tached to the antarāla and a detached pillared hall that now stand in front of the shrine seem, in all possibility, to be later erections. Two other temples at Baroli are each essentially of the same form as that of the one noticed above.

Another interesting example of the early Nāgara phase is furnished by the Chaturmukha Mahādeva temple at Nachna Kuthara. The sanctum stands on a high basement and is pañcha-ratha in plan. On the walls of the cella the groupings of niches, each within an elaborate framework surmounted by a shallow sloping eave of an indented pattern, introduce a new note in the treatment of this section. Again, the shallow eave, forming the transition between the cubical and curvilinear sections of the structure, may also be considered to be a novel feature, so far as Nāgara temples in Central India are concerned. This feature, it may be noted, is typical of the Western Indian expression of Nāgara style. The extension of the pagas beyond the shoulder in the Nachna Kuthara temple is in the manner of what we find in the Baroli temple; the triangular finials are, however, more emphatically expressed. The āmalaka is much smaller in girth and seems to be rather incongruous with the shoulder. Over the āmalaka is placed the kalasa. The exterior surfaces, in the lower as well in the upper sections, are overspun with miniature chaitya window patterns, sharply cut but shallow in depth. Kramrisch is inclined to assign the lower part of the structure to the eighth century and the śikhara to the tenth. Stylistically, however, both the parts seem to belong to the same period, and a date in the eighth century may not be far off the mark. The crowning elements of the āmalaka and the kulasa, which seem to be ill-fitting so far as the structure and its superstructure are concerned, might have been later restorations.

The process of variegating the temple structure by dividing and subdividing the body, both horizontally and vertically, was carried a little further in Central India. For example, a typical Central Indian temple is sapta-ratha in plan and the cube of the cella is divided into seven sections (saptāṅga) horizontally. In Orissa we have pañcha-ratha plan and pañchāṅga division only. In this respect the Central Indian temple may be said to have reached a further elaboration, though, of course, following the same line of evolution. The walls of the cube, thus diversified, horizontally as well as vertically, offer a background for a moving pageant of elegant sculptures in various attitudes and poses, all conforming to the varied composi-
tion of the walls. The evolutionary tendency with regard to anga-
sikharas, already felt in Orissa, was carried to its logical conclusion
and clusters of anga-sikharas clinging to the body of the main tower
and obliterating its paga divisions, as we have in the Central Indian
temple, impart to it a plasticity and volume hardly paralleled else-
where. Boldly projected and rising up one above the other, they
signify an imperient and restless upward urge which, not infrequen-
tly, interferes with disciplined movement. This restlessness is em-
phasised further by the projections of the pagas beyond the shoulder
course. Another characteristic Central Indian feature is furnished
by two āmalakas as the crowning member not only of the principal
śikhara but of the anga-sikharas as well. The last two are already
known to have made their appearance in a few of the temples noti-
ced above.

A typical Central Indian temple is, again, a component of a larger
number of elements, all joined together in one axial length and
raised over a substantial and solid terrace (socle, adhisthāna). From
the back to the front they are the garbhagriha (sanctum cella), the
antarāla (vestibule or antechamber), the manda (audience hall)
and the ardha-manda (frontal portico hall), the last communica-
ting with the tall flight of steps forming an impressive approach. The
first is covered by a śikhara of the form described above, the second
by a pediment of an ornamental shape abutting on the śikhara and
the third and the fourth each by a pyramidal (piṭhā) roof of a slight-
ly domical outline. Ascending in graduated heights, these super-
structures sweep up to the tall śikhara standing behind and suggest,
to a certain extent, the rising peaks of a mountain range converging
on to the highest. A somewhat similar effect of the elevation may
be noticed in the Ananta Vāsudeva temple at Bhuvaneśvara. In
Orissa such halls are usually astylar, but in Central India pillars have
been introduced in the interior as well as at the lateral ends for sup-
port of the roof. These pillars with their architraves, supporting the
domed ceiling, afford suitable backgrounds for elegant carvings
with the result that the interiors of these halls are richly ornament-
ed, in definite contrast to the dull and bare appearance of the in-
teriors of the Orissan halls. Again, such halls in Orissa are closed, but
in Central India they are open on the lateral sides, the openings
between the pillars forming balconied windows shaded by project-
ing eaves. Along the sides are provided seats (kakṣhāsanas) with
sloping balustrades. In the more ambitious schemes the sides of the
manda hall form transepts which, going round the sanctum cella,
constitute an inner ambulatory (pradakshīna) with balconied win-
dows on three of its sides. These openings not only provided well
lighted halls, in contrast to the gloomy interiors of such Orissan components, but also throw intense shadow athwart the intermediate section of the building and provide a significant contrast to the solids in the lower and upper sections of the temple scheme. This contrast of solids and voids lends an effect which is seldom paralleled in any other part of India.

The above characteristics, gradually evolved, reach their fruition in the temples of Khajuraho of which the Kandariya Mahadeva represents the most notable creation. It is useful to discuss certain instructive monuments illustrating the emergence, one by one, of the significant elements expressive of this development. The complete emergence of the type with all its characteristic features falls, however, outside our scope and it will be possible here to notice such instructive examples that may appear to belong to the period under discussion. The practice of crowning the śikhara with two āmalakas and projecting the pagas beyond the shoulder course have already been noticed. The five-fold division of the cube of the cella, in conformity with the pañcha-ratha plan, may be noticed for the first time in the Viśvanātha temple at Maribagh (Rewa district)71 which may be said to illustrate an early phase in the transition from the early Nāgara design to the typical Central Indian form. At the same time the high plinth with its boldly designed elegant mouldings, the graceful sculptures in two tiers in the wall section of the sanctum cube and the gable-shaped pediment over the antarāla anticipate the well-marked characteristics of the typical Central Indian temple. The śikhara, however, is one unbroken mass, except for the division into receding vertical planes of the pagas, and has a pleasing continuous contour all along the height in conformity with the characteristic Nāgara design.

Amarkantak, reputed as the source of the rivers Narmadā, the Son and the Mahānadi, has been a very sanctified place from ancient days and not a few beautiful temples were erected and consecrated at the spot in pretty old times.72 Of the monuments that still stand, three are extremely important as signifying important developments. They are the temples of Kaśvanarāyaṇa, Machchhendranātha and Pātāleśvara, the first two standing contiguous to each other and the third a little apart. Each of them consists of a sanctum, an antarāla and a mandapa, combined in one axial length as a unified scheme, and exhibits, along with the pañcha-ratha plan

71 JDL, XXIX, Article No. 8.
72 For temples at Amarkantak, MASI, No. 23, pp. 53-60, pls. XIII-XVI.
and five-fold division of the cube, balconied windows with projecting eaves and kakshāsanas on the lateral sides of the mandapa. In the characteristic Central Indian fashion the pagas project beyond the shoulder course and the śikhara is crowned by two āmalakas, one above the other, the upper one being smaller. The mandapa roof (now broken away in the Machchhendranātha) is pyramidal in shape and rise in horizontal tiers, receding as they go up and crowned at the apex by two āmalakas and the usual finials. In the Machchhendranātha and the Pātāleśvara a central complement of four pillars each, in addition to those that go around the hall, has been introduced for support of the mandapa roof. In all these respects these three temples represent notable advances towards the typical Central Indian form of the Nāgara temple. Stylistically they are to be dated about the tenth century A.D. The evolutionary course continues in the subsequent period and may be studied with reference to several other instructive monuments till the type reaches its fullest expression in the magnificent temples of Khajuraho.

It will be useful to refer to a few temples of exceptional design in order to complete the story of the Central Indian architectural movement during our period. In this context mention should first be made of two temples, one at Gurgi Masaun and the other at Chandrehe (both in Rewa district). The former is in a battered state, a substantial portion of the śikhara having fallen down. The latter is in an excellent state of preservation, complete with all its adjuncts and details. Identical in conception, both might have belonged to the same period. It is possible, as has been suggested, that they were erected by one and the same person, the abbot Praśantaśiva of the Mattamāyaśa sect of the Saivas, about the middle of the tenth century. Each temple consists of a sanctum, circular in plan both inside and out, with an antarāla and an open mandapa projecting from the front. The Chandrehe temple, in view of its completeness and elegant appearance, merits a fuller description. The entire scheme is raised over a terraced basement and faces west. The plinth consists of several boldly designed and elegantly executed mouldings, the section below the sanctum being circular. Over this circular section the external wall surface is broken up by shallow pilasters arranged in even intervals all around. The projections and recesses, thus produced, allow certain alternations of light and shade, though less pronounced than in temples of cruciform shape. The cube admits of division into five segments in vertical axis. The pilasters and recesses in the wall section are continued as a refrain on the elegant-

73 MASI, No. 23, pp. 32-35, 41, pls. I, VI.
ly tapering śikhara, the facets, thus formed, continuing beyond the shoulder course in the characteristic Central Indian manner. The pilasters in the lower section supporting the facets in the upper, are plain. The latter, however, are exquisitely treated, the entire surface being covered by shallow-cut tracery of chaitya window motifs. Again, two āmalakas crowning the śikhara reproduce the usual Central Indian feature. In the like manner the mandapa has kakshāsaṇas on its two sides and is surmounted by a pyramidal roof with sloping eaves running along its three sides. The antarāla is topped by a gable-shaped superstructure leaning on the śikhara. One notable fact about the Gurgi temple, of which the superstructures are gone, is the seven-fold division of the cube, as in the typical and full-fledged Central Indian temple. Apart from the circular plan of the sanctum in each, these two temples may be found to be closely related to the Central Indian architectural movement in the composition of the different components as well as in the essential features of elevation. In spite of the novel plan, they represent, hence, a movement that is parallel and analogous to the Central Indian architectural tradition. A few brick temples in Uttar Pradesh may be found to offer interesting analogies to the circular temples at Chandrehe and Gurgi and will be dealt with later.

