GENERAL SUMMARY.

Temple sites of the medieval period are widely scattered all over the North of India. Due to frequent Muslim inroads all of them could not be well preserved as they are in the South, yet even the ruins bear witness to their glory in the past. The foregoing review would reveal clearly what wealth of cultural historical and iconographic material lies hidden in the sculptured treasures of north Indian temples belonging to the first half (9th to 13th Cent.) of the medieval period. The vast span of the whole of North India, being the source of study, it had to be divided into four zones to make the work more scientific, as well as to bring out the salient features of each zone. Thus the Eastern Zone comprises states of the provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa; the Central Zone consists of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh; the Western Zone has the provinces of Rajasthan and Saurashtra; and the Northern Zone comprises of Kashmir State, Delhi and provinces of Himachal Pradesh and the Punjab. A summary of some of the outstanding features revealed during the course of study is being given here.

CONSPICUOUS RELIGIOUS AND ICONOGRAPHIC FEATURES.

Vishnu—Vishnu worship, though prevalent, throughout the length and breadth of North India (i.e. from Jagannath Puri in the east to Dwarka Puri in the west and from Chamba in the North to Bajpur in the South) was most popular in the province of Rajasthan in Western Zone. In almost all the important temple sites—e.g. Osian, Kiradu, Ekalingaji, Chittor and Chandrabbhaga Patan, of this province temples
dedicated to Vishnu have been found (Ataroo is the only exception and it may be so, as the place being situated near the borders of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, fell under the influence of Siva worship prevalent in the latter province). The sculptors were familiar with the twenty-four minor forms of Vishnu and most of them, if not all, have been found in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh only. Vasudeva, the fourteenth minor form of Vishnu, alone is conspicuous by its absence. Vishnu’s most popular minor form seems to have been Trivikrama, who has not only been found in almost all the provinces of the North, but whose largest number of images have been found. A favourite depiction of Vishnu appears to have been Vishnu lying on the serpent Sesha or Jala Sayi Vishnu. Vishnu, practising Yoga or the Yogasthānak image of Vishnu, a very rare depiction, has also been found in the Central (Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh) and Western (Rajasthan) Zones.

Of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, his Matsya-avatāra has not at all been depicted in the Eastern Zone. The Matsya and the Kūrma Avatāras of Vishnu have been depicted not as half-man and half-fish or tortoise as the texts prescribe but as all animal or all human seated on the fish or the tortoise in Yogamudrā (the latter at Khajuraho alone). In the Varāha incarnation the Yajña and the Pralaya Varāha forms as given in the texts have not been found. Only Bhūvarāha has been found either completely in animal form or like Mṛīśa, in half human and half animal form (i.e., having the animal face with human body). A fourteen handed Mṛīśa image, depicted in the Rimal Shah temple at Mt Abu, not only shows adoption of Hindu gods by Jains, but also supplies a rare depiction of Mṛīśa—giving fourteen hands to him.
Depiction of the Vāmana incarnation of Vishnu has not been found in Saurashtra. Parāśurāma has been rarely depicted, only three of his images have been found. Kāma— the seventh incarnation of Vishnu and the scenes from Prabhuṣya have been found only in the temples at Puri in the eastern zone and Kiradu, Chittor and Hodhera in the western zone. Aruna and scenes from his life are found at Bhubaneswara, Gwalior, Khajuraho, Kiradu, Abu, Ekalingaji and Chittor. Depiction of Balabhadra is found only in central zone and in the Rajasthan Prades of western zone. Like Parāśurāma, Kalki has also been rarely depicted. Mostly his depictions are found in the Prabhāvali or the aureole of Vishnu images and that too only in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Siva I-

