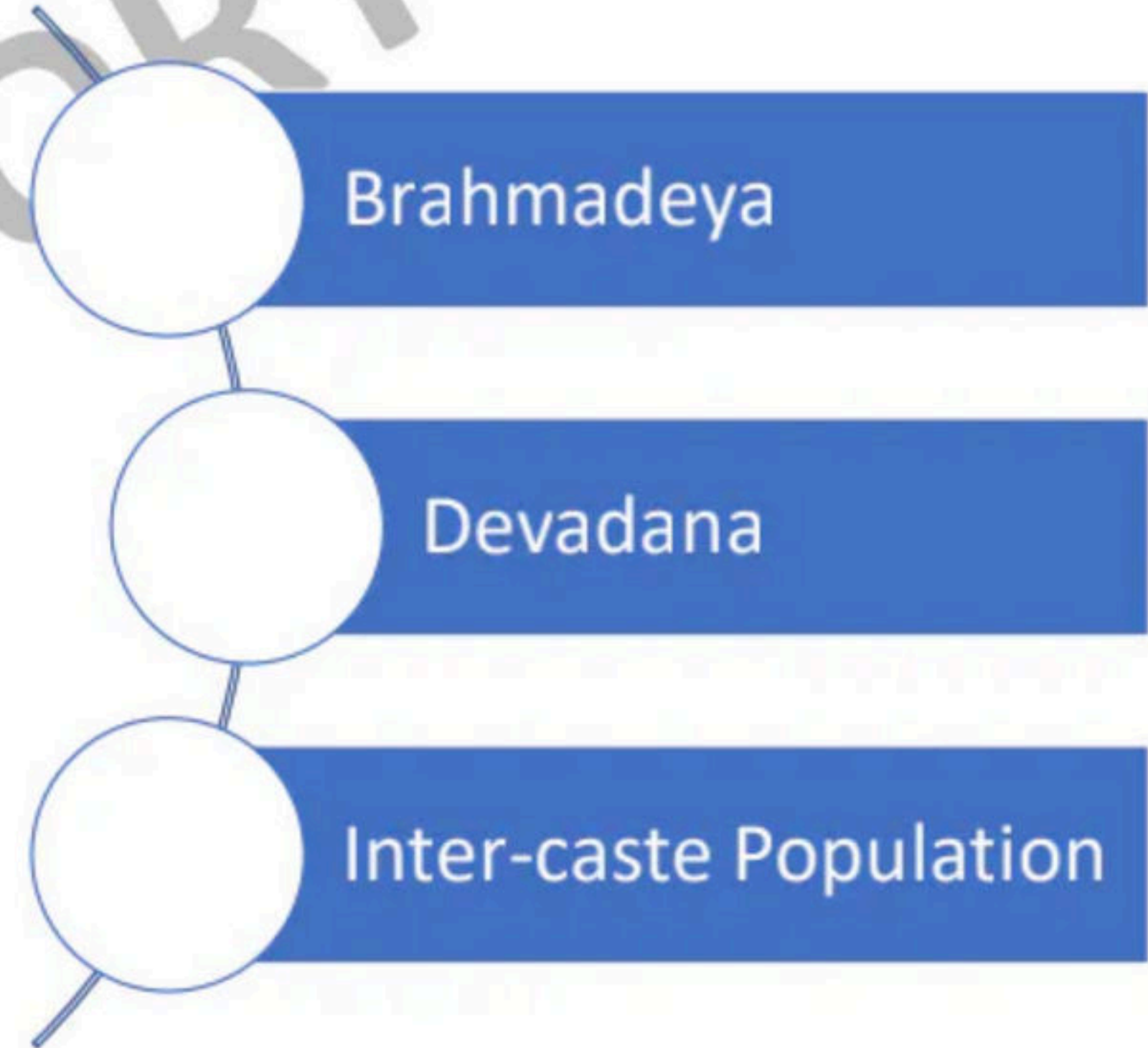
Village Economy

The villages were mainly of three types:

The first type was the **Brahmadeya or Agrahara Villages** which was granted to the Brahmins. They were exempted from tax and were prosperous. The Brahmins were not cultivators they got the land cultivated by original agricultural communities in the region or by settling new ones.

The second type of village was the **Devadana**, which were villages granted to God. The revenue from these villages was donated to a temple. During the Cholas, the devadana type of villages gained popularity as the temples became the centers of life.

The third type consisted of an **inter-caste population** where the land was held by all classes of people and paid taxes to the king in the form of land revenue. It was the most frequent type.



Chola Architecture

- Chola art saw the culmination of **Dravida temple** art resulting in the most sophisticated buildings
- Cholas followed the **architectural style of the Pallavas** deducting essential features of Pallavas such as lion motifs, for tigers, adding greater refinement, etc. and were mostly involved in the construction of temples (Dravidian Style).
- They used material of stone instead of bricks due to its greater durability. Neatly detailed frescos including birds, dancing figurines, and other pictorial stories from Puranas. Some temples have portraits of the Kings and queens themselves.
- The temples had a **Garbhagriha** (Deity room); **Vimana** (Brihadeswara Temple); **Shikhara**(Stone weighing 90 tonne); Mandap. Metal Art(Nataraja at Chidambaram Temple) Lofty Gates.
- **Dvarpalas** at the entrance of the mandap became a unique feature-
- Temples were covered with exquisite well-composed sculptures and frescoes.
- **Ganas** are the most memorable figures that were built during the Chola period.
- **Yazhi** a recurring pattern of the sculpted mythical animals was also a unique feature.
- Examples include **Brihadeswara and Vijayalaya temples**.
- The **presence of a water tank** is a unique feature of Chola architecture.

Nature of Chola State



Centralized State

Segmentary State

Feudal State

Nature of Chola State

The nature of the Chola state has been explained through several models like-the centralized state model, segmentary state model, and feudal state model.

Centralized State

This view was first presented by **K.A. Neelkanth Shastri**.

Under this model, the Centralized state is marked by autonomous assemblies at the local level.

King as a supreme authority, centralized military, centralized revenue system.

Division of the kingdom into politico-administrative units and in descending order, they were Mandalam, Wala Nadu, Nadu/Kurram, and Villages

Within this centralized system, there existed autonomous assemblies at the **local level (Ur, Sabha, Nagaram)**.

Segmentary State

- Segmentary state is a form of political structure of a state, which is opposed to idea of centralised state. It was first developed by an anthropologist **Aidan W. Southall** to describe the political organization of certain section of African society. The concept of segmentary state was first applied to polities in South India of Chola and Vijaynagra by historian Burton Stein.
- Segmentary state lacks well defined territory and are characterized by numerous centers and domains. Each of these states are largely autonomous both administratively and economically.
- B. Stein viewed the as opposed to strong and centralised, Cholas state was based on the concept of sacral kingship, segmentary state, peasant society and peasant state.
- Under the chola system Nadu constituted the segment of kingdom, which has separate chief and had autonomous units. So, the entire system characterized by many state segments.
- Three categories of Nadu: Central, Intermediary and Peripheral. The central Nadus located in Kaveri delta region. It is known as prime centre.
- Sovereignty was exercised through Political i.e actual control and Ritual i.e through inscriptions, land grants and constructing various image of king/temple.

