CHAPTER-6

Conclusion

It has already been shown that the building art as it was developing in Southern India, was assuming a separate form. Also that this form, in view of the fact that it was being practised almost entirely in the Tamil country, anciently known as Dravidadesha, has been referred to as the Dravidian style. This southern type of architecture, it has been found convenient to resolve into five periods, corresponding to the five principal kingdoms which ruled in the south of India during the course of its evolution. These are as follows:

(1) Pallava (A.D. 600-900); (2) Chola (900-1150); (3) Pandya (1100-1350); (4) Vijayanagar (1350-1565); (5) Madura (from 1600).

Of all the great powers that together made the history of southern India, none had a more marked effect on the architecture of this region than the earliest of all, that of the Pallavas, whose productions provided the foundations of the Dravidian style. Originally the political successors of the Andhras, under whose rule the Buddhist architecture of Southern India attained its finest form, the Pallavas came into prominence in the seventh century, and continued paramount in the south until the beginning of the tenth century. The centre of their kingdom lay on the lower reaches of the Palar river, and the chief examples of Pallava architecture are to be
found in the country around the town of Conjeeveram (Kanchipuram) the ancient capital. There are however a few instances of the work of this dynasty located as far south as Tanjore and Pudukkottai.

The Pallava dynasty maintained its varying forms of architecture for some three centuries, from A.D. 600 to 900, and its productions resolve themselves into two phases, the first of these occupying the seventh century, and the second the eighth and ninth centuries. In the former the examples were entirely rock-cut, in the latter they were entirely structural. There were four principal rulers during the period of their power, and the works of each phase have been divided into two groups, comprising four groups in all, each of which is named after the king who was ruling at the time.

1st Phase : Mahendra Group, A.D. 610 to 640, Mamalla Group, A.D. 640 to 690.

2nd Phase : Rajasimha Group, A.D. 690 to c. 800, Nandivarman Group, c. A.D. 800 to c. 900.

It will be seen from the above that the rock architecture of the first phase takes two forms, referred to as mandapas, and rathas. In this connection, a mandapa is an excavation, while a ratha is a monolith. The former is an open pavilion, and, as excavated in the rock, takes the shape of a simple columned hall with one or more cellas in the back wall. A ratha is in reality a caror chariot, provided by the temple authorities for the conveyance of the image of the deity during processions. But here, by
common usage, it refers to a series of monolithic shrines, which are exact copies in granite of certain structural prototypes.

Beginning with the rock-architecture produced during the reign or Mahendravarman, constituting the earlier of the two groups of the first phase, this represents the mode that found favour with the Pallavas in the first half of the seventh century. The examples of the Mahendra group consist of one type only, namely pillared halls or mandapas. In this connection, it is perhaps only natural to infer that because the surviving relics of an ancient civilization are those formed out of the lasting rock, people were acquainted solely with that method. It will be shown however that a true picture of the time would represent these rock-cut halls supplemented by a very considerable miscellany of other buildings structurally formed. Although the latter have perished, owing to their impermanent character, the style and certain distinguishing features of their architecture are preserved by copies cut in the rock. But it is obvious from the examples of the early group, which are fourteen in number, and enumerated below¹ that the architecture, whether structural or otherwise, of the Pallavas at this particular stage was of a definitely primitive type. Each rock-cut mandapa consists of a pillared hall serving as a kind of portico to one or more cellas deeply recessed in the interior wall. The

exterior presents a facade formed of a row of pillars, each pillar averaging seven feet in height with a diameter of two feet, the shafts being square in section except for the middle third which is chamfered into an octagon. An immense and heavy bracket provides the capital, the composition as a whole suggesting as its origin a very elemental structure in which a ponderous wooden beam and bracket were the main features. So plain and simple is the Mahendra type that in the earliest examples, as at Mandagapattu and Trichirapally, there is not even a cornice above the pillars, but later a roll-moulding was added as at Pallavaram. Afterwards, at Mogalrajapuram, this roll-cornice was ornamented at intervals with a motif known as a *kudu* (acroteria), which is readily identified as the Buddhist chaitya-arch much reduced and converted into an object of decoration.