Siva Vaivāhika and Siva Sukhāsana images are found all over the north; in practically all the sites visited. One unique Uma Naheśa image shows Trisūla and Chakra in the upper two hands of Siva; while another rare depiction found at Raipur shows Pārvatī also with four hands, along with her consort Siva. In the four handed depictions of Siva images in the north his chief characteristic Nyudhas seem to be Trisūla and Sarpa which are invariably given in his hands. Damarū has been given to him only in a few cases and Siva images with Damarū in one of his four hands have been found at Gwalior Museum, Sun temple Kiradu, Small temple Ekalingaji, Chandrabhaga Patan and Hodhera. Damarū he carries mostly in his Bhairava form though two images of Siva with Trisūla, Sarpa, Damarū and Ḍhatvānga have been found at Hodhera. Pustak in the hands of Siva was not generally
found except for a few depictions at Khajuraho (only one image with Pustak has been found on the right outside Mahavirat temple at Schagpur). Siva in Yoga Nambū seated in PadaEsana has also been found at Um. Of the Sādhāra Mūrtis of Siva the most commonly depicted are the Gaja-Sādhāra and the AndhaKāsurasvadhā images. Only one Kūrūsvadhā image of Siva has been found at Indore Museum. The Sādhāra mūrtis are two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, sixteen and eighteen handed. In Calcutta a rare depiction is that of Siva Pasupati having three faces— the central face is that of Śiva in calm mood and those on the right and left are the faces of Rudra (Śiva in angry mood) and Umā. Of the Bhairava form of Śiva a unique depiction is Aja-Nākapāda Bhairava at Bhuvanēvara. A ten handed Bhairava holding a Lion by its waist in one of his hands, is also a rare depiction (Amoosh Museum, Calcutta).

Saktī is—

A large variety of Devi images has been found. Ambikā, Vidyavāsini, Trikhandik, Kṛishodarī, Parvatī, Umē, Lalitā, Yogesvarī, Kalī, Bhairavi, Sarvasangalā, Kāmbhāsē, Chāmunda and Mahiśasurasamardinī are only some of her forms that can be mentioned here, besides Lakshmi, Sarasvatī and the Kātrikās. This list does not include the long list of Yogini names inscribed on the pedestal of the Chausath Yogini images at Seringhat Jabalpur, nor the eleven Yoginis found at Dhubela Museum. Hence it can be stressed that here also the sculptors have maintained their originality by introducing new images
and new features. Some of the rare images are Gajalakshmi with four elephants—two purifying water over her and two shown on the lotuses in her hands; Mahisāsura-mardini facing all the four demons who have sprung forth from the Buffalo, simultaneously; Chāunda in Jhalawad Museum is shown holding Brahma in one of her hands—showing thereby the Supreme power of the Divine mother who has Brahma (represented by Brahma) in her hands, and who supports heaven and earth both (heaven seems to have been represented here by the Navagraha panel supported above by her upper two hands); Amer museum preserves an image of Lakshmi with Kubera and Kauberī on one side of her while Ganga is shown sitting below—the image perhaps hints that wealth (represented by Kubera and his consort) is to be gained through wisdom which Ganga represents; Vārāhi image in the Kota museum shows such Śyudhas in the hands of the goddess that instead of merely being the consort of Yama, she, according to this depiction becomes the consort of Yajñāvārāha—this image seems to point out the most salient feature of the Hindu Philosophy that—'the unflinching faith of man in a god or goddess, has the power of raising the deity to the position of God Supreme in the eyes of the devotee, who is in turn himself raised to an elevated position through his faith. This image raised Vārāhi to the position of Supreme mother as she is shown as the consort of Yajñāvārāha, who is none but an incarnation of Vishnu himself. Depiction of Śvāhā (Baroda Museum) as one of the Mātrikās and the depiction of Śrīśāhā as the consort of the Śrīśāhā incarnation of Vishnu, not only
prove that a great deal of freedom was enjoyed by the sculptors (as these images are unwarranted by the scriptures) but also throw light on how they attempted to bring about religious harmony through such depictions which bring an unnamed rare goddess at par with the Supreme mother.