Feudal State

Third state model is **Feudal** which was produced by **R.S. Sharma** and his follower such as **D.N. Jha, B.N.S. Yadav and R.N. Nandi** focusing on production relations in the fief and the decline of trade in medieval period.

According to Sharma, a major cause of feudalism in India was the land grants to Brahmans, religious institutions and officials with the given the rights of ownership with the legal action and freedom from taxation. They encroached on communal lands of villages and slowly reduced these villagers to serfdom. This development was partly caused and further aggravated by a decline of urbanism and trade.

Politically, this development was characterized by a continuous process of fragmentation and decentralization caused by the widespread practice of granting territories to vassals and officials who established themselves as independent potentates. Socially, this period was characterized by a proliferation of castes and the gradual decay of the economic and social status of the Vaishyas and Shudras.

These two Varnas eventually became indistinguishable from each other, while the Kshatriyas and Brahmins became akin to the feudal lords of Europe.

D. C. Sirkar critiques that the Indian Feudalism Model defended its argument that the Brahmins performed the same tasks as the military officials in Europe but only in a different approach. Thus, Brahmins provided legitimisation to their rulers in several ways.

Decline of the Chola State

- The collapse of the Chola Kingdom due to ineffective leadership in the late 12th century has frequently been highlighted in conventional histories.
- As a result of Rajaraja Chola III's and Rajendra Chola III subsequent weakness, the Cholas endured constant conflict.
- Kopperunchinga I, a Kadava chieftain, was one feudatory who even briefly took Rajaraja Chola III captive.
- During this time, the **Hoysalas** played a contentious role in the politics of the Tamil nation.
- They took full advantage of the fact that the Tamil kingdoms were not united, which prevented the Cholas and Pandyas from attaining their full potential.
- However, the Chola Empire left behind a significant legacy. It witnessed magnificent artistic creations, including a particularly elegant bronze sculpture, and **architectural marvels** like the **Thanjavur Temple**.
- **Tamil literature and poetry also had a golden period** during this time.

Temple Architecture

OMIS HISTORY

- The Gupta period marks the beginning of structural temple architecture. As evidenced from the extant monuments, there was experimentation in a number of forms and designs, out of which two significant temple styles evolved, one in the North and the other in the South.
- The following well defined types may be identified:
 - (1) Flat-roofed, square temple with a shallow pillared porch in front (eg. ***Temple No. XVII at Sanchi, Kankali Devi temple at Tigawa and Vishnu and Varaha temples at Eran, Madhya Pradesh***).;
 - (2) Flat-roofed, square temple with a covered ambulatory around the sanctum and preceded by a pillared porch, sometimes with a second storey above (Example : ***Parvati temple at Nachna Kuthara, the Siva temple at Bhumara (both in Madhya Pradesh) and the Lad Khan at Aihole***);
 - (3) Square temple with a low and squat sikhara (tower) above (Example : ***Dasavatara temple at Deogarh (Jhansi district) and the brick temple at Bhitargaon (Kanpur district)***);

- (4) Rectangular temple with an apsidal back and a barrel-vaulted roof above (Example : ***Ter*** ***(Sholapur district) and the Kapotesvara temple at Cezarla (Krishna district)***); and
- (5) Circular temple with shallow rectangular projections at the four cardinal faces (Example : ***Maniyar Matha (shrine of Mani Naga) at Rajgir, Bihar***).
- The second and the third types of Gupta temples, to be called ***vimana*** (storeyed) and ***sikhara types***, represent elaborations of the first in respect of both the ground-plan and elevation.
 - In the following centuries, these two types supposedly underwent further improvements and crystallised to form two distinctive temple styles respectively in the South and the North.

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HISTORY

Bhitargaon Temple

Basic Features of Indian Temples

Garbhagriha (Sanctum Sanctorum)

- It literally means womb-house and is a cave like sanctum.
- In the earliest temples, it was a small cubical structure with a single entrance.
- Later it grew into larger chambers.
- The Garbhagriha is made to house the main icon (main deity) which is itself the focus of much ritual attention.

Mandapa

- It is the entrance to the temple.
- It may be a portico or colonnaded (series of columns placed at regular intervals) hall that incorporate space for a large number of worshippers.
- Some temples have multiple mandapas in different sizes named as Ardhamandapa, Mandapa and Mahamandapa.

Shikhara or Vimana



- They are mountain like spire of a free standing temple.
- Shikhara is found in North Indian temples and Vimana is found in South Indian temples.
- Shikhara has a curving shape while Vimana has a pyramidal like structure.

Vahana

- It is the mount or vehicle of the temple's main deity along with a standard pillar or Dhvaj which is placed axially before the sanctum.

Amalaka

- It is a stone disc like structure crowning the top of the North Indian style shikhara.