Towards the end of Mahendra’s reign some efforts were made to break away from this singularly plain treatment of the mandapa, as may be seen in the rock-cut temple of Anantasayana at Undavalli, and in the series of shrines at Bhairavakonda. The former is a definite departure, as although in some senses a mandapa, for it consists of several of these pillared halls one above another, it is fairly clear that it was an attempt to reproduce in the rock technique a pyramidal composition, evidently based on the conventional form of a Buddhist vihara or monastery, as it is in four stories and rises to a height of some fifty feet. Yet except for its size and more complex design, its architectural rendering shows but little advance on the single storied examples already referred to. It is,
however, in the series of eight excavated examples at Bhairavakonda, probably the latest of this reign, that a marked step forward is observable, for here is the beginning of the distinctive Pallava type. It is true that here also the mandapas are of the same simple plan as are all the foregoing, but it is in the design of the facade, and specially in the elaboration of the pillars, that a new spirit seems to have entered architectural effort of the time. It is the stage at which the characteristic pillar, or order,” of the Pallava into the style makes its appearance.

Up to this point the pillar in the Mahendra group of mandapas has been a rudimentary type of beam and bracket, serviceable in principle, but the idea of minds evidently in possession of very limited experience. At Bairavakonda, this crude’ production is still visible, but superimposed on its simple shape is an entirely different and much more sophisticated design of capital and shaft, a formation which has already been referred to as representing the Dravidian mode. And moreover, with the fusion of the two forms of pillar, there was also added another element, that of a lion, a figure of one of these animals being combined with the lower portion of the shaft, and another introduced into the capital. This heraldic beast, which from now onward occupies a prominent position in the architectural productions of the Pallavas, was appropriated by the ruling dynasty, and made to serve as a symbol of their Simhavishnu, or lion” (simha) ancestry. The Bhairavakonda pillars therefore depict the Pallava order in the making, the blending of the stark realism of the beginner, with the more reasoned results of endeavour. How this order of pillar
design, as yet unformed, was refined and adapted until it developed into a type of column of exceptional character and elegance, is shown in the productions of the succeeding reign.

The second group of the first phase of Pallava architecture, mainly executed during the reign of Narasimhavarman I (A.D. 640-68), while still adhering to the rock-cut method, in addition to a series of mandapas, is also represented by a number of rathas or monoliths. Practically all the examples of this group are found on one site, marking the position of the deserted seaport town of Mamallapuram, and named after its royal founder, one of whose titles was Mahamalla. This archaeological record of the one-time might of the Pallavas lies towards the mouth of the Palar river, thirtytwo miles south of Madras, and indicates that here was the harbour for Conjeeveram, the capital seat of the dynasty, situated some forty miles up the river. Here the configuration of the coastline was singularly suitable for its purpose, as rising out of the sand near the seashore was, a large rocky hill of granite gneiss, aligned from north to south, measuring half a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide with a height of over a hundred feet. Detached from this main prominence, and towards the south, was another and much smaller rocky outcrop, consisting originally of a whale-backed mound of granite about two hundred and fifty feet long and fifty feet high. It was out of these two formations that the rock architecture of the Mamalla group was excavated and sculptured. As already implied, however, in conjunction with the rock productions, there was a large amount of structural architecture some of it of considerable
importance; of which has perished. There are still visible foundations of a citadel which may be traced on the heights of the large hill and within this were palaces and similar royal residences, apparently built on raised masonry basements,’ while buildings themselves consisted of a wooden framework filled in by brick and plaster walls. As was not an common practice, therefore the secular buildings structural while the halls for religious purposes were quarried out of the natural rock.

One other feature is observable at Mamallapuram, now almost obliterated, but which when in full use gave the town, and particularly its religious architecture, some’ of its character. This was a well-designed and extensive water system, drawn from the Palar river, and distributed by means of canals and tanks to all parts of the port. The are indistinct but none the less definite traces of this installation, so that in its palmy days such a constant supply of running water must have made it a very pleasing seaside resort. But this was not provided solely for public use, it was also maintained for ritualistic purposes, as proved by, the design of some of the temples in which cisterns and, conduits appear to have formed an essential part of the scheme.