Among the unusual temple types in Central India mention should be made here also of the peripteral shrines dedicated to the worship of the Chaunsatha Yoganīs associated with the cult of the goddess Sakti. They were fairly popular in Central Indian territories, though a few may be found outside the geographical limits of Central India. A temple of this type usually takes the shape of an open circular court surrounded by a peripheral colonnade with chapels with the images of the sixty-four Yoganīs and occasionally of some accessory divinities as well, besides a principal shrine, sometimes in the centre of the peripheral chapels or situated in the centre of the open court, which is occupied by the image of one or other aspect of Sakti. The Chaunsaṭha Yoganī temple at Bheraghat,74 near Jabalpur, has an internal diameter of 116 feet with eighty-one peripheral chapels including a central shrine with an image of Umā-Maheśvara. It appears to date from the ninth century or earlier even. A similar temple may be seen at Mitauli,75 possibly of the eleventh century, which has a diameter of 120 feet and sixty-five chapels in peripheral range and a circular shrine with a mandapa in the centre of the court. Circular Yogini temples may also be found at Ranipur Jharial

74 ASC, IX, pp. 60-74.
75 ASR, 1915-16, pt. 1, p. 18.
(Patna), 76 Hirapur (near Bhuvanesvar) 77 and Kalahandi, 78 all in Orissa and at Dudahi in Lalitpur district 79 in Uttar Pradesh. All of them may be assigned to the early medieval period. The type seems to have extended to Coimbatore in the south where it is represented by a single shrine reproducing the above essential features. The Chaunsatha Yoginī temple at Khajuraho 80 illustrates an exceptional design in this kind of shrines. It is slightly later than the Bherachat Yoginī temple. It is rectangular in plan, the central quadrangle measuring 102 feet by 59.5 feet. It has sixty-four peripheral chapels, arranged around the court, together with a larger one in the back wall which, no doubt, represents the main shrine. Each one of the chapels is surmounted by a small śikhara of essentially Nāgara design, but crowned by more than one āmalaka (wherever the top is preserved) in the characteristic Central Indian manner.

(iii) Western India

In Rajasthan and in Gujarat-Kathiawar may be recognised yet another expression of the Nāgara temple style which may be described as the Western Indian. In both these territories the story of the Nāgara temple may be traced back fairly early and the regional ramification that emerges eventually is found to be linked together. Not only by historical circumstances but also by fundamental identities in conception and form. As in Orissa and in Central India activity in Nāgara temple building started with shrines of the triratha plan ultimately developing, in course of time, into pañcharatha. In Gujarat and Kathiawar temple building activity extended to conceptions other than Nāgara and such conceptions had a certain impact on the Nāgar temples of this area. It is interesting to note that many of the Nāgara temples of this region appear to have been provided with a wooden ambulatory around the sanctum cella. This feature, unknown in early Nāgara temples elsewhere, seems to have been derived from a type of early temples, apparently an exceptional growth in this area. The most eminent monument of this type, and perhaps the earliest (sixth century), is a temple at Gop in the Barda hills (Kathiawar), in which the square sanctum, with a roof of two stepped courses crowned by a graceful domical finial, had a wooden ambulatory around. Except for this, the Gop type is not known to

76 HIEA, II, p. 51.
77 JOHRS.
78 ASC, XIII, p. 132f.
80 HIEA, II, p. 51.
have left any marked impress on the formal development of the Nāgara temple in this area.

In spite of a fundamental identity in the architectural movement in Rajasthan and Gujarat-Kathiawar, it may be found convenient to treat the story of temple architecture in the two regions separately.

(a) Rajasthan

Rajasthan supplies us with the earliest remains of a structural shrine (c. third century B.C.), namely the circular structure at Bairat, near Jaipur. Nārāyaṇa-vāṭika of the Hāthibāḍa inscription. (c. second century B.C.) might have contained some kind of shrine, the exact nature of which is no longer possible to ascertain. Fragments of an āmalaka (parts of the crowning member of a śikhara temple), unearthed at Nagari, near Chitor, and datable in the fifth century A.D.,\(^\text{81}\) indicate building activities in this order of temple as early as the Gupta period. This part of the country thus seems to have been familiar with the early evolution of the Nāgara temple that had its beginnings in the śikhara temple. The records of this evolutionary phase have not survived. Extant monuments date from the eighth century; the Nāgara design had already become established in its distinctive features and characteristics.

The small village of Osia (Ukeśā of ancient days), 32 miles north-west of Jodhpur, supplies us with about a dozen interesting temples,\(^\text{82}\) representing two phases of building activity, one early and the other late. Temples of the early phase belong to about eighth-ninth centuries A.D. and illustrate a stage in the elaboration of the Nāgara temple in which the regional characteristics are yet to appear.

Among the temples of the early series, which are, more or less, alike to one another, a few are of paṅchāyatana composition, each with a larger principal shrine situated in the centre and four smaller accessory ones at the four corners, the entire scheme being raised over an elevated platform with the sides broken up by elaborately carved niches. Temples Nos. 1 (dedicated to Hari-Hara), 2 and 7 (dedicated to Śūrva) are characteristic examples of this early series, each of them being of the paṅchāyatana class. Each of the temples, including the accessory shrines wherever preserved, is paṅchāratna in plan, the cube being divided into three sections and se-


\(^{82}\) For a general account of these temples, *ASR*, 1906-07, p. 42; 1908-09, pp 100-15. The site was known as Ukeśā, as known from a fragmentary inscription in the Mañjūvīra temple,
parated from the śikhara by a recessed frieze between two shallow cornices. The wall section is occupied by sculptures, one on each ratha within a niche capped by an elaborate superstructure. The śikhara shows an elegant inward incline and is topped by a spheroid āmalaka-śilā. Richly fretted chaitya window designs cover the facets of the pagas and these, together with the sculptured niches in substructure, lend each of these temples with a fluency relieving, to a certain extent, the harsh four-square shape. Each of the shrines in temple No. 1 is preceded in front by a projecting portico with its roof, consisting of an elaborate triangular pediment, supported on two richly carved pillars. Temple No. 2 shows a distinct advance in architectural composition in the addition of a maṇḍapa preceding the principal shrine. Temple No. 7 is, perhaps the finest monument in the early series of temples at Osia. It records a further advance in architectural grouping in having the attendant shrines connected by a cloister, parts of which still remain. In this arrangement may possibly be recognised the beginnings of the cloistered composition that is characteristic of the Jaina temples of this region, a composition that is at once pleasing and impressive. The principal shrine consists of the sanctum and an open pillared maṇḍapa raised over a substantial platform; from the latter projects, again, a portico accommodating an elegant flight of stairs that leads up to the maṇḍapa hall. The pillars of the portico, rising directly from the ground level, are tall and fluted. This temple has an appearance of classic dignity, and much of its effect is due to the novel design of its frontage and elegant, yet restrained, manner of the treatment of its various parts and their embellishment.

In spite of the smallness of size, each of the temples at Osia, to quote Kramrisch, "is a model of clarity in the disposition and proportion of its architectural theme." The horizontal and vertical divisions balance each other, while the elegant proportions of the different sections and their chaste ornaments, together with the graceful and unbroken contour of the tower of each, contribute to lend the temples a charming effect and appearance. The pañchā-yatana temples, again, in their exquisite setting and orderly disposition of the central and accessory shrines, represent each an impressive composition. The early series of temples at Osia, even in their damaged state, constitute, hence, one of the most significant among the entire series of Nāgara temples.

In Rajasthan temples essentially of the same style are also found at Jharlapatan, Ambam and Buchkala. One of the temples at
Buchkala has an inscription, dated in v. s. 872 (A.D. 815), of the reign of the Gurjara Pratihara king Nagabhaṭṭa II. At Osia an inscription in the Mahāvira temple speaks of the shrine as existing in the time of Vatsarāja, father of Nagabhaṭṭa. The temple itself, as it now stands, is however of a later date. Vatsarāja flourished in the last quarter of the eighth century, and these two inscriptions indicate that during the early Pratihara regime in the eighth-ninth centuries there was a brisk temple-building activity in Rajasthan. From stylistic indications the early series of Osian temples may be said to have belonged to about that period. In plan, in shape, in appearance and in surface treatment the early temples in Rajasthan resemble the temples of the Nāgara order in other parts of India and cannot be said to have presented any distinctive mark as yet.