Kalasha

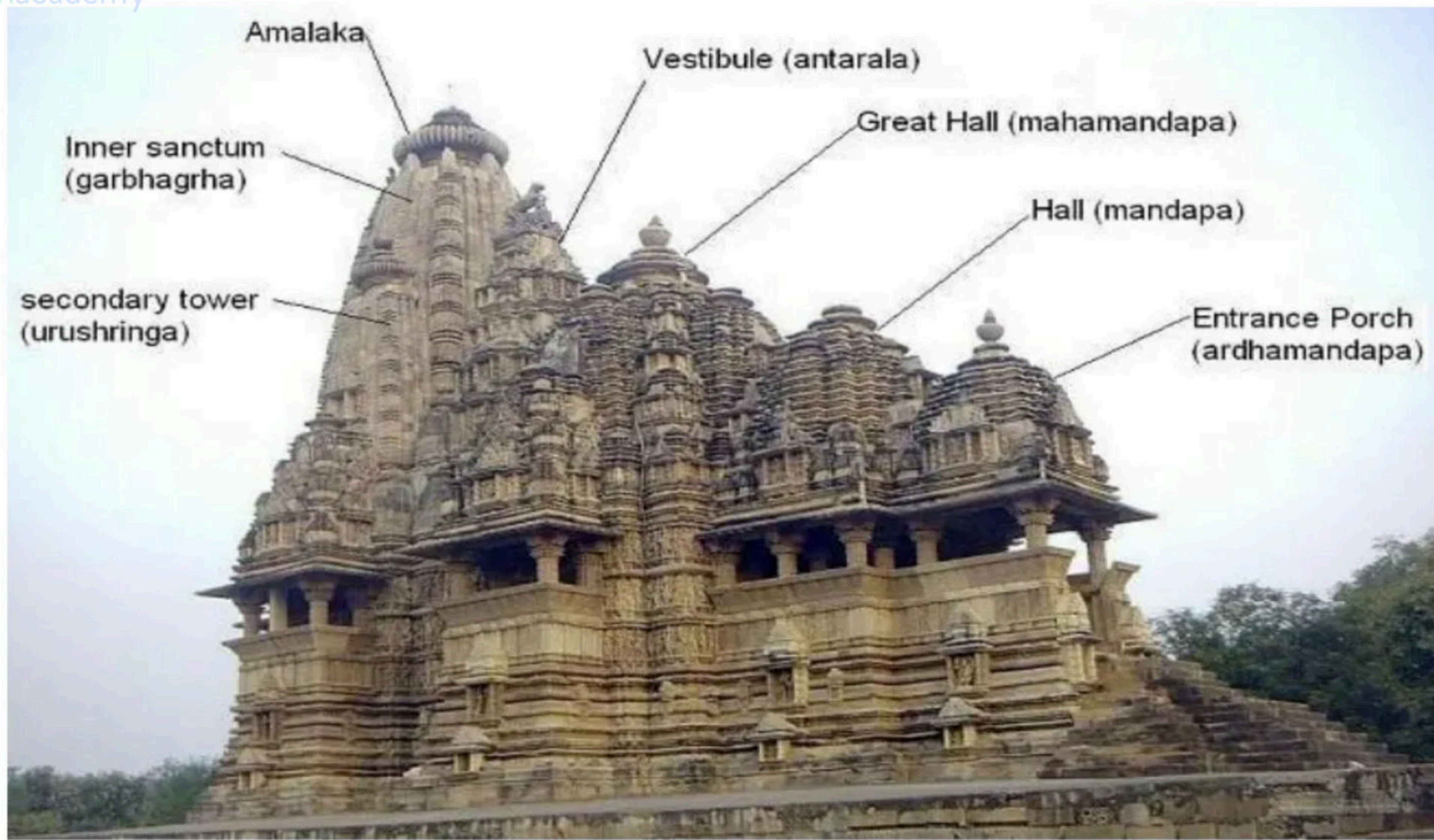
- Wide-mouthed pot or ornamental pot-design decorating the shikhara in North Indian temples.

Antarala (vestibule)

- Antarala is a transition area between the Garbhagriha and the temple's main hall (mandapa).

Jagati

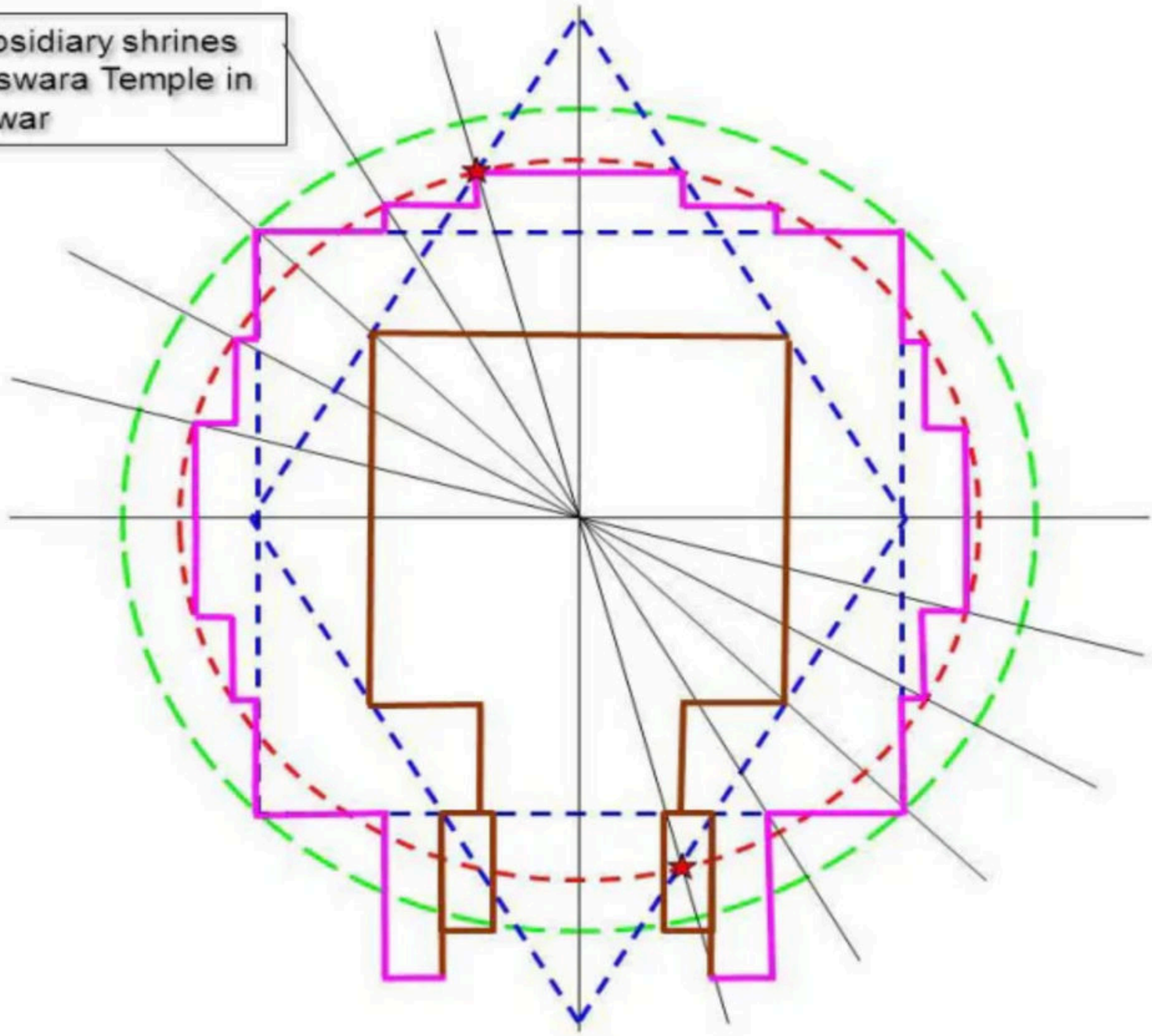
- It is a raised platform for sitting and praying and is common in North Indian temples.