The significance of what appears to be a popular belief in water worship, combined with the Naga or serpent cult, is embodied in a remarkable scene sculptured on the eastern face of the main hill, and now misnamed Arjuna’s Penance. This rock-cut drama is an allegorical representation of the holy river Ganges issuing from its source in the
distant Himalayas, the water, fed from a receptacle above, cascading down a natural cleft in the rock in the centre of a magnificent picture carved in relief.

Yet even with such vivid relics still in situ, it is difficult to reconcile this deserted area consisting of a bare rocky hill, and desolate sand dunes, with what was once a populous maritime centre. The drifting sands have covered up and obliterated most of its landmarks, while the warring elements of wind and tide have altered the contours of the coastline, so that its ancient appearance can only be imagined. But in its art connections alone this part had more than ordinary significance. For there is little doubt that from Mamallapuram, in the middle of the first millennium, many deep-laden argosies set forth, first with merchandise and then with emigrants, eventually to carry the light of Indian culture over the Indian Ocean into the various less enlightened countries of Hither Asia. Amidst the opalescent colouring of Java’s volcanic ranges, and on the lush green plains of old Cambodia, in the course of time there grew up important schools of art and architecture derived from an Indian source. That the origin of these developments is to be found in the Brahmanical productions of the Pallavas, and, before them in the stupas and monasteries erected by the Buddhists under the rule of the Andhras, is fairly clear. It is possible to identify in the Khmer sculptures at Angkor Thorn and Angkor Vat, and in the endless bas-reliefs on the stupatemple of Borobudur, the influence of the marble carved panels of Amaravati, while the architecture that this plastic art embellishes owes some of its
character to the rock-cut monoliths of Mamallapuram. In addition therefore to providing the foundations of the Dravidian style of architecture in southern India, the vigorous creations of the Pallava craftsmen exercised considerable effect over a much wider field, and it was from this now deserted port that their It was probably conveyed to more distant lands.

Of the rock-cut examples of Pallava architecture at Mamallapuram, the mandapas may be referred to first: these excavated halls are ten in number, and are to be found on various suitable sites on the main hill. In most instances they are of the same general character and proportions as those of the previous group, but much more highly developed, a proof of the rapid progress that took place during the short period that intervened. None of them is large, their approximate dimensions being as follows: width of facade 25 feet; height from 15 to 20 feet; depth overall including cella 25 feet; pillars 9 feet high and 1 to 2 feet wide diameter; cellas, rectangular and from 5 to 10 feet side. It will be seen from these measurements that the mandapas are relatively shallow halls or porticos, and are remarkable therefore not for their size but for the exceptional character of their design and execution. This character is shown in two ways, first in their architectural treatment, and secondly in the disposal and quality of the sculpture combined with the architectural forms. As regards the former, except for the pillars which are the main features of the composition as a whole, the actual architectural treatment is of the simplest kind. On the facade there is a roll cornice decorated with chaitya arch motifs (kudu), and above this a parapet, or attic member, formed of
miniature shrines, a long one alternating with a short one. The remainder of the scheme both inside and out consists principally of pilasters of mouldings acting as a framework of the figure sculpture, the display of which appears to have been one of the prominent objects of the mandapa idea. For it is fairly clear that the rock-cutter was primarily and fundamentally a sculptor, and these pillared halls were regarded very largely as a means of presenting to the visiting devotees pictures of mythological and other subjects produced in this plastic manner. Not that the treatment of the architectural features was in any way inferior to the relief work, some of the architraves, cornices and strings-courses being as finely wrought as the figures. As an instance the precision with which the basements were designed and executed is admirably shown in the Varaha mandapa, where the stylobate has been sunk so as to form a long narrow receptacle for water. Apart from the manner in which this important part of the facade has been conceived and carried out so as to compel ablutions before entering the temple, it is an excellent illustration of the artistic handling of a purely material adjunct.