In the early series of the Osia, temple conceptions other than Nāgara may be recognised as well. A small temple consisting of a square sanctum preceded by an open pillared portico has a low pyramidal superstructure composed of flat tiers rising in gradually receding stages. In this may be recognised what is known as the bhadra or piḍhā deal in Orissa. The form is not unknown in temples of Nāgara conceptions in which it appears as the mandapa in front of the rekha sanctum. Its occurrence as the sanctum proper, as we have in this Osian temple, may however, be considered to be rare. The much damaged temple No. 3 at Osia represents, again, an unusual form. It has a sanctum of rectangular plan preceded by a wide mandapa, also of a rectangular design. The superstructures over both these components have collapsed. The rectangular design is evidently a rare feature and appears to suggest a form of the superstructure over the sanctum which is, without doubt, unrelated to that of the rekha tower of a Nāgara temple. The remains of the roof of the mandapa show curved slabs, regularly arranged, as covering the transepts. A wagon-vaulted roof rising in two stages might have been a likely covering for the rectangular hall, and a similar superstructure may also be suggested for the sanctum on this analogy. Certain elements of the Nāgara temple, such as the division of the wall into ratha facets and of the cube of the sanctum into three segments, the balconied windows with kakṣahasanas at the lateral sides of the mandapa, also characterise this temple. They may be considered to be borrowals from the principal conception so widely prevalent over a vast area. In temple No. 3 at Osia we have apparently a conception of the rectangular temple called the Khākharā in Orissan canonical texts, of which likely parallels may

84 EI, IX, p. 199.
be found in the Vaitāl deul at Bhauvanésvara, a few other temples in Orissa, the Navadurga temple at Yagesvara, the Teli-ka Mandir at Gwalior, etc.

This early series of Rajasthan temples, fundamentally resembling the contemporary Nāgara temples, may be found to have greater affinities with those of Central India. Again, the development of the early Nāgara temple in this part of country, including Gujarat and Kathiawar, and in Central India is also, to a certain extent, parallel. The distinctive type of Western Indian temple, which emerges, very possibly, not before the end of our period, differs only slightly from the typical Central Indian one.

Whatever the affinity of an early Nāgara temple in Rajasthan, with the Central Indian, it lacks, however, many of the distinctive features of the typical Central Indian temple, namely the extension of paga facets beyond the shoulder course, number of amalakas as the crowning element of the sikhara, and the most significant, the saptaratha plan and the seven-fold division of the cubical section of the garbha-grīha. A typical Western Indian temple (Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kathiawar) retains the three-fold division of this section that has been characteristic of the early Nāgara design.

(b) Gujarat and Kathiawar

The monuments of Gujarat and Kathiawar may be found to share certain features significantly in common. The evolution of the Nāgara temple design in these two regions again, is to a very great extent identical and closely allied to that in Rajasthan. Geographical reasons and, to a certain extent, political circumstances might have been responsible for such striking affinities.

A few temples in Kathiawar, apparently representing conceptions different from that of the Nāgara, are chronologically anterior to the oldest extant monument of the Nāgara design and should naturally claim a prior attention. Perhaps the oldest structural monument in Kathiawar may be seen in the temple at Gop in the Barda hills. Because of its rather unusual shape it has been described as a ‘stranger’ in the region.\(^{85}\) It was supported on a basement of two terraces, the upper of which, slightly receding in dimensions, possibly served as a pradakšinā-patha or ambulatory around the sanctum cella. Each of the terraces, and these are heavily damaged, is relieved horizontally at the bottom, and also perhaps at the top, by bands of mouldings and vertically along the sides by ornamental niches originally with sculptures. The square sanctum, supported

\(^{85}\) Henry Cousens, Somnath and other Medieval Temples in Kathiawad, p. 37.
on the upper terrace, has severely plain perpendicular walls with a line of grooves on each side near the top. A few of the grooves still have fragments of wood, apparently remains of wooden beams that supported a roof covering the upper terrace running around the sanctum walls. Such a roof as well as the walls enclosing the second terrace appear, hence, to have been of wooden construction. Thus there seems to have been a closed ambulatory of wood around the sanctum cella and the disappearance of this element, naturally in course of time, has now lent a bald and severe effect to the sanctum walls which, it should be noted, were not originally meant to be seen from outside. The Siva temple at Villesvara, the best preserved temple of this class (as we shall see later), has its stone ambulatory complete and on the analogy of this temple similar wooden ambulatories may also be said to have formed essential elements in temples of this type.

The cubical section of the sanctum ends at the top in two shallow cornices. The roof rises in two stepped courses and is ultimately surmounted by a graceful domical finial. On each side the stepped courses are relieved by chaitya arches, two in the lower and one in the upper. Bold in design and elegant in execution they originally contained sculptures and project each in the form of a former. The superstructure is highly effective and stands in strong contrast to the severe appearance of the lower section.

The Gop temple presents a rather unusual design and it may be useful to look for its antecedents and affiliations. According to Cousens two important elements of the temple, namely the stepped-out pyramidal roof with chaitya arches in the courses and the trefoil arches around the lower terrace of the basement, have striking analogies in the early Kashmirian monuments, particularly the Martand. He is of the opinion, hence, that the type was introduced in the region of Kathiawar by the Sun-worshipping ancestors of the Mers. This view of Cousens, though accepted by scholars including Coomaraswamy and Percy Brown, suffers from two important drawbacks. First, nothing is definitely known about the history of the ancestors of the Mers or that they originally came from Kashmir. Secondly, the Gop temple is admittedly two cen-

86 Information kindly supplied by Professor N. K. Bose.
87 Cousens thinks that they were made of stone (Somnath, p. 37).
88 Ibid., p. 6.
89 HIIA, p. 82.
90 Percy Brown, Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu), p. 159.
turies earlier\textsuperscript{91} than the temple type in Kashmir with which such analogies are suggested. The absence in Kashmir of the type of a date earlier to that of Gop precludes, hence, the hypothesis of a Kashmirian origin of the Gop temple. Again, when closely analysed, the Kashmirian analogy appears to rest on a weak foundation. The Gop temple has, no doubt, a stepped-out roof as in the Kashmirian temples. Nevertheless, the graceful dome-shaped crown of the Gop superstructure, instead of the harsh angular top of the Kashmirian temple, indicates for the temple at Gop a conception other than that of the Kashmirian. The boldly projecting chaitya dormers in the superstructure of Gop are fundamentally dissimilar to the angular pediments on the roof of the Kashmirian temple. It is difficult, moreover, to class the arches around the basement of the Gop temple with the distinct trefoils of Kashmir. On these considerations it is more reasonable to hold that the conception of the Gop temple was wholly distinct from that of the Kashmir temple.

The shape of the basement arches in the Gop temple has led Sankalia\textsuperscript{92} to suggest, with some hesitation though, a Gandharan influence through Sind. This view, again, cannot be pressed seriously because in respect of the fundamental elements of design and composition the Gop temple can be said to have hardly any parallel in the Gandharan monuments. The two fundamental features in the composition of the Gop temple, followed also in other monuments of this class, are a covered ambulatory around the sanctum cella and the stepped arrangement of the roof. The first has a parallel in a type of Gupta temples, usually storeyed in elevation, and on this analogy the stepped arrangement of the roof in the Gop temple may be but a slightly different expression of the storeyed conception of the Gupta temple. In fact, the bold and emphatic steps in the superstructure of the Gop temple reproduce, though in a lesser way, the receding storeys in the composition of the roof of the Gupta temple. There is a plausibility, hence, that the type represented by the Gop temple in Kathiawar was inspired by the storeyed temple of the Gupta period. Chaitya arches are found to occur as gables

\textsuperscript{91} James Burgess, \textit{Report on the Antiquities of Kathiawar and Cutch.}, p. 7; HI IA, p. 82; Br. IA, p. 159. A radio-carbon test of the wood fragment found in the Gop temple was conducted by Dr. Syamadas Chaterji in the Physics Laboratory of the Calcutta University College of Science and Technology. According to the test, Dr. Chaterji reports, the wood fragment is approximately 1400 years old. The view of the archaeologists who place the temple in the sixth century A.D. is thus confirmed by the scientific test. H. D. Sankalia (\textit{Archaeology of Gujarat}, p. 59) is inclined to assign the temple to the fifth century.

\textsuperscript{92} H. D. Sankalia, \textit{AG}, pp. 57-59.
on the roof from very early times since the days of Bharhut (c. second century B.C.) and there is no reason, hence, to suggest a Kashmirian analogy, which itself is doubtful, on this account. Cousens\textsuperscript{93} has, no doubt, noticed certain analogies between the temple at Gop and what he describes as early Dravidian temples at Aihole and Pattadakal; he, however, describes them as “purely accidental.” In our opinion such analogies are of greater significance in respect of the affiliations of the Gop temple. It should be noted especially that an almost identical plan characterises also the early temples of the Deccan where among the different kinds of superstructures both the storeyed as well as the stepped arrangements may be recognised.