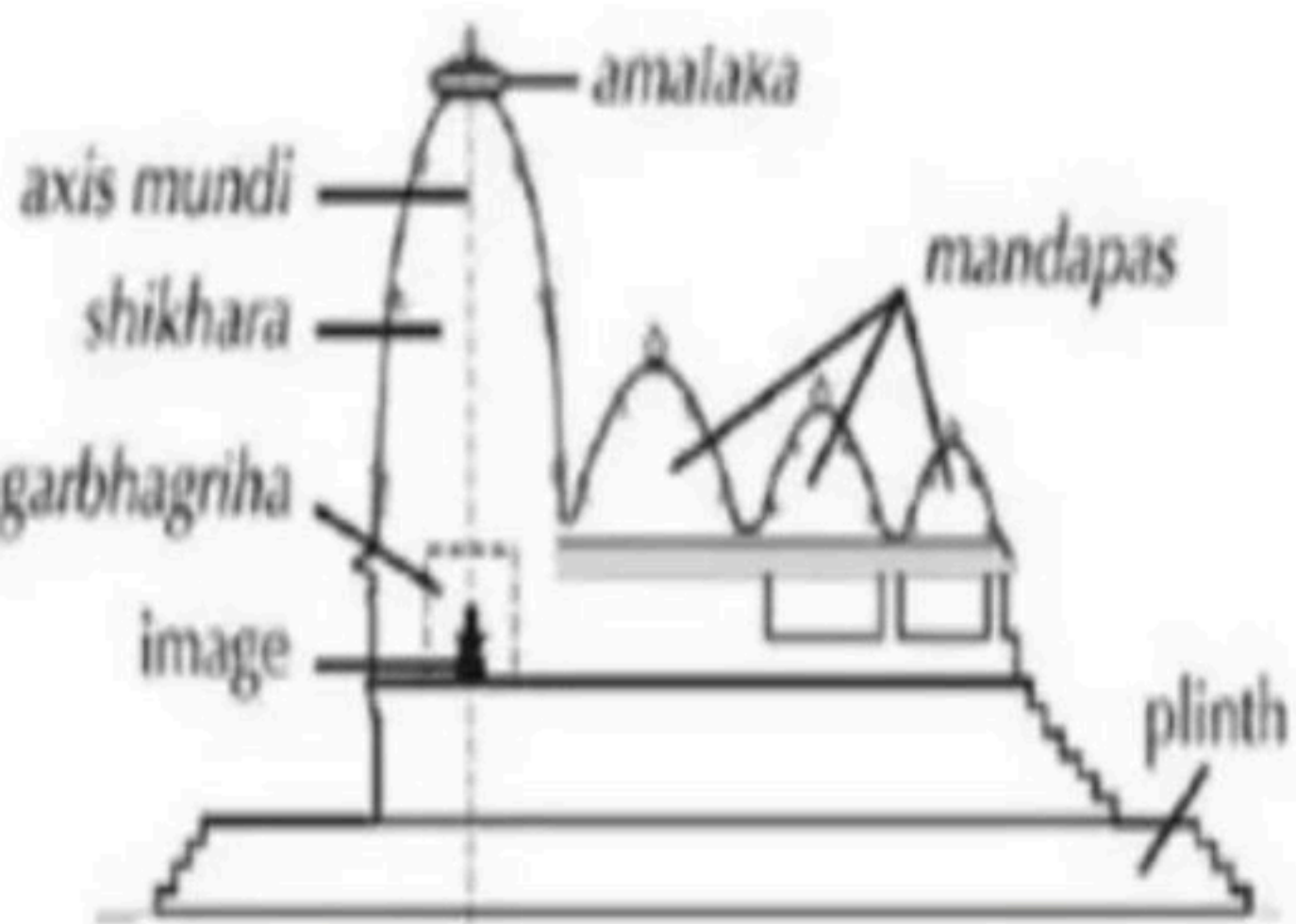


Emergence of Later Temple Styles

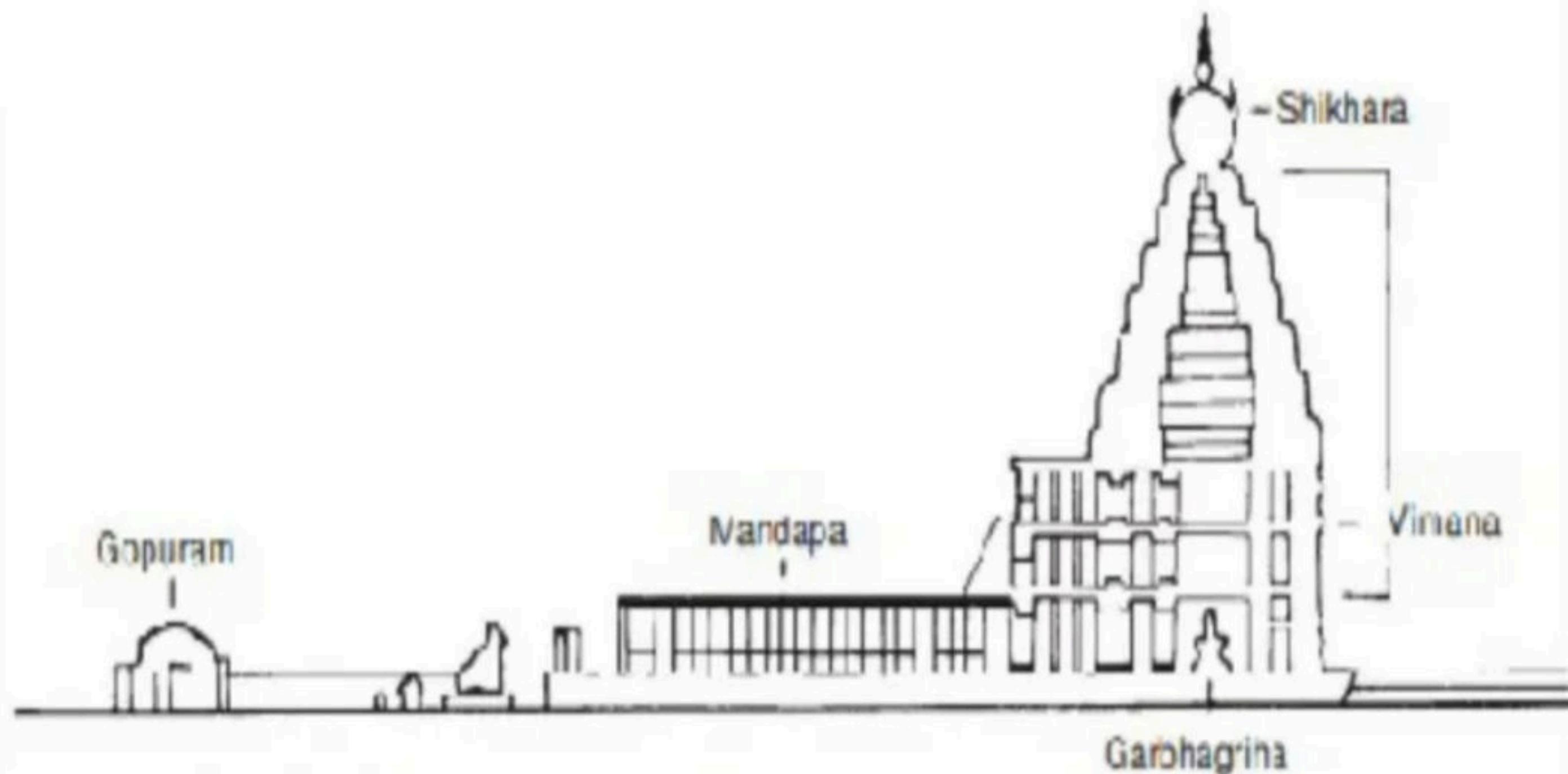
- The major temple styles listed and described in the Vastu Sastra texts are the nagara, dravida and vesara.
- Every temple of North India, irrespective of its situation and date, reveals characteristic features in planning and elevation. *The North Indian temple is a square one with a number of **graduated projections (rathakas)** in the middle of each face, which gives it a cruciform shape in the exterior.* In elevation it exhibits a **tower (sikhara)**, gradually inclining inwards and capped by a spheroid slab with ribs round the edge (**amalaka**). ***The cruciform ground-plan and the curvilinear tower may, hence, be regarded as the salient features of a Nagara temple.***
- A temple of South India has the ***sanctum cella (garbha griha)*** situated invariably within an **ambulatory hall** and a **pyramidal tower** formed by an accumulation of **storey after storey in receding dimensions**. These are to be regarded as the distinctive characteristics of a **Dravida temple**.