Surya:

Temples dedicated to Surya are lesser in number as compared to those dedicated to Vishnu, Siva and Sakti who seem to have taken the place of the Vedic Triad—(Brahma the Creator being replaced by Sakti— the mother of all). Only five Sun Temples are referred to at Konark, Khajuraho, Kishana, Madhara and Kashmir but the images of Surya find a place, not only in almost all Hindu temples, but also in the Jain temples at Osiyan, Chittor and Mt Abu. Thus it is evident that though Surya was one of the popular Vedic deities Vishnu worship had gained greater popularity during this period. But two images of Surya, one depicting him with Trisula and the other with Sakhra and Chakra (at Konark and Junagarh) tend to show his affinity with Siva and Vishnu.

Ganesha:

Ganesha temples were found only at Ateroo and Kowhaha but worship of Ganesha as Virvighneshwara was very common. Ganesha was worshipped before beginning any task as he is worshipped even today. Hence though temples dedicated to him are rare, yet his images are very commonly found in the niches, small friezes or in the panels of the door jams of practically all the temples. But a very rare and peculiar depiction of Ganesha is Keramba Ganapati (found at Gwalior Museum).
In the depiction of Dīkṣālas also a large variety is found. At Orchha Agni has been given Trisūla in one of his four hands to remind us of his affinity with Śiva; Yama, in Śiradu, carries a Lekhani and Pustak in his hands while another image shows him having horns and holding Parasu in one of his hands. Like Yama, an image of Vāyu is also depicted with Lekhani and Pustak (in Chittor). Of the Navagrahas Ṛahu and Ketu are also depicted separately. Depiction of Pinga Mandal and Naksattra panels (in Dhubala and Ajmer Museums) is also a rare phenomenon. Brahma—when Śiva and Vishnu, the last two deities of the sacred Trimūrd gain a great deal of religious importance, Brahma loses his. Consequently, but for a single shrine at Pushkara Tirtha, no temple was ever dedicated to him although his images were found in large numbers in all the temple-sites or zones of north India. The image of Brahma along with his consort, found at Sarnath, depicts a baby in the fourth hand of the god. Generally, it is the goddess who is shown with the baby and not the god.

Gradually Hanumān worship was also becoming popular and only a few of his images have been found in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Saurashtra.

Worship of Kārtikeya was prevalent in all the zones of north India and the Raipur Museum presents a rare six-faced twelve-handed image of this god.

Minor gods and goddesses—

Depictions of minor gods like Kevanta, Ṛakṣa, Brahma, Śrīspati, Śrīspati, Viṣvakarmā, Kāmadeva, Ārvinīkumāras and
Hindu temple sites having a number of groups of temples also harboured Jain temples in the vast open space lying around them. Hence the important Jain Tirthas or places of pilgrimage were Khajuraho, Un, Badi Chandari, Gwalior and Gyaraspur in Madhya Pradesh of the Central Zone; Abu, Alwar, Osian and Chittor in Rajasthan and Girnar in the Saurashtra provinces of the Western Zone. As no Jain temples of the early medieval period or their remains have been found in the Eastern Zone it can well be asserted that Jainism was not much popular in these provinces during those days. In Jain iconographic depiction, the Tirthankara images alone have some originality as they have direct religious impact, for they are depicted nude in Kayotsarga or Padaisana with their distinguishing symbols. Jain temples are usually dedicated to Adinath, Parsvanath or Mahaveera, all the remaining Tirthankaras have their images installed.
in the niches of the same temple or in the smaller shrines within the rectangular courtyard of that temple. Besides the Tirthankara who thus becomes the Mālandyak, other images found in Jain temples are those of the twenty-four Yaksha and Yakshiṣis and the sixteen Śrutadevis. The icons of Yaksha, Yakshiṣis or the Śrutadevis clearly show marked influence of Hindu iconography. This assertion is very well illustrated by images like that of Kusuma Yaksha whose Vāhana is Deer and who is shown with Dhvaja in his hands which is given to Vāyu—the god with Deer Vāhana in Hindu iconography. Similarly Mātanga Yaksha with Elephant Vāhana has been given Vajra—the Nyūśa of Indra who also rides an elephant. The Tumbara Yaksha is shown with musical instruments as in Hindu mythology a Gandharva of the same name is said to be the musician of gods—though his image has not been found. The influence wielded by the Hindu iconography over the Jains is evident by many more such images whose description has already been given. Images of Yakshiṣis and Śrutadevis also bespeak of this fact.