Temple of the same class as that of Gop may be found at several other places in Kathiawar, namely Than (old Jaina temple),\textsuperscript{94} Visavavada,\textsuperscript{95} Harshadamata, Pindara, Villeshvara,\textsuperscript{96} etc. The plan in each case is that of a sanctum within a covered ambulatory and each has a superstructure of stepped stages. In these respects they may be recognised as clear analogues of the Gop temple which, however, is the earliest in the series. In course of time the number of stepped stages was increased together with a gradual reduction of the heights of the steps. At the same time were gradually achieved more harmonious proportions between the substructure and the superstructure along with a general refinement of the contours. The temple of Siva at Villeshvara\textsuperscript{97} illustrates, perhaps, the latest development of the type. Being the most perfectly preserved temple of this class it is helpful for an understanding of the design and composition of the type in a more convincing manner. The entire composition, built of stone, is square in shape with the sanctum situated within a covered ambulatory and with a pyramidal superstructure of stepped courses in receding tiers. Each stage on each face is relieved by ornamental chaitya arches, gradually diminishing in number from six in the lowest stage to one in the topmost. Each stage is further ornamented with a decorative finial at each corner. The ambulatory, which has a flat roof, is relieved on the exterior by pilasters that end in cornices. The Villeshvara temple is the largest among the temples of the Gop class and is the most complete of the series. The increased number of stepped courses, the refined pyramidal contour, the harmonious proportions and the shape and design of the chaitya

\textsuperscript{93} Henry Cousens, \textit{Somnath}, pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., pl. XLVIII.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., pp. 44-45.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 40; H. D. Sankalia, \textit{AG}, pp. 59-62.
arches would also indicate it to be the latest, at least in point of style, in the whole group.

A rectangular design of the sanctum may also be recognised among the temples of the Gop type, there being at least two temples of this class in Kathiawar, one at Kadvar and the other at Kalsar. The latter, better preserved of the two, has a rectangular portico in front. In both the components the roots rise in stepped courses, each course being relieved by chaitya arches. The topmost course over the sanctum is damaged; that over the portico slopes on either side and on that analogy a similar from of the top course over the sanctum may be visualised. From the plain walls with narrow slots along the sides at the top it appears that the sanctum was situated within a covered ambulatory of wood that has now disappeared.

It has been usual to class the Sun temple at Sutrapada with the temples of the Gop class. The situation of the sanctum within a covered ambulatory, that has been characteristic of the Gop group of monuments, might have been responsible for such a classification. The shape and design of the tall curvilinear tower belong, however, to a conception that is essentially different from that of the Gop type. Instead of stepped-out pyramidal tower with strong horizontal emphasis, as one sees in the Gop class of monuments, the tower of the Sutrapada temple has its emphasis on the vertical lines in the graded facets on each face rising with unbroken contour, and with āmalaka quoins at regular intervals at the corners and the heavy āmalaka-śilā with a smaller one as the crowning elements, it reproduces the prominent characteristics of a Nāgara temple. The plan of an inner sanctum within a rocheved ambulatory may also be found to have characterised temples of the Nāgara design in other regions as well as in Kathiawar. The chaitya ornament on each face of the tower is also a characteristic mode of surface treatment of the Nāgara temple in different parts of India. On these considerations it is proper to class the Sun temple at Sutrapada with the temples of the Nāgara style. Similarly it is not possible to class the small temple at Pasthar with its archaic śikhara of stunted height with the temples of the Gop group, as has been done by Sankalia. Close to the Śiva temple at Villeshvara, described above, there is a śikhara temple representing, as Cousens says, “a very early and rudimentary stage of the Northern style.”

88 Henry Cousens, Somnath, pp. 38-39; H. D. Sankalia, AG, pp. 60, 63.
89 Henry Cousens, Somnath, pp. 7, 41; H. D. Sankalia, AG, pp. 59; 62; Br. IA, p. 159
100 H. D. Sankalia, AG, p. 60.
101 Henry Cousens, Somnath, p. 40.
temples of two conceptions, the Nāgara and that of the Gop type, at an early stage of architectural activity in this area might have been responsible for a few of the early Nāgara temples in the region having covered ambulatories.

In Gujarat and Kathiawar temples of the early Nāgara form, prior to the emergence of the characteristic regional expression, are very few in number. Even of the few that remain, some have been erroneously interpreted or their correct imports not always recognised. It is, perhaps, on this account that the characteristic expression of the Nāgara temple in Gujarat and Kathiawar has sometimes been considered to be an individual growth in this area, some even suggesting its derivation from the Gop type of monuments. One has to recognise that architecturally, though not geographically, the two groups stand apart and illustrate two essentially different conceptions. On an ultimate analysis there can hardly be found any common link between the two either in form or in design. The Nāgara style of temple had been widely distributed over different parts of India, including Gujarat and Kathiawar. Monuments bearing the distinctive features of the Nāgara design are equally in evidence in this area from an early phase and in course of time was evolved yet another manifestation of the Nāgara style sharing some characteristics in common with the typical Rajasthani expression and the entire movement, as already observed, may be designated as the Western Indian.

A few stray and isolated monuments of the early Nāgara design still remain in Gujarat and Kathiawar, perhaps vestiges of many more that might have been erected during the early phase of architectural activity in this region. Fundamentally they are in no way different from the early monuments of this class in other areas of the Nāgara zone.

A dilapidated shrine at Rhoda (Gujarat) may be recognised to be the oldest example of a Nāgara temple in this area in respect of both form and design. It consists of a small square sanctum, tri-ratha in plan, preceded by a pillared portico in front. In their chaste ornamentation the pillars have almost a classic simplicity of design. The cubical section of the sanctum cella is divided into three segments and is separated from the curvilinear superstructure by a recessed frieze between two projected mouldings. Much of the sikhara has collapsed, but enough remains to enable one to determine its distinctive features. It is seen to be inclining inward and is divided horizontally by āmalaka quoins at regular intervals. The vertical bands on its body, in continuation of the rathas in the
lower sections, have richly fretted ornamentation of chaitya arches. The āmalaka quoins would suggest a flat and spheroid āmalaka-śilā as the crowning member of the śikhara. From its simple design and elegant and refined ornamentation the Rhoda temple does not appear to have been far removed from the Gupta śikhara temple with which begins the history of the Nāgara temple style. Apparently, it has to be assigned to a date not later than the seventh century. The small shrine lying close to the Siva temple at Vīllesvarā and the Sun temple at Sutrapada, both in Kathiawar, belong architecturally to an identical conception. The former, which appears to be unfinished, is more archaic in treatment as well as in effect. The latter seems to have been as rich in execution as the Rhoda temple; but being in an inferior kind of stone it has, more or less a weathered appearance.

There are a few other temples in Gujarat and Kathiawar of the early Nāgara form and of these, a small shrine at Pasthar (Kathiawar) may be said to present certain unusual features. It is of tri-ratha shape (as is visible from the śikhara), similar in form to temples of the same class that one finds elsewhere within the Nāgara zone. What is interesting is that the central band on the śikhara (rāhū-paga) is divided into two equal vertical halves by a deep sunken line along its height. The appearance of sectional āmalakas on this band may also be recognised to be a rare feature in this particular temple. In respect of these two unusual features the Pasthar temple may be said to have its analogy in Temple No. IV at Barakar in West Bengal, and the occurrence of such rare features in two temples situated far apart from each other supplies a problem that is difficult to explain in the present state of our knowledge. In the Pasthar temple the cubical section of the sanctum cella, in contrast to the rich scheme of the śikhara above, is unrelieved by any horizontal moulding or by any vertical ratha projection. This plain and severe appearance of the lower section may indicate that the sanctum was situated within a covered ambulatory, perhaps of wood, that has disintegrated. The above-mentioned Nāgara temple by the side of the Vīllesvarā Siva temple and another small temple lying close to the Navalakha temple at Ghumli (Kathiawar) also seem, from their bare walls, to have been originally provided each with an ambulatory of wood. The Sūrya temple at Sutrapada, being entirely made of stone, has this ambulatory still intact. It is not impossible that the plan of a sanctum within a covered ambulatory in this early series of Nāgara temple in Kathiawar was derived from monuments of the Gop class which had this characteristic composition. The plan of the
sandhāra-prāsada (temple with a covered ambulatory) that we meet with in several of the regional developments of the Nāgara temple might have evolved out of early compositions of this kind.

From the tri-ratha plan was naturally developed the pañcha-ratha, and of the few temples of this plan, architecturally posterior to the tri-ratha group, the small shrine at Sandera (Gujarat)\(^2\) may be considered to be one of the most notable monuments of early Nāgara form in this region. In its exquisite proportions and in its rich and elegant chaitya arch ornamentations it may be said to rival the celebrated Muktesvara temple at Bhuvanesvara. The Gānapatī and the Mahādeva temples at Mianī (Kathiawar),\(^3\) each of the pañcha-ratha plan and preceded by a pillared portico, are as effective in design and decorative treatment as the shrine at Sandera. The above-mentioned temple at Ghumli (Kathiawar) might have been as elegant but for the bare appearance of the exterior walls. The temple of Ranik Devī at Wadhawan (Kathiawar),\(^4\) though essentially belonging to the same conception, appears to be slightly later in date in view of the high plinth, the division of the cubical section into five segments and a rather elongated form of the śikhara.\(^5\) It has to be noted that unlike Orissa and Central India the typical Western Indian temple of the Nāgara style retains the three-fold division of the cubical section of the sanctum in conformity with the early Nāgara design; the five-fold division of this section, as seen in the Ranik Devī temple, is rather weakly expressed by a shallow band, not too emphatic in treatment, and may be considered to be an exception of this area.