Plan of subsidiary shrines
of Brahmeswara Temple in
Bhubaneswar

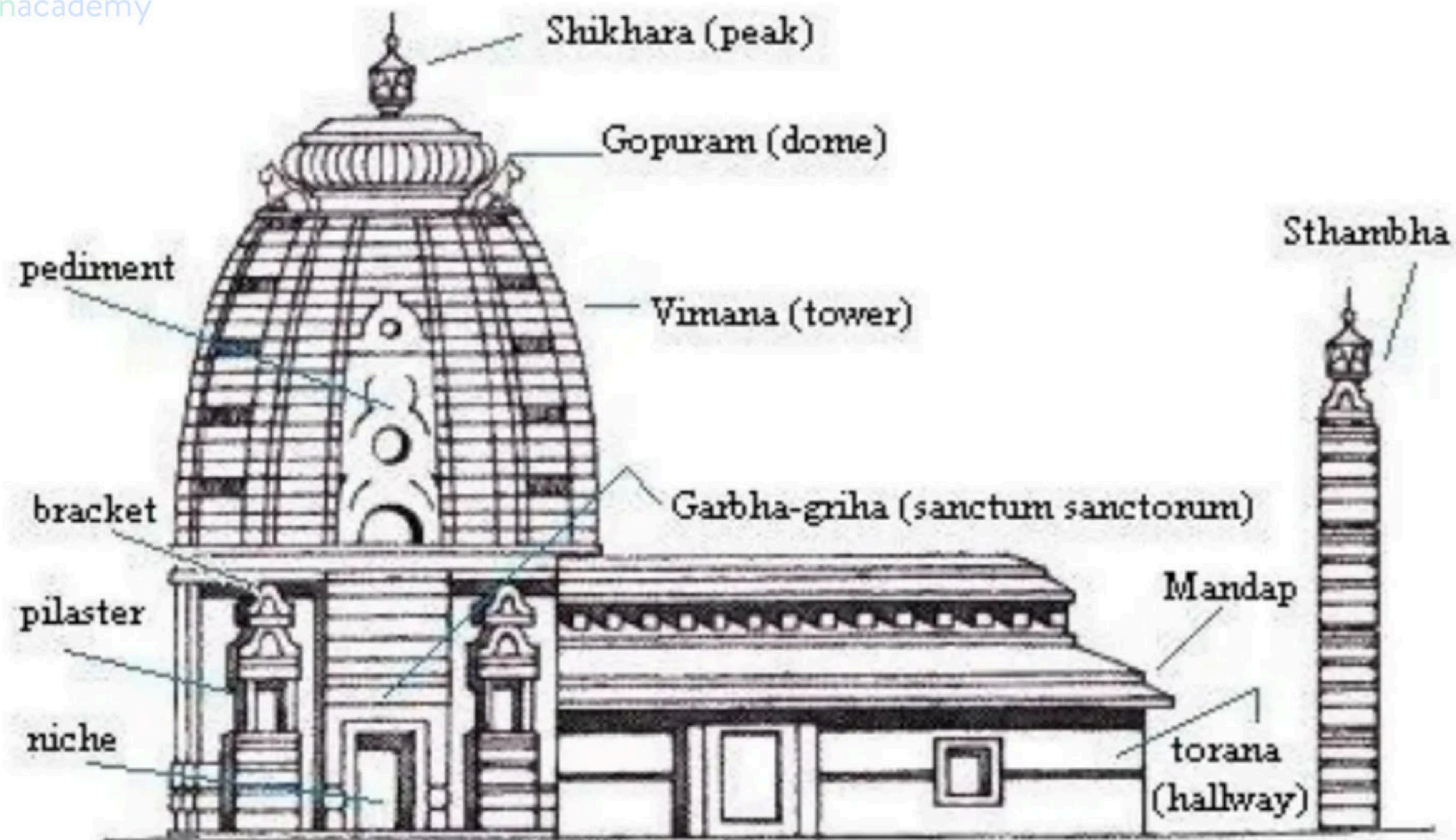




Nagara style of architecture



Dravida style of architecture



Nagara Style

- Initially, the temple originated as a ***flat-roofed square structure in the form of a cell (shrine)***, with a *pillared porch in front*. Variants of the flat-roofed structure persisted under the post-Gupta dynasties of north and central India, and the *Nagara style* emerged with the evolution of a sikhara or superstructure over the square shrine.
- The subsequent development of the nagara style can be traced through regional schools, of which the major ones were those of ***Orissa*** (ancient Kalinga), ***central India*** (ancient Jejakabhukti-Mahoba), ***Rajasthan*** (the home of the Rajput dynasties) and ***Gujarat*** (ancient Gurjaradesa).
- These represent significant stylistic and aesthetic developments and variations in the vertical ascent and horizontal elaboration of the temple structure.
- In Uttar Pradesh (and its hill states), Bihar, Bengal and Himachal Pradesh, temples of the northern style were erected without architectural and stylistically significant differences. Kashmir developed a distinct class of temples, away from the main nagara style.



- There are many subdivisions of Nagara temples depending on the shape of the shikhara.
- **Rekha-Prasadatype or Latinatype** : This type of temple has square shikhara at the base and its walls curve slowly inward towards the top. They are mainly used to house the main garbhagriha.
- **Phamsana type** - Phamsana buildings tend to be broader and shorter than Latina ones. Their roofs are composed of several slabs that gently rise to a single point over the centre of the building, unlike the Latina ones which look like sharply rising tall towers. Phamsana roofs do not curve inward. Instead, they slope upwards on a straight incline. Phamsana design is used for the mandapas.
- **Valabhi type** - These are rectangular buildings with a roof that rises into a vaulted chamber. The edge of this vaulted chamber is rounded, like the bamboo or wooden wagons that would have been drawn by bullocks in ancient times. They are usually called wagon vaulted buildings.