**Buddhism**

Historically, Buddhism was a decaying religion during this period. This fact is corroborated further as only one temple site contains a temple dedicated to the Buddha—and that is Bodi Gaya. Although a large number of Buddha images and quite a few of the other Buddhist gods have been found yet the temple extant is only one and Buddhist images find shelter only in the Museums or such other collections
at Patna, Calcutta, Gaya, Bodh Gaya and Nalanda. How Buddhism had lost its appeal and become a part of Hinduism can be learnt from the depiction of the Buddha as one of the ten incarnations in the Prabhāvali of Vishnu image. He was assumed and assimilated as only an incarnation of Vishnu— all his originality and powerful personality has merged with the Hindu god Vishnu. Attempts must have been made by the Buddhist monks to cater lay followers for their sect and hence one image depicts Buddha seated in Padmāsana in the centre with Brahma on one side and Indra on the other. The image seems to indicate that Buddha also stands supreme like Brahma—the Creator of the Universe and like Indra the Lord of the heavens. If Indra has conquered heavens, Buddha has conquered the Earth through compassion and has saved the world from falling in utter misery by showing the path of Truth and Knowledge. Another image depicts Vishnu, Siva and Brahma in the aureole of the Buddha image as well as the Vishnu and Varaha incarnations of Vishnu. Here Buddha is shown to be one with the Trinity—a Power Supreme. Such images not only show the supremacy of one religion over the other but also convey the message of Unity in Diversity. Buddhist images also depict five Bodhisattvas—Śrīmāntabhadra, Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Manjusri and Vajrapani and a large number of other gods like—Śadaksharīlokesvara, Śiṣhānādalokeshvara, Khasarpāna, Lākenātha, Padmaprātiṣvāra, Raktalokeshvara and Trailokyavijaya. Trailokyavijaya is shown as trampling Siva and Pārvatī under feet to establish the superiority of the Buddhist god over two of the most popular Paśchimadevas of the Hindus. Such an image instead of being helpful in reviving Buddhism, might
have proved otherwise as it did not pertain to constructive thinking
( it was defamatory to Hinduism for it showed Śiva - the slayer of
demons like Andhakāśura and Gajāsura and Pārvatī - the conqueror of
Mahishāsura, lying prostrate under the feet of Trailokyavijaya). Some
of the Hindu gods and goddesses were also adopted by the Buddhist as
Mahākāla, Kubera (who is called Jambhala in the Buddhist Pantheon),
Gajalakshmi and Śaśravati combined in one, and so on. Goddesses like
Parnasabari, Kāpichi, Udbhayavārāhanā, Turā, Mahāmayūrī and
Aparājita who were of a purely Buddhist origin also sometimes showed
clearly the Hindu impact on their depiction e.g. Kāpichi with seven
Pigs to draw her chariot as the Śūrya has seven horses; and Kāpichi
who has been depicted like Āstikā. Like the Jains, who deified
Śīvarājasvacī and Śambalī, two famous Jain ascetics, Buddhists also
depicted Nāgarjuna, a famous monk.