Muni Bhāva’s temple, near Than (Kathiawar),\(^6\) and the temple of god Trinetrasvāra at Tarnetar,\(^7\) six miles north-west of Than, indicate further stages in the development of the simple design of the Nāgara temple toward the typical Western Indian form. The former is now in a battered state and the latter has entirely disappeared, the only records now surviving are a few photographs and drawings made in course of the survey of the monuments of Kathiawar by Cousens. The sanctum in each of the temples is pre-

\(^3\) Henry Cousens, Somnath, pl. XC.
\(^4\) Op. cit., pp. 53-54, pl. LVI.
\(^5\) H. D. Sankalia (AG, pp. 83-84) is inclined to include the Ranik Devī temple at Wadhawan and the temple at Sandera among the examples of the Solānki temple. But the above distinctive features of the early Nāgara temple are too emphatic, and it is difficult to class them otherwise.
\(^6\) Henry Cousens, Somnath, pp. 51-52, pls. LII, LIV.
\(^7\) Ibid.
ceded by an attached mandapa to which a distinctly regional character is supplied by the provision of kakshasanas, as noticed in the former temple. In the latter the sikhara had clusters of anga-sikharas around. It is this theme, anga-sikhara round the body of the principal sikhara, that distinguishes the early Nagara temple from its later regional developments. Each region has its own individual interpretation of this theme, Western India having likewise its own distinctive mode in this respect. This characteristic mode seems to have started in the now ruined Tarnetar temple which was presumably a key monument in the development of the typical Western Indian temple.

The typical Western Indian form of the Nagara temple, also called the Solaňki, appears to have received its complete expression during the period of the Chaulukya rulers of Gujarat. A discussion of such temples falls appropriately within the scope of the next volume of the series.

(iv) Mālava and Dakhan

Yet another regional expression of the Nagara temple style may be recognised in Mālava and the upper Deccan, called Dakhan by Cousens, roughly the territory between the lower reaches of the Narmadā and the upper courses of the Godāvari. A survey of the distribution of the temples of this series reveals that the territory covered by them was for sometime under the political hegemony of the Paramāras of Mālava. It was during the Paramāra hegemony again that the type reached its mature expression. The Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra of Paramāra king Bhoja possibly refers to this type as Bhūmiṭha ('born in the country'). There are cogent reasons hence for designating this regional type as Mālava after the name of the territory which formed the nucleus of the Paramāra dominions. The type extended beyond the limits of Mālava with the expansion of Paramāra outside the home territory. The type appears before us in its complete form not earlier than the eleventh century; the two eminent examples of the type belong to the second half of that century.

(v) Sindhu-Gaṅgā Valleys

In the upper belt of Northern India (Āryāvarta), in the rich riverine plains watered by the Sindhu and the Gaṅgā-Yamunā systems, very few old temples now survive. In this flat alluvial tract

stone was not easily procurable and the principal building material was necessarily brick. A brick building is not expected to survive long and once left to neglect disintegrates very rapidly. Besides, many political upheavals from which the territory repeatedly suffered have led to an almost total obliteration of the earlier monuments, except in a few out of the way and inaccessible places. The few extant temples that can claim some antiquity are situated in widely apart regions over this vast stretch of territory and belong, as is to be expected, to the Nāgara conception.

A few dilapidated brick temples in Uttar Pradesh (Parauli, Kurari and Tinduli) are found to exhibit characteristics of the early Nāgara temple, but for their preference for circular shape. In the temple at Parauli (Kanpur district) the sanctum cella is circular internally; externally it is a polygon of sixteen sides, describing the periphery of a circle. Three of the sides were possibly cut off in front to form the entrance. The sides are separated from one another by deeply recessed vertical lines from the base to the top. Because of this treatment of the exterior the cubical section has the appearance of being divided into pilasters and the theme is carried up the śikhara, each such facet with its tapering outline being covered with minute interlacing pattern of chaitya windows. The sunken lines separating the facets and their deep-cut minute tracery ornamentation lend to the exterior a very subtle effect of chiaroscuro. Several temples of similar external shape, but square internally, may be seen at Kurari (Fatehpur district), while another, circular externally and square internally, still stands at Tinduli (Fatehpur district). Unfortunately all these temples are heavily damaged. Except for the plan they follow, as the extant remains indicate, the fundamentals of the Nāgara design, and must have illustrated a new direction in the development of the Nāgara temple. Clear analogues of these brick temples are to be found in Central India in the temples at Chandrehe and Gurgi Masaun.

As some extant monuments indicate, the Nāgara temple conception seems to have been known also in the Himalayan regions in the north-west and in the Chotanagpur region and Bengal in the east. From the few stray and isolated examples it is not possible to say however whether there was any sustained and organised activity in Nāgara temple building in any of these areas. At least, neither of these regions has now a single monument that can compare, in

110 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
111 Ibid.
scale or in magnificence, with any of the regional manifestations of the Nāgara temple style mentioned above.

The earliest monument of the Nāgara design in the Himalayan regions may be seen in a group of rock-cut temples at Masrur (Kangra). Reproducing the prominent characteristics of the early Nāgara temple the group may belong to the eighth century A.D. A group of structural temples at Baijnath (Kangra), possibly of the ninth century, are alike in form and design to the early Nāgara temples in Orissa, a further analogy with the Orissan movement being supplied by a rekha śikhara embedded at each of the four corners of the maṇḍapa in one of the temples (cf. similar feature in the maṇḍapa of the Vaitāl deul at Bhuvanesvara, Orissa). Several temples of early Nāgara form at Chamba are characterised each by paścima-ratha plan and in the bigger temples pañchāṅga division of the bāḍa. The last seems to connect them with the Orissan development of the Nāgara style, while the shallow string-course around the āmalaka-śilā represents a feature that is particularly Rajput in occurrence. In a few of the Chamba temples there appear two superposed parasols, each resting on a frame of wood and covered by thin slabs of slate, one over the gāndhi and the other over the āmalaka. This contrivance appears to be a necessary feature in the hilly regions for draining off snow and is seen also in the temples of Kedārnātha and Badarinātha in the snowy heights of the Himalayas. The temple of Mahādeva at Bajaura Kulu is notable for rich carved ornamentations and for the three side chapels, one on each of the three sides, projected from the body of the sanctum.

In the eastern belt of Āryāvarta a few extant monuments in West Bengal and the adjoining region of Chotanagpur illustrate again a familiarity of this territory with the Nāgara temple conception. That the Nāgara design was also the prevailing form in other parts of Bengal and Bihar may also be known from several monolithic and metal votive temples in miniature of this design and sculptures reproducing in relief the form of this order discovered from these areas.

Of the extant temples referred to above a few may be assigned

113 Ibid., 1905-06, p. 17f.
114 For Chamba temples, ASC, XIV, pp. 109-14.
116 JISOA, II, pp. 135-36; HBR, I, pp. 499-500, figs. 82; 84; 104.
117 R. D. Banerji, Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture, pls. XIX. b, XC. a, XCIV. b.
to our period. There was an important group at Telkupi (Purulia district) evidencing a sustained activity for several hundred years.118 Unfortunately, the temples have been submerged, victims of a necessary irrigation project in this area. Nearby at Para, Boram, Dulmi, etc. there stand a few small and unpretentious temples of Nāgara conception; they are not important however, either in scale or in preservation, to be of much use for a study of Nāgara temples in Eastern India.

Some temples in West Bengal may offer a fruitful study for an understanding of the Nāgara form of the temple in this area. At Barakar (Burdwan district) there are four stone temples collectively known as the Begunia group.119 Three of these (Nos. I, II and III) have to be dated to a period not earlier than the sixteenth century. Temple No. IV, however, as the architectural and stylistic features indicate, belongs to a much earlier period. It consists of a sanctum. *trī-ratha* in plan, but anticipating the *pañcha-ratha* in the provision of a subsidiary niches on either side of the central *ratha* projection. The *mandapa* in front is a recent addition. The niches are each capped by a superstructure, those in the central *rathas* terminating in the lowest stage of the *baraṇḍa*. The *gāndī*, with a slight inward curvature from the start, is topped by the spheroid *āmalaka-sīlā*, its surface being covered by carved panels, illustrative of various legends and animal and human motifs.