Bullets (Nagara)

- In Nagara style, it is common for an entire temple to be built on a stone platform with steps leading up to it.
- Unlike South Indian temples it does not usually have elaborate boundary walls or gateways.
- The three main distinctive features of Nagara style is **Shikhara** (Curvilinear tower), **Garbhagriha** (Sanctum Sanctorum), **Mandapa** (Entrance Hall)
- While the earliest temples had just one tower or shikhara, later temples had multiple Shikharas.
- The garbhagriha is always located directly under the tallest tower.
- **Examples** - Dashavatara temple (Deogarh), Vishwanatha temple (Khajuraho), Lakshman Temple (Khajuraho), Jagannath Temple (Puri).

Dravida Style

- The nucleus of the Dravida temple is the **storeyed form of the Gupta temple**, and the **rock-cut rathas of Mahabalipuram** (7 th century CE) supply an interesting stage in the evolution of the Dravida style. Each of the rathas, except the Draupadi, exhibits a storeyed elevation of the roof, each storey terminating in a convex rolled cornice, ornamented with chaitya window arches.
- In these rathas, one may recognise the origin of the twin fundamental features of the Dravida temple, viz., **the vimana** (representing the sanctum with its tall pyramidal tower) and the **gopuram** (the immense pile of the gateway leading to the temple enclosure).
- With its beginnings in the Pallava rock-cut rathas in the first half of the 7 th century CE, the Dravida style passes through a long process of evolution and elaboration under different dynasties of the South. The style flourished for nearly a thousand years and, confined within a comparatively small area, remained more or less compact and unilateral.

- *The rock-cut method of the initial phase was replaced by the structural one during the reign of Narasimhavarmarman II, also known as Rajasimha. The Shore temple at Mahabalipuram, possibly the first structural temple to be built in the South, consists of two shrines, symmetrically joined to each other.*
- *An organic and unified conception of a temple scheme, in which all the trappings of the Dravida style are clearly expressed and harmoniously adjusted to one another, first comes into view in the celebrated **Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, also built by Rajasimha.***
- *With all the appurtenances, like the walled court, the gopuram, the pillared mandapa and the vimana, all complete and in their forms and positions, the **Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram** may be described as one of the key monuments of the early Dravida style.*

- A more developed sense of composition is clearly evident in the **Vaikunta Perumal temple** at Kanchipuram, built by **Nandivarman II**. Architectural activity in the South continued in the later phase of the Pallava rule. The rich heritage of the Pallava tradition passed on to the Cholas, under whom the Dravida style enters yet another brilliant and distinctive phase.
- There are some sub-divisions of Dravida temples based on shapes :
 - Square, usually called **Kuta or caturasra**
 - Rectangular or **shala or ayatasra**
 - Elliptical or **vrittayata** also called **gaja-prishta** or **elephant backed**
 - Circular or **vritta**
 - Octagonal or **ashtasra**
- It must, however, be remembered that this is a simplistic differentiation of the subdivisions. Several different shapes may be combined in specific periods and places to create their own unique style.











Bullets (Dravidian)

- Unlike the Nagara temple, the Dravida temple is enclosed within a compound wall.
- The front wall has an entrance gateway in its centre, which is known as a **gopuram**.
- The shape of the main temple tower known as **Vimana** is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving shikhara of North India.
- In the South Indian temples, the word **Shikhara** is used only for the crowning element at the top of the temple which is equivalent to the **amalaka** and **kalasha** of North Indian temples.
- In the Dravida style temples, one will generally find sculptures of fierce **dvarapalas** or the door-keepers guarding the temple.
- It is common to find a large water reservoir, or a temple tank, enclosed within the complex.

- Subsidiary shrines are either incorporated within the main temple tower or located as distinct, separate small shrines beside the main temple.
- Unlike Nagara style, at some of the most sacred temples in South India, the main temple in which the garbhagriha is situated has, in fact, one of the smallest towers.
- **Examples - *Shore temple (Mahabalipuram), Brihadesvara temple (Thanjavur), Meenakshi Temple (Madurai)***

Vesara Style

- The Vesara style is also known as the ***Chalukyan or Deccan style***. Its beginnings may be traced back to the days of the early Chalukyan kings in the 7th and 8th centuries CE.
- At Aihole and Pattadakal and other places, Dravida and Nagara temples were being erected side by side. This co-existence afforded an opportunity for a certain admixture of the ideas of the two, leading to the emergence under the later Chalukyan rulers, of a mixed or hybrid style. In this development, it is the Dravida, rather than the Nagara conception that played a comparatively more important role.
- The Chalukyan temple, like the Dravida, consists of two main features, ***the vimana and the mandapa, joined by an antarala, with occasionally, an additional open mandapa in front***. In course of time, there is a marked tendency to compress the heights of the storeyed stages of the vimana.

- At the same time, ornamental *niche motifs*, repeated one above the other, up the ascent of the tower, *simulate the vertical bands of the northern spire*. Here is an evident inspiration from the Nagara *sikhara*.
- The Chalukyan temple presents an essential divergence from the Dravida in *not having its sanctum cella enclosed within a covered ambulatory*.
- In the treatment of the exterior walls, there seems to have been a blending, again, of Nagara and Dravida ideas. *The walls are broken up by ratha offsets in the characteristic Nagara fashion, further spaced at regular intervals by pilasters in accordance with the usual Dravida mode*.

- The recesses thus formed, are usually filled up by niches with superstructures of the Nagara or of the Dravida style, thus producing a refrain of great artistic beauty. Some of the Chalukyan and most of the Hoysala temples are distinguished for their multiple-shrined compositions in which *two, three or four shrines are arranged around the common mandapa hall.*
- Apart from architectural treatment, the Chalukyan temple, or its descendant, the Hoysala, is also characterised by an *exuberant plastic ornament covering all its external surfaces which seem to have a richly fretted appearance from the base to the top.*
- In the interior, the pillars and door-frames, as well as ceilings, are likewise exuberantly treated. Considered as a whole, *the Chalukyan temple, together with its offshoot, the Hoysala, represents one of the most ornate and florid expressions of Indian architecture.*



Kashmiri Style

- Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir soon after the Buddha's demise and king Ashoka is said to have built stupas in the 3rd c. BCE.
- With the background of Buddhist artistic tradition, Kashmiri artisans evolved a style of Hindu temple architecture with a distinct characteristic of its own. Kashmir temple exhibits a unique blend of foreign style and indigenous creativity that resulted in a distinctive architecture which was more suited to their geographic and climate conditions.