As in all rock architecture of a similar type, the pillars, especially those of the facade, are the principal elements in the composition, and those of the Mamalla group are no exception. The beginning of the Pallava order of the column has already been referred to in the works of the previous reign, but the Mamallapuram mandapas show this feature in its rich maturity. In some of the examples the crude block bracket is still

muc in evidence, primitive traditions usually die hard, but on the other hand some of the pillars as for instance those on the exterior of the Mahishasura mandapa are singularly graceful conceptions, when the purpose and peculiar technique are taken into consideration. A further development, with the addition of the heraldic lion forming the lower half of the shaft, is seen in the facade pillars of the Varaha mandapa, one of the most finished examples in the entire group. But the culmination of this lion form of pillar is represented by the two interior columns of the former mandapa, so different from any of the others, yet refining and combining all their attributions, implying the accomplishment of a craftsman of more than ordinary powers. The lion as a pillar base is not an uncommon motif in the architecture of several civilizations. It is found in late Roman work, and also in Lombardic Romanesque buildings of Europe dating from the eleventh century, but in these occidental examples the shaft is usually supported on the animal’s back. In the Pallava type the pillar is made to rest on the sedent animal’s head, and, in the case of the lion in the Mahishasura interior, it is not the homed grotesque of the mandapas, but a more natural leonine figure yet sufficiently conventionalised to suit its architectonic purpose. The remaining members forming this particular class of pillar are equally well designed, the fluted and banded shaft (stambham), the refined necking (tadi), the elegant curves of the “melon” capital (kumbha), and its lotus form (idaie) above, with its wide abacus (palagai), are all so united as to produce an “order” of marked propriety and stability.
Passing now to the other type of rock architecture of Mamalla’s reign, namely the series of monolithic temples called *rathas*, and widely known as the” Seven Pagodas”, these exemplify an entirely novel form of expression. Although in much the same architectural style as the mandapas, they enunciate a completely different idea. Each is obviously a replica, quarried out of the whale-backed rock previously mentioned, of a separate type of religious structure evidently common at the time, and built largely of wood, as is shown by the Yama heads, rafters and purlins faithfully represented in the granite reproduction. Each example, with all these features is so well preserved as to be perfectly comprehensible, but the question is to once arises, what was the object and intention of recording so faithfully and with such infinite toil each architectural type, as if it were a full sized model, or to be regarded as a standard pattern for the guidance of the temple builders? Solitary, unmeaning, and clearly never used, as none of their interiors is finished, sphinx-like for centuries these monoliths have stood sentinel over mere emptiness, the most enigmatical architectural phenomenon in all India, truly a co riddle of the sands”. Each a lithic cryptogram as yet undeciphered, there is little doubt that the key when found will disclose much of the story of early temple architecture in Southern India.

As with all the rock productions of the Pallavas, the rathas are of no great size, the largest measuring only 42 feet long, the widest 35 feet, and the tallest is but 40 feet high. They number eight in all,¹ and, with one

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exception, are derived from the two types of structure hitherto attributed to the Buddhists, the vihara or monastery, and the chaitya hall or temple. The exception is that known as Draupadi’s ratha, the smallest of the series, as well as being the simplest and most finished. This example is merely a cell or pansala, and the shape of the roof indicates plainly that it was a copy of a thatched structure, most probably a form of portable shrine belonging to a village community, as shown by its sub-structure. For its base is supported by figures of animals, a lion alternating with an elephant, their attitudes suggesting that they are bearers of a heavy burden. Such an idea is occasionally represented in Indian architecture of the temples and shrines borne along by supernatural creatures, or supported on poles by grotesque human beings, thus implying that these religious constructions were sometimes not fixtures, but could be carried in procession or moved about from place to place. The portable shrine represented by Dru-padi’s ratha may have some connection with certain models of tabernacles depicted on the gable ends of the remaining rathas, to be referred to hereafter.

Of the vihara or ‘monastery type of ratha at Mamallapuram, all of which are square in plan and pyramidal in elevation, there are five examples, varying in size and in their details, but all treated in the same architectural manner. In shape and appearance these vihara rathas seem to have been evolved out of a building composed of cells arranged around a square courtyard, the inner court being afterwards covered in with a flat roof on pillars. In the course of time, as the community of monks
occupying the monastery increased another story was added, and, finally, still another, the whole structure eventually being finished off with a kind of domical roof. In the rock-cut interpretation of this composition, the cells have lost their original character and intention, and become modified into ornamental turrets, while other substantial alterations have been effected in order to make it suitable for its new purpose. The transformation from a Buddhist hostel to a Hindu shrine is best illustrated in the largest of these vihara rathas, that known as the Dharmaraja, enough of which has been completed to show the full architectural style of the exterior, as well as the manner in which it was proposed to treat the inner compartments. As regards the elevation, this is in two parts, a square portion with pillared verandahs below, and the pyramidal shape or sikhara (tower) formed of the converted cells, above. With its strongly moulded stylobate, its lion pillared porticos casting their deep shadows, the scintillating appearance of its turreted roof, this type of design is not only an effective production in itself, but it is a storehouse of pleasing forms and motifs, besides being replete with potentialities. That such promises were amply fulfilled is shown by the architectural monuments developed from this rock-cut model which evolved later.