Reproducing the prominent characteristics of the early Nāgara form, temple No. IV at Barakar offers a general resemblance to the Paraśurāmeśvara at Bhuvanesvara. Its link with the typical Orissan temple is also evident in the bold miniature *sikhara* shown on the front face. These are, however, certain distinctive divergences. for instance, the comparatively taller *sikhara*, the relief panels that introduce a new scheme of ornamentation, the rounded contours of the *bhūmi-āmalakas* and the fluted cusp-like indentations of these and the main *āmalaka*, and the shallow rectangular offset panels on the mouldines of the plinth. In respect of the last two features the Barakar temple seems to have parallels in temples of Western India, particularly of Gujarat. Further, the division of the *rāhā-paga* on each face in two vertical sections by a deep sunken line along the middle and the sectional *āmalakas* in their upper stages also seem to connect the Barakar temple with the Western Indian movement, such features being noticed in the temple at Pasthar.

118 D. Mitra, *Telkupi.*
119 ASC. VIII. pp. 135-36; *JISOA,* I, pp. 125-27, pl. XXXVI; *HBR,* I; p. 499 fig. 81.
(Kathiawar). Along with these affinities of the Barakar temple with the distant west, its link with Orissa remains clear and explicit. As it now stands, it offers many interesting problems of which no satisfactory explanation is available at present. From the fundamentals of its architectural form it does not appear to have been much later in date than that of the Paraśurāmeśvara at Bhuvaneśvara.

In the brick temple at Sat Deuliya (Burdwan district) the rathaka plan and curvilinear tower with the ratha shape repeated on the tower. The axial division of the sanctum cube into five (pāñchāṅga) segments has apparent analogy with the Orissan development of the Nāgara design. The cube ends in a series of inverted offsets forming the support for the gāndī. The latter has an emphatic and unbroken curvilinear contour and is covered by low-relief patterns of interlacing chaitya windows all over. From the damaged state of the top it is not possible to ascertain the nature and character of the crowning elements of the temple. A significant feature is the absence of the bhūmi-āmalakas at the corners of the gāndī; this may suggest also the absence of the āmalaka-sīlā as the crowning member of the temple. In spite of the absence of these usual features of the Nāgara temple scheme, the fundamentals of the plan and elevation of the temple clearly indicate its affiliation with the Nāgara design. From the architectural form and decorative scheme, the temple may be assigned to about the tenth century.

The finest brick temple of the Nāgara design in this part of the country is the Siddhesvara temple at Bahulara (Bankura district). To the same conception belongs also the brick temple known as Jatar deul in the Sunderbuns; its original shape and appearance have, however, been much obliterated by modern conservation. In these temples may be recognised yet another interpretation of the theme of the aniga-śikharas which may be considered to have been characteristic of the Nāgara temples of this region. Two stone temples at Dihar (Bankura district), though their śikharas have disappeared, seem also to have belonged to this group. From considerations of style they appear to be dated not earlier than the eleventh century and fall outside the scope of the present volume.

120 ASR, 1934-35, p. 43, pl. XIX, a; HBR, I, pp. 500-01; fig. 85.
121 ASC, VIII, p. 202; ASR, 1921-22, pp. 84-85; 1922-23, pp. 58-59; HIIA, fig. 213; JISOA, II, pp. 139-40; HBR, I, p. 501, fig. 86.
122 JISOA, II, p. 141; HBR, I, pp. 501-02, fig. 89.
123 JISOA, II, pp. 140-41; HBR, I, p. 1501, fig. 88.
5. EXOTIC TYPES

Among the temples of the period there are some that stand apart from any of the canonical styles mentioned above, and in the wide perspective of Indian temple architecture they may appear to be to a certain extent exotic. Nevertheless, they are found to be characteristics of the regions in which they developed.

First in this context comes a group of temples in Kashmir. In this secluded valley a significant phase of building activity starts with Lalitāditya Muktapīḍa (c. A. D. 724-760), one of the foremost monarchs of his age. The earliest monuments were Buddhist and of these, a group of buildings at Parihāsapura consisting of a stūpa, a monastery and a chaitya is found to have been conceived on an impressive scale. Each, however, conforms to the characteristic pattern and calls for little comment.

The most abundant activity of this phase is recognised in the erection of Brahmanical temples. A few of these were, no doubt, grand and imposing conceptions. The typical Kashmir temple is situated within a quadrangular court enclosed by an impressive peristyle of cells and approached by one or three monumental porticos. This kind of conception is not unknown in India proper and in Kashmir it might have been derived from similar Buddhist establishments. But apart from this, the Kashmir temple has an individual character of its own which is particularly emphasised by its pillars, the treatment of its wall surfaces and by the elevation of the temple superstructure. The last consists of a pyramidal roof of two stages, obviously derived from the usual wooden roofs common in Kashmir. On each stage of the roof there is a triangular pediment enclosing a trefoil niche on each side, with a similar pediment over the doorway in front. The pillars are fluted and surmounted by capitals of quasi-Doric order. The ceiling of the roof, either of wood or stone, takes the form of a lantern formed by overlapping intersecting squares. This constitutes another speciality of the Kashmir temple. These features lending a distinctive character to the Kashmir temple may betray certain extra-Indian inspiration. The celebrated Sun temple of Martand, built by Lalitāditya, is one of the earliest and perhaps the most impressive conception even in its ruins. The pattern established therein appears to have been followed in subsequent temples. Of the other typical examples may be mentioned the temples

124 HIEA, I, pp. 251-72; HILA, p. 143; Br. JA., pp. 185-94; Benjamin Rowland, Art and Architecture of India, pp. 119-20; For detailed accounts of the Kashmir temples reference may be made to R. C. Kak, Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.
at Bangath, Avantipura, Avanteśvara and Avantīsvāmī, the latter representing another touchstone of the type), Patan, Payar, Buniār, and Pandrethan or Purāṇādhisātha. The type does not appear to have extended outside the limits of Kashmir. The view of its influence on the Gop type of temple in Kathiawar lacks support.

The colossal brick temple at Paharpur (Rajshahi district, North Bengal), as laid bare by excavations, is of an unusual type that has been described by some scholars to be unknown to Indian archaeology. It occupies nearly the centre of an immense quadrangle forming the monastery, the far-famed Somapura mahāśīra of old. It is of the shape of a gigantic square cross with angles of projection between the arms, measuring 356'8" north-south and 314'3" east-west. The temple is seen to be rising in a number of terraces with an ambulatory enclosed by a parapet wall in each of the two upper terraces. An extensive flight of stairs, provided on the north, leads to the first and second terraces.

Dikshit appears to be right in observing that "the plan of the Paharpur temple was the result of a pre-mediated development of a single central unit", in which expansion was in a sense pre-determined in a vertical direction. A hollow square pile in the centre, shooting high up above the terraces, provides the nucleus round which the plan of this stupendous monument has been conceived and evolved. The walls of this tall central shaft form a sharp square and in order to relieve the monotony of the bare walls provision was made in the second upper terrace for a projection, consisting of an ante-room and a forward chamber, on each face, leaving out a portion of the length of the square at either end. This treatment resulted in a cruciform shape with one projecting angle between the arms. This was enclosed by an ambulatory with a parapet wall which was made to run parallel to this arrangement. On the next lower terrace again a similar rectangular projection was added on each side, the whole being surrounded by an ambulatory with a parapet. The basement conformed to the alignment of the lower terrace structure with the result that the angular projections in the plan of the lower terrace and that of the basement were three each between the arms of the cross; an additional projection was added to the whole by the stairway provided in the middle of the northern arm. The entire conception, there are reasons to believe, belongs to a single period of construction and the evidences of later repairs, additions and altera-

K. N. Dikshit, "Excavations at Paharpur" MASI, No. 55.
126 Ibid., p. 7.
tions did in no way affect the fundamental arrangement of the temple.

Some scholars are inclined to find a prototype of the Paharpur temple in a colossal brick structure excavated at Lauriya Nandangarh in North Bihar. There is no doubt that there is a general agreement between the two in the cruciform shape presented by each. It should be noted, however, that the projecting angles of the Nandangarh monument appear to be purely decorative and to have originated from an entirely different conception. Their disposition, too, is different and every re-entrant angle is found to be revetted by a buttress. The distinctive arrangement of rectangular structures round the monument at each lower level, which resulted in the cruciform shape and in the production of the many projecting and re-entrant angles that we see at Paharpur, is totally absent at Lauriya Nandangarh. The Paharpur temple may be said to have its own specific characteristics and no exact parallel has so far been found elsewhere in India.

According to Dikshit the main shrine of the temple was situated on the top, i.e. on the third terrace. This is said to have consisted of a square cella with an open ambulatory around. In view of the extremely mutilated condition of the monument at the top it is difficult to follow Dikshit's line of argument in this regard. Certain facts, however, definitely go against above suggestion. If the shrine had been located on the top, i.e. the third terrace, one should naturally expect the grand stairway extending beyond the second terrace to reach the third. There are definite indications, however, that this flight of stairs terminated with the second terrace and that no access to the third terrace, if there had been any, had been provided for in the original composition. Some would like to locate the shrine on the brick-paved floor inside the hollow square pile 'roughly at the level' of the second terrace with its projected chambers. But no access to this inner square from the chambers has been found, nor is there any evidence that there was originally such an access that had been blocked up at a later period. The paved platform inside the hollow square pile, that had been strengthened by a deep soling of bricks and several courses of offsets, appears, hence, to have been provided for to add to the strength of the lofty walls of the central square. So far as the arrangement goes the sanctuary of the stupendous temple could have neither been situated at the top nor inside the central square pile.