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- ***The temple of Lodhu*** situated 16 miles from Srinagar is in the midst of a tank and is said to be the earliest remaining stone structure. This temple does not find mention by Kalhana or any other text. The temple is a plain and simple square, walled structure, circular on the inside. A large number of dressed stones are lying around in the tank, notable among them are the memorial stones depicting war heroes. *The corbelled corners of the structure suggest that it had a pyramidal roof as found at Pandrathen.* Because of its simpler type of trefoil niche, consisting of a rounded arch inside a trefoil pediment and its unique circular plan, it is representative of the earliest engineering developments which later on culminated at Martand.

- **7th and 8th century marked the culmination of art during the reign of Karakota rulers.**
Lalitaditya Miktapida (724-761 AD) ushered in an era of glory and prosperity in the kingdom. After gaining victories over Punjab, Kananuj and Bihar, he turned his attention to the bordering territories of Kashmir . He led the victorious army to Dardistan, Ladakh and Tibet .
- During the Karakota rule there was a crisis across which brought a improvised style into being. We see a profound influence of Chinese, apparent from faces and dresses, which are typically Mangoloid. Building art was a product of influences from different classical schools viz-Greko-Roman, Gandharan, while as the sculpture iconography reflects the tremendous central Asian impact.
- **Lalitaditya built the famous and elegant Sun temple at Martand and Parihasakesvar at his capital Parihasapura.** The temple at Martand is the most impressive of all the ancient structures of Kashmir . Dedicated to Sun god, Surya this magnificent edifice is located on a Kerewa or tableland.

- The temple proper contains *garbhagriha*, *antarâla* and closed *mandapa*, approached by grand flight of steps. The plinth supporting the Central shrine has two tiers, both with niches. The upper row has large niche, with figures of 37 divinities including Surya, Shiva, Vishnu, Parvati, Ganga , Yamuna and the Dikpalas. Exteriorly the sanctum is *tri-ratha* in plan.
- Martand reveal a great depth of thought, the delicacy of execution and the balanced proportion of figures. Even in its present ruinous condition, Martand evokes awe and wonder and is hailed as the most striking masterpiece of architecture of Kashmir , incomparable for its artistic grandeur.

- The second golden age of temple building was brought into being by the patronage of king **Avantivarman** the founder of **Utpala dynasty**. The king established his capital at Avantipura and built two temples ***Avantishvara and Avantisvamin***, one dedicated to Shiva and other dedicated to Vishnu.
- The final refinement of form and a more polished look may be seen in a group of temples erected by Sankaravarman (A.D.883-902), who succeeded Avantivarman.
- He shifted his capital to Sankarapatnam, modern pattern, and built two temples, ***Sugandhesha and Sankaragaurisha***. Both the temples are much on the same plan as described earlier but these structures reveal a refinement in handling the material, treatment of ornamentation and more polished look.

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- The former is of *panchayatana* type, surrounded by a cellular peristyle. The main shrine and the remains of two subsidiary shrines are the only surviving structures. Sankaragaurisha is an enlarged version of Sugendhesha and consists of a *garbhagriha* and *antarala*. Peristyle walls and superstructure are entirely lost.
- During subsequent years due to constant wars between the weak kings and kingdoms temple activity gradually started receding. By the beginning of the 10th century the growth of style had come to an end but small shrines were raised without any notable architectural development.

Bullets

The main architectural features of the temples of Kashmir could be summed up in a nutshell as:

1. The temples face either east or west.
2. The temples have a straight-edged pyramidal roof in two tiers instead of curvilinear superstructure of the southern temples.
3. The triangular pediments enclosing trefoil niches are on all the four sides of the main shrine.
4. They have a cellular layout with a row of pillars – a feature, which is not reported elsewhere in India .
5. The double-chambered gateway matches the central shrine in scale and design. The temple walls in Kashmir are profusely carved.



Temple Lists

OMSHISTORY

Guptas and Post Guptas

• **Bhitargaon Brick Temple**

- It is located in the town of Bhitargaon of Kanpur district in UP. This ancient religious edifice was built in the 6th century during the Gupta period. One of the oldest surviving Hindu pilgrimage centres, the temple comprises of a roof and is graced with an elevated shikhara. The 18th century however, caused certain injuries to its upper chamber.
- The ceilings of anteroom and the sanctum have domical vaults and the sanctum bears a resemblance to a tri-ratha. Bhitargaon Temple, known for its extraordinary architectural beauty, has well decorated walls with large niches, positioned between ornate pilasters.

- The delicately sculptured walls illustrate interesting stories, myths and images of various divinities. Figures of birds, animals and beasts also adorn the beauty of the walls.
- The temple decked with the terracotta sculptures illustrate different secular and religious themes like images of Lord Ganesha, Mahishasur-mardani (Goddess Durga) and the river goddess. The mythological story of the abduction of Sita and the penance of Nara and Naryan have also been skilfully depicted.

• Deogarh Dashavatar Temple

- One can observe the ruins of an excellent temple dedicated to Vishnu and numerous Jain temples. The Vishnu temple has been constructed during the Gupta rule. In the whole of North India, this excellent Vishnu Temple is the first Panchyatan temple.
- Carved panels are present in the terraced basement. The sculpted door, which is the entry point to the holy chamber, contains figures of Ganga and Yamuna. The Gajendramoksha Panel, the Nar Narayan Tapasya and the Anantshayi Vishnu are the three enormous sections, which mirrors the events from the Vaishnava mythical stories.

• Sirpur Temple

- The archaeological remains in and around Sirpur consist of both Hindu and Buddhist monuments in the form of temples and monasteries. Among them, the most well preserved magnificent temple is the east-facing Lakshmana temple built by Vasata, the mother of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna in the 7th century CE.
- The Lakshmana temple is located in the village Sirpur in Mahasmand district of Chhattisgarh.
- Sirpur is derived from the ancient name Sripura which was once the centre of power of South Kosalas during the rule of Sarabhapuriyas and Panduvamsis from 6th to 8th century CE.
- Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, this brick temple stands on a high massive platform accessible by steps in the north and the south. The plan of the temple consists of a garbagriha, antarala and a mandapa.
- The mandapa now in ruins, was originally upheld by stone pillars in rows. The exquisitely carved doorframe depicts figures of Seshasayi Vishnu along with his other incarnations. This temple is one among the best examples of brick temples of ancient India.

Chalukyas

- The temple-building activity under the Chalukyas of Badami can be broadly divided into two stages. ***The first stage is represented by the temples at Aihole and Badami.*** Aihole is a town of temples and contains no fewer than 70 structures, of which four are noteworthy.
- **Ladh Khan temple** is a flat roofed building.
- **Durga temple** was an experiment seeking to adopt the Buddhist chaitya to a Brahmanical temple.
- **Hucimaligudi** is very similar to the Durga temple, but smaller than it.
- **The Jaina temple of Meguti** shows some progress in the erection of structural temples, but it is unfinished.
- Of the temples at Badami, the **Melagitti Sivalaya** is a small but finely proportioned and magnificently located temple. A group of **four rock-cut halls at Badami** (three of them Hindu and one Jaina) are all of the same type. The workmanship in the caves is marked by a high degree of technical excellence. Though the front is very unassuming, the interior is treated with great skill and care in every detail.