Even more significant than the foregoing are the remaining three examples of rathas known as Bhima, Sahadeva and Ganesh, which appear to be based on various types of chaitya hall, or Buddhist temple. They are all oblong in plan, and rise up into two or more stories, while each has a keel or barrel roof, with a chaitya gable end. The Sahadeva type is
apsidal, and structural replicas of this form were erected at a subsequent date, of which the later Pallava temple of Vadamallisvāra is an example. A still more informative instance of the chaitya hall type is Bhima’s ratha, which is a copy of a building in two stories, the upper story displaying a perfect representation of a keel roof with a gable at each end. A similar effect was produced later in two structures of the Indo-Aryan order, the tenth century temple of Vaital Deul at Bhubaneswar, Orissa, and in the eleventh century Teli-ka-Mandir in Gwalior Fort. The remaining ratha of the group, that of Ganesh, is in some respects a combination of the two previous examples, but it is different in as much as the entrance is through a pillared portico on its long side. Not only were these three rathas the prototypes of temples, but they were also the pattern out of which was evolved an important later development, for it was on their oblong plan, diminishing stories, and specifically, the keel roof with its pinnacles and gable ends, that the gopuram was based. It is possible to see here the beginnings of those great towering pylons forming the entrance gateways to, the temples of the south, and which give their chief character to the Dravidian style.

These monolithic shrines were’ of Saivite attribution, and in their proximity are images, also carved in the rock, of a lion an elephant, and a bull, symbolizing respectively, Durga, Indra, and Siva. Yet the fact that these Siva shrines are in a style of architecture traditionally associated with the Buddhists, seems to imply that they were a type of structure not the monopoly of anyone religion, but had a common origin. There is
evidence in support of this in certain emblematical subjects carved within the gable ends of the three chaitya hall-examples, each of which is full of allegory. And in more than one of them there is a central symbol not unlike a stupa. Each gable illustrates a conventional or diagrammatic rendering of a prayer-hall, the curved barge-boards taking the place of the vaulted roof, the decorated brackets on either side simulating the ribs of the vault, while, most significant of all, the central object is a tabernacle or sacred relic. Each of these representations of tabernacles or reliquaries takes a different form, just as the ratha on which it is depicted also is of certain design, so that both ratha and reliquary may be identified as belonging to one another. It is possible therefore that each ratha is a shrine consecrated to one of the manifestations of Siva, its shape being conditioned by the tradition which has ordained that it should take such a form for that particular manifestation.

A remarkable feature of the Pallava rock-architecture is the fine quality of the figure sculpture which adorns both mandapas and rathas. But in its plastic form it was only part of a movement, which, extending over the whole of, southern India, found expression in a school of sculpture of a grand classical order. Most of this is in the rock-cut technique, of which that on the Kailasa at Ellora, and at Elephanta, are rather later examples, but some of the finest and earliest productions were the work of the Pallavas. These figure subjects at Mamallapuram are endowed with that same passionate spirit which pulsates in the Christian art of Europe of the corresponding date, but with even a finer feeling for
form and more experienced craftsmanship. There is a notable sense of restraint and refined simplicity—especially in the bas-reliefs of single figures, yet even more pronounced in several of the larger sculptured dramas, as for instance in the Vishnu panel of the Mahishasura mandapa, which has some of the breadth and rationality shown in the sculpture of the Greeks towards the end of their first period. In view therefore of the superb quality of the Pallava plastic art it is not surprising that the schools of sculpture which developed out of this movement in Java and Cambodia displayed also the same high artistic character.