128 Paharpur, p. 8.
Dikshit's suggestion that a four-faced (*chaturmukha, chaumukha*) Jain temple might have furnished the barest model129 of the Paharpur temple is a pertinent one and is worth more serious consideration. In this connection one should take into account a particular type of temples at Pagan in Burma130 which may be regarded as an adaptation of the *chaumukha* shrines of the Jains. The type consists of a square temple with four images set in recessed niches on four faces of a solid masonry pile of square shape standing in the middle of a surrounding gallery or galleries and approached by entrance vestibules on one or more of its faces. The Pagan temples appear to offer a striking analogy to the plan of the second terrace of the Paharpur temple and may be compared with profit for the many problems of this unique Indian monument now in a fragmentary state. At Paharpur the walls of the central pile do not have any niches for the reception of images; yet bearing in mind the analogy of the Pagan temples and of the *chaumukha* shrines, a suggestion that images were installed in the ante-rooms on the second terrace does not appear to be quite improbable. It has to be noted that these ante-rooms still have remains of brick platforms abutting on the walls behind and there is every probability that these were intended as pedestals of the images that were once installed on the four sides of the central square pile.

The temple was built of well-burnt bricks laid in mud mortar. On the outer face the plainness of the walls is relieved by projecting cornices of ornamental bricks and bands of terracotta plaques, set in recessed panels, which run in a single row around the basement and in double rows around the ambulatory parapets in the upper terraces. The lower part of the basement is embellished by a number of stone sculptures which are almost wholly Brahmanical, though extraordinarily varied in style and distribution.131 The main fabric belongs to a single period of construction, most likely to the time of Dharmapāla, who was responsible for the foundation of the monas-

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129 Dikshit uses the word 'outline' (*ibid.*, p. 7) which presupposes an earlier structure that served as the nucleus for additions and amplifications at different periods. As it stands now, the temple belongs wholesale to a single period of construction and if any earlier structure existed it served as a model for the present monument which was conceived on a much grander scale, and not as a nucleus for later additions and accretions.


131 The problem of the occurrence on the basement of stone sculptures of varied style, a few of earlier dates, has been discussed in detail by the present writer in *IC*, VII, pp. 35-40 and sketch, and also in *HBR*, I, pp. 508-09.
tery around it in the latter part of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century.

In view of the extremely fragmentary state of the monument, as it is at present, the form of the superstructure, the method of roofing and other details of elevation are difficult to ascertain now. Marshall\textsuperscript{132} assumes the temple to have been a ‘garbha-chaitiya’ or hollow pagoda. Such perhaps was also the view of R. D. Banerji\textsuperscript{133} who described the main shrine of the temple as consisting of a ‘hollow-roofed chamber’, meaning probably a shrine open to the sky. But such open shrines, during this period at least, are extremely rare, if not unknown. It is reasonable to presume that this stupendous composition was capped by some sort of superstructure. The terraced arrangement of the structure would appropriately suggest a roof rising in receding tiers over the vaults spanning the different ambulatory galleries, broken by gables, possibly with dormer windows, over the projections on each face. On the analogy of the Pagan temples it is possible to suggest again that the tall masonry pile in the centre supported a curvilinear \textit{sikhara} as the crowning element of this colossal composition. This kind of roof and superstructure suits not only the analogy of the Pagan temples, but also the evidences of shrines shown in relief in East Indian sculptures or sketched in miniature in East Indian manuscript illuminations.

The type of temple laid bare at Paharpur has been described as entirely unknown in Indian archaeology. Indian literature\textsuperscript{134} on architecture, however, often refers to a type of building, known as \textit{Sarvatobhadra}, which is described to be a square shrine with four entrances at the cardinal faces and with an ante-chamber on each side. Further, it should have uninterrupted galleries all around, should have five storeys and sixteen corners and many beautiful turrets and spires. The temple at Paharpur, as now excavated, approximates fundamentally to the \textit{Sarvatobhadra} type as described in Indian \textit{śilpa} texts. It is a many-terraced temple, each terrace corresponding to the height of a storey, consisting perhaps of a votive altar in each of the four projecting faces and surrounded by a continuous ambulatory in the second terrace, with further projections and passages in the next lower terrace to extend the building commensurate to its height, a scheme that results in so many projecting and re-entrant angles in the ground plan. It is also to be noted that the Jaina

\textsuperscript{132} Illustrated London News, January 29, 1927, p. 190.

\textsuperscript{133} ASR, 1925-26, p. 109.

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Brīhat Sāhāhitā}, LII, 36, also relevant commentary, \textit{Matsya Purāṇa}, ch. 269, 84-85; \textit{Nāsika}, II, p. 137.
chaturmukha (chaumukha), i.e. four images on four sides of a square block, which might have supplied the model for this elaborate structure, was also known as pratimā sarvatobhadrikā. In Indian temple architecture, thus, the type does not appear to have been unknown. The texts prescribe such a type for the use of the gods and the kings; if our reconstruction of the elevation of the Paharpur temple is accepted, a fair popularity of the type in Eastern India is evidenced by the not too infrequent representations of this type of shrines in the sculptures and paintings hailing from this region. In fact, such illustrations indicate that the type was possibly characteristic of Eastern India.

This type of temple in Eastern India may be found to have influenced greatly the architectural activities of South-East Asia, especially of Burma and Indonesia, the origins and associations of which had been an intriguing question with the archaeologists since the time of Fergusson. We have already referred to the points of analogy between the Paharpur temple and the square temples of Pagan in Burma. At the same time there are again certain points of divergence between the two. Though the shape and elevation of the Paharpur temple might have afforded a possible scope for imitation by the Burmese builders, there should be recognised a substantial difference in the general conception and arrangement of the Pagan temple as a whole. Dikshit has referred to the Tjandi Loro Jonggrang and the Tjandi Sewu in Central Java as offering the nearest approximation to the plan and elevation of the Paharpur temple. "The general view of the former", he says, "with angular projections, truncated pyramidal shape and horizontal lines of decoration, reproduces the prominent characteristics of the Indian monument." The plan of the main temple in each of two complexes, Tjandi Loro Jonggrang and Tjandi Sewu, also resembles that of the second terrace of the Paharpur temple. Further, clear analogies with the Indian temple are afforded by the terraced elevation and unbroken circumambulatory galleries in both the Javanese monuments. The colossal temple at Paharpur belongs definitely to an earlier period; the close connection between Eastern India and the archipelago is an established fact. In view, therefore, of a close similarity between the Paharpur temple on the one hand and the two Javanese monuments on the other, "the possibility is clearly suggested of the Indian monument being the prototype."

SCULPTURE OF NORTHERN INDIA

II. SCULPTURE OF NORTHERN INDIA FROM A.D. 320 TO 989

The rise of the Guptas and the consolidation of their power in terms of an imperial hegemony were destined not only to change the political set-up in India, but also to bring about outstanding achievements in all spheres of life in general, and the field of art activity in particular. The rise of the imperial Guptas led to the decline and downfall of the various foreign powers like the Sakas, Pahlavas, and the Kushānas, who had been dominating the scene since long. This ousting of the alien forces and the establishment of a unified kingdom by the Guptas, particularly over greater part of Northern India, facilitated “the efflorescence of Indian genius in all its aspects” fostered by “the resurgence of a conscious national ideal.” The impact of this on the art activity of the country was direct and conspicuous.

Although the rule of the Guptas did not outlive the fifth century, as a cultural epoch the Gupta period may be said to have extended from the fourth to the close of the sixth century. This period saw the culmination and fruition of all anterior trends and tendencies of artistic pursuits resulting in a unified and synthesised plastic expression characterised by an unprecedented intellectual diction and spiritual depth. Due to the inherent potentiality, both in spirit and type, of this plastic expression, whatever sculpture was produced throughout the length and breadth of India during the period between the fourth and the sixth centuries breathed the same air, and even subsequently, its legacy seems to have determined the norms of the derivatives. Gupta sculpture, therefore, marked the apogee between its preceding formative crescendo and the waning aftermath, and the effect of this highest achievement was not restricted to any particular region alone, but was shared with equal enthusiasm throughout the country and even outside. This explains why the art of the Gupta period is most aptly referred to as the ‘Classical’ art of India. It is ‘Classical’ because of its intrinsic quality of high-order, which was shared throughout the country but was never paralleled earlier or later, and which, serving as veritable index, helps us appreciate the nature of achievements accruing to anterior or posterior artistic practices in the country.2