- **The second stage is represented by the temples at Pattadakal.** There are about ten temples here, four in the northern style and six in the southern style. In the Deccan both styles were used. There was even a tendency to combine the feature of the two styles (Vesara).
- **The Papanatha temple (known Mukteshwara in inscription)** is the most notable among the temples of the northern style, it also reveals attempts to combine northern and southern features in one structure.
- **The Virupaksha temple** was built by one of the queens of Vikramaditya II. Workmen brought from Kanchi were employed in its construction. Hence it is a direct imitation of the Kailasanatha temple which had come into existence in Kanchi some decades earlier.
- **The Sangamesvara temple**, which was built some years before the above one, is more or less in the same style.

- **Jambulinga Temple** is a small temple, which enshrines an exquisite image of Dancing Lord Shiva, with Goddess Parvati and his mount Nandi by his side. It has been built with a northern style tower, which has a horseshoe arched projection on its facade.
- The second queen of Vikramaditya II built **Mallikarjuna Temple**, along with Virupaksha Temple, to commemorate the victory of the Chalukyas over the Pallavas. The largest of all Hindu temples at Pattadakal, the Mallikarjuna Temple is ornamented with rich sculptural works.

Pallava Architecture

- The development of temple architecture, particularly Dravida style, under the Pallavas can be seen in four stages.
- **Mahendra Group** : The influence of the cave style of architecture is to be seen in this group. Examples: are the rock-cut temples at ***Bhairavakonda*** (North Arcot district), and ***Anantesvara temple at Undavalli*** (Guntur district).
- **Narasimha Group** : They comprises the rathas or monolithic temples, each of which is hewn out of a single rock-boulder. These monolithic temples are found at ***Mamallapuram***. The rathas, popularly called the Seven Pagodas, are actually eight in number. They are ***(1) Dharmaraja, (2) Bhima, (3) Arjuna, (4) Sahadeva, (5) Draupadi, (6) Ganesa, (7) Pidari and (8) Valaiyankuttai***.
- **Rajasimha Group** : There are five examples of this group—the at ***Mahabalipuram (Shore, Isvara and Mukunda temples)***, one at ***Panamalai in South Arcot***, and the temple of ***Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi***. Among all these, the most mature example is the last one.

- **Nandivarman Group** : This group mostly consists of small temples except the ***Vaikuntaperumal temple*** at ***Kanchi*** and in no way forms an advance on the achievements of the previous age. But they are more ornate, resembling the Chola architecture. The best examples are the temples of ***Muktesvara and Matangesvara at Kanchi***, the ***Vadamalisvara at Orgadam (near Chingalput)***, and the ***Parasuramesvara at Gudimallam (near Renigunta)***.
- The Pallavas also contributed to the development of sculpture in south India. The Pallava sculpture largely is indebted to the Buddhist tradition. It is more monumental and linear in form, thus avoiding the typical ornamentation of the Deccan sculpture. The best example is the ***'Descent of the Ganga'*** or ***'Arjuna's Penance'*** at Mahabalipuram.

- **Sittanavasal, near Pudukkottai** in Tamil Nadu is renowned primarily for its **rock-cut cave temple with its rare Jaina mural paintings**. The cave floor, in fact, provides slightly elevated beds and pillows carved out of rock, for use of the monks. There are about 17 beds, rectangular even-spaces; each with a sort of stone pillow.
- It is likely that on these rock beds the Jain ascetics performed austerities such as *askayotsarga* and *sallekhana* (voluntary starvation leading to death). They represent one of the best cave paintings of early medieval India. These are example of rock-cut architecture based on Jain thought and ideologies.
- They have a close form of Ajanta and Bagh caves. The importance accorded to Sittanavasal is not because of its size or grandeur, but because of its significance in the history of development of Indian art and also because of its exquisite style of depiction, as evidenced by the fragments of its remnant murals.
- The Sittanavasal paintings are regarded as a surviving link between the Ajanta paintings (6 th century) and the Chola paintings of Thanjavur (11 th century). They are also classified with the Sigiriya (Srigiri) frescoes of Sri Lanka (5 th century) and the Bagh frescoes in Madhya Pradesh (sixth and seventh centuries)

Chola Temple

- Early Phase :

- The Pudukkottai district in Tamil Nadu has an unusually large number of early Chola temples, which give us a good idea of the growth of the south Indian style of architecture from the Pallava period to the Chola period.
- Most important among them is undoubtedly the ***Vijayalaya Cholesvara temple at Narthamalai (also called Melamalai)***. Other important temples in this category are the ***Nagesvarasvami temple at Kumbhakonam, Kuranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur***, the twin temples of ***Agastyisvara and Cholesvara at Tiruvalisvaram***.

- **Mature Phase :**

- The best example is, however, the Siva (or the ***Brihadeesvara or the Rajarajesvara***) temple, built in 1009 by Rajaraja I, at Tanjore. It is a fitting memorial to the material achievements of the Cholas under Rajaraja I. Apart from being the tallest (216 feet) of all Indian temples of the medieval period, it is a masterpiece of south Indian architecture. In this temple, a carving of a man's head with a European hat is found on one side of the temple (in a subsidiary structure), which is believed to be that of ***Marco Polo*** (late 13 th century), the Venetian traveller.

➤ The temple of ***Gangaikonda Cholapuram*** (also dedicated to Siva or ***Brihadesvara***), the creation of **Rajendra I**, was meant to excel its predecessor in every conceivable way. Erected around 1030, the greater elaboration in its appearance attests to the more affluent state of the Chola empire under Rajendra I. It is larger in plan though not as tall as the previous one.

- **Late Phase :**

➤ In this category, two Chola temples worth mentioning are the ***Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram*** (Tanjore District) and the ***Kampaharesvara temple at Tribhuvanam***.

Hoyasala Temples

- In many cases, the Hoyasala temples are not single but double, having all essential parts duplicated. One more noteworthy feature is that the temple itself appears to be the work of a sculptor and not of a builder.
- This is best illustrated in the ***Hoyasalesvara temple at Halebid***, whose plinth consists of nine bands and each band has thousands of decorative figures in various postures.
- Hence the Hoyasala temples have been aptly described as sculptors' architecture. There are a number of temples in the Mysore territory which exhibit amazing display of sculptural exuberance.
- The most typical and well known examples are the temples of ***Kesava at Somnathpur, Chenna Kesava at Belur*** and ***Hoyasalesvara at Halebid***. The ***Kesava temple at Somnathpur, near Seringapatnam***, erected about 1268, is still in a perfect state.

Thank You!

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