From the unfinished state of nearly all the rock architecture at Mamallapuram, much of it lacking that final effort which would have made these shrines really serviceable, it would seem as if some unexpected political cataclysm had intervened, causing the rock-cutter to throw down his mallet and chisel and hasten away, never to return. History records no such upheaval, so that an explanation must be looked for elsewhere. What these incomplete shrines reveal is that the patronage of Narasimha Mamalla having ended with his death in A.D. 674, under his successor Rajasimha a new architectural movement began. For with the rule of this king, the rock method ceased, no further labour was put either into the excavated mandapas or the monolithic rathas, in a word as a form of expression it became obsolete.

Instead of the permanent yet inflexible carving of the granite, the art of structural building was taken up, as it was being realized that this process gave greater powers to the workman, it provided him with more
freedom, so that he could place his structure where he pleased, and make it what shape he liked.” The only limit to his performance was the extent of his knowledge of the principles of the mason’s Craft, and the size and strength of his materials. With the reign of Rajasimha therefore the second phase of Pallava architecture opens, in which all the buildings are entirely structural. The production of the first temples of this phase, and called the Rajasimha Group, began towards the end of the seventh century and occupied the whole of the eighth century, during which period several notable buildings were erected.

Of the Rajasimha mode there are some six examples, comprising the” Shore,” Isvara, and Makunda temples at Mamallapuram ; a temple at Panamalai in the South Arcot district; and the temples of Kailasanatha and of Vaikuntha Perumal at Conjeevaram. Three of these are of major importance as each illustrates a stage not only in the style as a whole, but in the development of the temple formation, in much the same manner as that already shown in the contemporary art of the Chalukyans on the other side of the Peninsula. These three examples are the .. Shore” temple, and the two temples at Conjeevaram. The first Pallava building to be constructed of dressed stone was the” Shore” temple, so named in modern times as it stands on the extreme foreshore of the ancient port. Although the earliest known production in this technique of the Pallavas, as it dates from the last 1 years of the seventh century, the materials of which it is composed and the maimer in which they have been applied indicate a certain amount of latent experience in the art of building construction. As a proof” of its
excellent workmanship for over a thousand years the” Shore” temple has endured on this exposed spur of rock, buffeted for half the year by the monsoon rollers, at other times.

“The grey sea creeps half-visible, half-hushed, And grasps with its innumerable hands Its silent walls.”

Yet even with the ceaseless activity of the sea on the one side, and the insidious menace of the drifting sands on the other, its twin towers are still erect and its shrines remain instact, immutable it stands, a silent record of a great but almost forgotten people.

Owing to its unusual position, and also to the intention of its creators, the plan of the Shore temple is not according to custom. The underlying idea was that the cella should face eastwards overlooking the sea, so that the shrine might be illuminated by the first rays of the rising sun, as well as being plainly observable to those approaching the harbour in ships. For it was a landmark by day and a beacon by night, as out amongst the breakers still rises a stone pillar on which a lamp would be placed to shine across the waters and guide the mariner to his anchorage. Such an arrangement, however, with the cella actually on the ocean’s brim, left no room for a forecourt or assembly hall, and not even for an entrance gateway, all of which had to be placed at the rear of the shrine. In this instance therefore the central building is surrounded by a massive enclosure wall, entry being obtained through the western side of the courtyard which was left entirely open. But quite early in its production
this simple scheme was complicated by two additional shrines being’
attached, rather unsymmetrically, to its western end, one of which provides
the smaller spire, as well as what at first sight appears to be the main
entrance. It is these two supplementary shrines which have converted the
Shore temple into a double towered monument; unconventional in its
grouping, ‘and a little difficult to comprehend.