Under the same catholicity of religious outlook as
some of the images of Buddhist and Jain gods, fall, composite images
depicting one or more of the Pāñchadevas together. The unique Harinara
image depicting Pārvatī on one side and Lakshmi on the other as the
consorts of the respective halves is noteworthy as no such example has been
found in the texts. The composite images like Śūryanārayana, Harinaras-
spitāsaka, Ardhanārīśvara, Vaikunthanātha, Vishnuśāntis, Hārāntand-
Śairāva etc. show the originality of the sculptures in introducing new
phenomena in iconography so as to make sculptures the vehicles of
their husbands. Women were free to take part in every walk of life and there was no Purdah system (prudery). The custom of self immolation after the husband's death or performing Sati was widely prevalent, being most popular perhaps in the Western Zone comprising Saurashtra and Rajasthan, as the largest number of Sati stones found in the region, tend to prove. At the close of the Gṛhaśāramas the family ties were broken gradually by the VṚpaprasthin and ultimately the Sanyāsī finally renounced the world in search of Tīyath.

Hunting, wrestling, juggling, gymnastics, dance and music were some of the popular pastimes. Luxurious life of the rich men and women having a number of servants to attend to them, wearing fine dresses (Sārī, Choli, Chunī, of women; Dhotī, Gānak, tunic, turban and Dupattā or Angavastram of men), their elaborate coiffure and head gears, beautifully designed jewellery worn in abundance (Mundala, Jhara, Necklace, Arañi, Kangana, Hastaphūla, Rings, Katisūtra, Pāyala etc.) all show that the standard of living was high and the country was rich and prosperous.

Various musical instruments like Veena, Clarionet, Srdanga and Manjeera, couches with soft cotton sheets, seats with goose feather cushions, folding tables and such other pieces of furniture not only show the luxury in which people lived, but also bespeak of the skill of the craftsmen in those days. Scenes depicting physicians and Surgeons, Judges, Commanders, Engineers etc. reflect upon the complex organisation of the Society. Common use of cosmetics like powd, collyrium, vermilion, Alaka made from costly herbs or plants.
of the body and the elaborate bath all bear testimony to the high
economic standards reached. The different means of transport, portions
of palatial buildings and men engaged in various occupations suggest
the economic prosperity of the country. Poor wage earners like metal
workers, weavers, tailors, barbers, potters, rope makers etc. were there
too, but even they were fairly well off to be able to afford some
quantity of crude jewellery for themselves.

Scenes relating to War and Political Life:

The battle scenes or scenes depicting the army on
the march prove that elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers
formed the four important parts of the army. Camels are also shown and
they must have served as beasts of burden in arid tracts of Rajasthan
and Saurashtra. Weapons of war commonly used were lances, double and
single edged swords, daggers and shields, the mace and bows and arrows.
To fill the valiant with zeal and to encourage him for fighting, martial
music was played. Some isolated scenes found specially in Puri and
Bhubanesvara, also throw a dim light on the lives of kings and queens.
The palace scenes, a judge pronouncing judgement, commanders leading
armies for battles reflect upon the administrative and political life of
the time.

Art and Architecture:

Temples of the early medieval period were of Madhara,
Vajrasara and Dravida styles of construction, but the Madhara style seems
to have been most popular. The tall minarets or Sikharas of the temples,
their beauty of proportions and contours, liveliness of the ornamental sculptures all over the temple, have an enormous appeal. Their recessed ceilings, singularly beautiful and most ingeniously varied are made of different geometrical and flowery designs. The richly carved floral and creeper patterns decorate every nook and corner of the outside walls. In the niches the Šūrasundaris dance and the Ārdūlas challenge; Gandharvas flitter and the Kinnaras rejoice and the ever young and life-like images of gods resilient with the sap of life, bless the onlooker.

Influence of Tantrism caused the appearance of the Mithuna couples or the erotic sculptures on the walls, niches or small friezes of the temples. Passages in the Utkalkhand, the Agnipuraśa and the Bṛhat Sāṁhitā say that they were intended to protect the structures against lightening, cyclone or other visitations of nature. By their presence on the outer walls, only, these scenes, depicting exaggerated version of the sensuous pleasures of life, which though sweet outwardly are not substantial, serve as a call that the senses should be directed inwards where there is only Purushottama or the God Supreme.

Thus we see that as repositories of religious and academic lore and as a sort of picture gallery the temples form a solid background to the study of iconographic and cultural developments in the country.

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