While it is quite clear that the ‘central buildings comprising the
Shore temple are a development of the monolithic rathas of the previous
phase, specifically from that of the Dharmaraja ratha, the difference in
treatment between the two types of the temple is considerable. The
change in technique from the’ rock-cut to the structural partly accounts
for this, and the interval separating the execution of the two productions,
although not great, would also have some effect. And there was, of
course, a new ruler on the throne, whose personal predilections may have
had some influence. But even these factors, significant though they may
be, can hardly account for the difference not only in temper and in trend,
but in the forms as well, which appear in this first structural example of
the Pallava period. In principle the monolithic Dharmaraja ratha and the.
Shore temple are the same, there is the square lower story, and the
pyramidal tower in diminishing tiers above in both conceptions, but there
is another and original ideal motivating the design of the Shore temple,
particularly noticeable in the shape of the tower. This is shown in the
obvious desire of tile builders to rid themselves of the vihara incubus, and
to devise a building more architecturally rational, in a word to shake off
the shackles of its prototype and give effect to their own rising genius.
And so we see in the composition of the Shore temple, more rhythm and more buoyancy than in the monolithic rathas, a lightness and a soaring quality that was however not entirely due to the more tractable technique. But there is also another important component in the structural example, which although relatively a matter of detail, was destined to give not a little of its character to the later Pallava art. This is the appearance in the architectural scheme of a very pronounced type of pilaster, a rampant lion in prominent relief, and which finds a place wherever such a structural form with an ornamental support is required. In the Shore temple this heraldic lion, erect and holding up a Dravidian capital, projects from every angle, and is also introduced at intervals around the lower part of the entire building. As the style progressed this leogriff motif became more frequent and more characteristic so that it may be generally regarded as the identifying symbol of the Pallava style. As in the case of numerous motifs in Indian art, the origin of this rampant lion pilaster is a mystery, it suddenly appears in the temple design without any markerl prefigurement, save for one small representation of it on the unfinished ratha of Valaiyankutai of the previous reign in the shape of an insignificant bracket. It is strange that from such a rudimentary detail much of the character of the Narasimha architecture should have developed.

There was however considerably more in the formation of the Shore temple than the central buildings described above, as these were surrounded by an outer rectangular enclosure containing many interesting features. In the first place it seems evident that portions of the ground
plan of the enclosure consisted of a system of shallow cisterns, which could be flooded on occasion, so that it resolves itself into a type of water temple. Some of the conduits and receptacles may still be traced, and it is clear that they constituted an essential part of the layout. The water to feed this system was brought by a canal and conveyed by sluices throughout the building, any overflow being carried down a rocky cascade in the rear of the shrine and into the sea. The surrounding wall was an imposing structure, its parapet and coping crowned by figures of kneeling bulls, while at close intervals all round the exterior projected boldly carved lion pilasters; on the western side admission was obtained through a richly ornamented doorway. This doorway was the main entrance and led into a corridor one side of which was formed by the inner face of the enclosure wall, the other by a large rectangular building, probably an outer mandapa, but only the foundations remain. Halfway along each of the long sides of the corridor, there was a pillared arcade containing an altar, possibly provided for Naga worship, as all the courts and passages around could be filled with water. A feature of this corridor was a series of carved panels on the side walls, each containing a figure-subject illustrating some.

Not long after the erection of the Shore temple at Mamallapuram, another Siva temple the Kailasanatha was begun at Conjeeveram, the capital seat of the Pallavas, situated fortyfive miles south-west of Madras. Conjeeveram, in the early centuries of the Christian era, was a place of considerable importance, probably the leading city of the Carnatic if not
of Southern India. As the home of Dharmapala, the great commentator, a contemporary of the famous Buddhaghosa of the fifth century, it appears to have been a centre of intellectual life, while its fine series of temples are proof of its religious activity extending over a long period. For here may be studied the Dravidian style of temple architecture from its genesis under the Pallavas beginning in the 6th century to its culmination at Vijayanagar as late as the 15th and 16th centuries, a period of a thousand years of development. The temple of Ekambaranatha illustrates in one or other of its compartments every feature of this evolution, while a study of the Kailasanatha should form the basis of any investigation of the Dravidian building art. Dealing first therefore with the latter example, the main shrine of this structure was built during the reign of Rajasimha, so that its approximate date is A.D. 700, although the actual completion of the temple as a whole was undertaken by his son Mahendravarman-II, but, with the exception of a few additions to the east end of the enclosure, it is all as originally conceived. The scheme resolves itself into three separate parts, consisting of a sanctuary with its pyramidal tower, a pillared hall or mandapa, the whole contained within a rectangular courtyard enclosed by a high and substantial wall composed of cells. At a much later date, probably in the fourteenth century, the two isolated buildings, the sanctuary and the mandapa, were joined together by a spacious intermediate hall or antarala, to accord with the ceremonial of the time. This mediaeval addition has robbed the main structure of some of its architectural appearance, and it is better to visualize it without such
an intervening compartment as shown. It will be seen from the drawing that the main building is the tall sanctuary at the eastern end of the enclosure, and that in principle it conforms to the monolithic prototype of the Dharmaraja ratha. But there are certain elaborations, particularly in the supplementary shrines attached to and projecting from its three free sides, which aid considerably its effective presentation.

Every aspect of this temple is replete with informative features, as it illustrates in all its parts the trends of the style. The cells comprising the interior of the ‘enclosing wall, the design of the wall with its parapet of cupolas, the sturdy, primitive shape of the mandapa pillars, the constant repetition of the rampant lion pilaster, these, and the composition of the’ building as a whole, make the grey pile of the Kailasanatha a most fascinating study. Yet undoubtedly its most interesting portion is the pyramidal tower or sikhara for it is in the distinctive treatment of this feature that the development of the Dravidian style may be best observed. From the somewhat compressed forms of the monolithic rathas to the more looselyknit elements of the Shore temple, we now arrive at a further effort to present the sikhara in a suitable architectural form, well-proportioned, substantial, yet at the same time rhythmic in its mass and elegant in its outlines. Such was evidently the aim of its designers, and within certain limits some of these desired conditions have been fulfilled. There is still however occasion for more refinement in the shape of this tower, for although it marks another stage of evolution, it obviously falls short of that perfected maturity which was subsequently achieved.
Apart from the main structure of this temple there are certain arrangements in connexion with the entrance to the courtyard which are noteworthy. This part appears to have been produced under the direction of Mahendravarman-III, and evidently marks a deviation from the original plan. In place of what should have been the main gateway, a large subsidiary chapel has been introduced, complete with cella, vestibule and stairway approach, the actual doorways into the courtyard being relegated to openirlg on either side. Although a place of worship, the Mahendravarmanesvara shrine is built in such a manner, as, with its accompaniments, to suggest the beginnings of the gopuram, or entrance pylon. That the masons were by this time realizing the importance of selection in the matter of their building materials is shown by the fact that in the Kailasanatha” while the foundations of the temple are of granite, the upper portions are of sand-stone, thus providing a hard and substructure to carry its weight and a more plastic substance for the sculpture. Unfortunately at a somewhat distant date repairs to the latter became necessary, when these were effected rather ruthlessly by means of concrete.

About a decade later, the temple of Vaikuntha Perumal, also at Conjeeveram, was built, and here the Pallava style of architecture is seen in its most mature form. This temple is slightly larger and more spacious in its proportions than the previous example, and instead of the principal parts such as the cloisters, portico, and sanctuary, being separate buildings, they are amalgamated into one architectural whole, as may be seen. Square in plan, having a side of nearly 90 feet, the eastern or front portion
is carried forward 28 feet to provide for an entrance portico. The exterior of this formation presents what might have been a high and somewhat uncompromising outer wall, but its surfaces have been so enriched with semi-structural and ‘ornamental motifs that it blends admirably with the sikhara towering above the whole composition but actually rising from the shrine within. Inside the outer wall are the cloisters consisting of a colonnade of lion pillars, with a passage for processions continued right round the building between thin and the central structure. The central edifice is in two parts, the sanctuary and its portico, but these are so combined as to form this portion into one building. The portico, of what corresponds to the mandapa, is interiorly a square compartment 21 feet side, having a transverse aisle of eight pillars, and it leads by means of a vestibule to the cella, a rectangular chamber over which rises the pyramidal vimana tower. This vimana is square in plan, externally having a side of 47 feet, and its tower rises to a height of 60 feet from the ground. It is in four stories, each with a passage round its exterior, a cella in the centre, and a corridor encircling two of these for circumambulation. Although there is not in the Vaikunta temple the living freshness and ingenuousness of the Kailasanatha, yet it has many commendable features, for it displays an economy in the disposal of its parts together with a skilful marshalling of the main elements so as to produce a unity of conception, which has resulted in a building having considerable architectural merit.