1 S. K. Saraswati, A Survey of Indian Sculpture, (henceforth SIS) Calcutta, 1957, p. 120.

2 The word ‘Classical’, as applied to qualify Indian art of the period of the Guptas, has been explained by scholars in different ways. One scholar has interpreted this word as meaning “a form of purism through which Gupta art retains—despite a somewhat cold elegance—a robustness and simplicity of stylisation from which springs a creative vigour and richness of invention far removed from the academic Classical”. See Encyclopaedia of World Art, London, 1963, VII, p. 955.
After the Guptas, Harshavardhana of the Pushyabhūti family raised up in the seventh century an imperial authority with Kanauj as the centre. But his reign was short-lived, it did not have a dynastic succession, and, quite logically, his period, art historically speaking, was rather uneventful. In fact, in the latter half of the seventh century, there being no imperial leadership, Northern India was virtually in chaos, both politically and culturally. The interim leadership shifted freely and frequently resulting in the variations of the political map of India at random following the conquests of satellite powers. As a consequence, separatism coupled with regional bigotry started asserting, and this meant an obvious disintegration of the Gupta Classical tradition of art. Art, particularly sculptural art, did no longer have a common denominator irrespective of its station, but parochialism and regional idiosyncrasies virtually contributed not only to the dismemberment of the Classical fabric, but also to a sort of retrogression in the creative output of the sculptural art. Of course it did not take long to check the process of this retrogression and to regenerate a somewhat similar attitude towards art throughout Northern India, but with a conscious topographical relevance. Thereby was ushered in, roughly from the middle of the eighth century onwards, what is known as ‘medievalism’ or ‘medieval factor’ in Indian art, which, strictly speaking, did not amount to the negation of everything of Classical Indian art, but was nevertheless an eventual new interpretation of the latter in terms of the changed socio-political context of the period and its consequent bearing on the means and methods of art.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GUPTA SCULPTURE

In the pre-Gupta sculpture of Bhārhat and Sāñchī the artist seems to have viewed the human figure, almost invariably, as but a complement to the worlds of the flora and the fauna. In other words, human figures are represented there as one of the numerous manifestations of Nature. But in the Gupta sculptural art, human figures are not merely a manifestation, but rather the representation, of Nature with all its grandeur. The Gupta sculptor used the human figure as the vehicle for the transmutation of Nature into art. Naturally, therefore, his main concern was the human figure and how to make the various features of its form relevant to what exists in the vegetal and animal worlds, in other words, in Nature at large. In fact, the articulation of all natural phenomena in terms of the human figure was the basic artistic proposition before the Gupta sculptor, whereas his predecessors were content with representing
man only as a part of Nature. This discovery of the potentiality of the human figure was a major breakthrough, which enthused the Gupta sculptor to explore all possible comprehensible means to give expression to the new idea, viz., to epitomise the Nature through the human body-form. To him, therefore, the preferred form in art seems to have been the human figure in various contexts and capacities.

Between the pre-Gupta and Gupta sculpture, hence, there is not merely a chronological distance, but a distinct change in the basic points of reference, preference, and, consequently, of the entire aesthetic outlook. This change, of course, did not come all of a sudden. It was obviously an outcome of all anterior art practices and of the experiences gained thereby, sustained by a series of political and socio-economic factors which also helped the Guptas build and consolidate their imperial power. Already in the sculptures of Amarāvatī and Mathurā the symptoms of this change of attitude were evident, and when it culminated in the Gupta period, its impact was so strong and widespread that it seemed to have been a birth without a pre-natal preparation. The experimentations carried out in these centres of art, during the preceding century, bequeathed to the Gupta sculptors the benefit of the results of their experience. The sculptors of the Gupta period presumably took up a new approach to the proposition as well, partly because they might have realised the limitations of the approach undertaken by their predecessors, and, obviously, also because they had superior intellectual ability for doing things.

Although the Gupta sculptor represented the entire nature in terms of the human figure and its actions, he showed no intention of relegating Nature to any sort of insignificance or unimportance; rather he was more dependent on Nature in so far as he was keen to embody in the human figure itself all the essential qualities of the vegetal and animal worlds of Nature. The human figure in the Gupta sculpture is characterised by a disciplined vitality which is no doubt the abstracted essence of all the possible ramifications of Nature. The youth or the youthfulness being the veritable vehicle of vitality, the Gupta sculptor invariably preferred a youthful human figure, be it of a divine or a mortal being. But in his glorification of the youth he never failed to appreciate that the real insignia of the youth is not a lewd vigour, but a rhythm of liveliness.

This realisation of the indispensability of a discipline co-existing

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3 In fact, in the Gupta art, Nature is given more prominent role than what it was assigned earlier. See R. C. Majumdar (ed.), Classical Age, (henceforth CA), Bombay, 1954, p. 516.
with vitality in a human figure, to make it basically relevant to Nature and artistically more expressive, led the Gupta sculptor to abstract and then to redistribute, according to his own understanding and preference, the characteristic features of numerous forms and norms of Nature pertaining to the concepts of discipline, vitality, or both. He analysed, and as if singled out, the characteristic features of objects and subjects in Nature for transmutation into the various limbs of the human figure, so that the latter always retained their reference or relevance (ṣādṛṣṭya) to Nature on the one hand, and the physiological concept of the anatomy of the human figure, on the other. For this kind of sophisticated expression the sculptor had to use a language formulated by himself with the newly oriented vocabulary of aesthetic forms and norms drawn out from the repertoire of Nature, and as such understandable to the majority of the people. The rhythmic torsion of the body conveyed the sense of the gliding undulation of a sprightly creeper. The drooping eyelids of a serene and contemplative face, particularly of a Buddha figure, have their parallels in the soft and tender lotus petals. The neck is likened to a conchshell with its spiral curves representing the folds on that limb. The simile for the thigh is either the firm and resilient trunk of a plantain tree or of a young elephant. Through the ingenuity of similar other poetic analogies the Gupta sculptor, in fact, extended the visual meaning of the human from beyond its mere anatomical structure, and this new aesthetic vision enriched the expressive content of the entire Gupta sculpture.

In the very attempt to discover the correspondence between various limbs and lineaments of the human form and certain distinctive elements of different forms and norms of Nature lay the genesis of certain amount of idealisation and intellectualisation of the forms represented in Gupta art in general, and in the Gupta sculpture in particular. This constituent element of idealisation gradually led to the systematisation of a series of aesthetic canons in terms of various attitudes (āsana), gestures (mudrā), flexions (bhaṅga), proportion and measurement (tālamāna), and iconicographic signs (pratimālakṣaṇa). The intellectual discipline, the soul of Gupta art, elevated it from the surfeit of earthliness of Mathurā, and, at the same time, discarded the sensuousness of the Veṅgī school. The Gupta sculptor formulated, so to say, a rationale of these two fundamental aesthetic points of view upheld in the anterior art practices, and represented the human figure with the confidence of a vital human existence, but characterised by a subtle spiritual illumination. Through the fully rounded modelling of the body and the transparent luminosity of its texture, the human figures in the Gupta sculpture expressed its phy-
ysical energy and also the vital current (prāṇa) of life. At the same time, the face is lit up with a hitherto-unknown experience of wisdom which contributed to a definite contemplative concentration not only in the facial expression, but in the totality of the form itself. The wisdom that seized the art was the outcome of the experience of seeing the outside world with open eyes, and the inner world with eyes closed. The most meaningful expression of the combined visions of the two worlds can be seen in the invariable half-closed eyes with drooping eyelids of the faces of human figures, divine or mortal, in the Gupta sculpture. And therein lies the true significance of the concept of yoga (union) between the physical and spiritual aspects of life, which was the guiding principle not only of the plastic arts, but presumably also of all spheres of activities during the Gupta period.

This element of communion of the body and mind made the form of the human figure meaningful beyond its formal connotation. There was no need, hence, for the ascription of any nervous tension or muscular configuration in the body for suggesting physical energy. Whatever the action, the body remained in easy and relaxed contemplative state of being, but nevertheless, it did not, for that matter, lose its import of potential vigour or even virulence. Whatever the mood and sentiment expressed by the human figures, they were invariably characterised by a complete detachment from all human contingencies and from one another, even though a number of them were composed in a group and they were supposed to be emotionally interrelated or to participate in a common action.

So far as the theme is concerned, the sculptures of the Gupta period can broadly be divided into two categories: (i) free and independent sculptures, mostly of the nature of cult images, and (ii) the narrative reliefs. The former category includes on the one hand the images of the Buddha having monastic simplicity of form and hieratic discipline in the overall bearing, and on the other, those of the Bodhisattvas and Brahmanical cult divinities shown with lavish jewellery and apparel and expressing a somewhat greater relaxation in bearing. The contrast between these two groups of statuaries in terms of their respective aesthetic import is too obvious, and the recognition of the two divergent trends simultaneously is a veritable evidence of the richness and variety existing even within a singular themetic motif. The stone sculptures of the Buddha are often provided with large circular halo or nimbus which, being most delicately ornamented with intricate carvings, served as a visual metaphor, as if, for ostentation contrasting with the serene simplicity of the figure of the Buddha in front. The other important category of sculptures,
viz., the narrative reliefs, particularly those depicting the legends of the Buddha, are, by and large, very much systematised in their formal compositions which often betray a sense of monotony about them. The episodes are often arranged one above the other in several tiers. The compositions are conventional but, nevertheless, the personages represented in such narrative reliefs appear invariably with all elements of liveliness as the sculptures could possibly express with a visual idiom.

Technically speaking, Gupta sculpture is characterised by a full rounded volume of the plastic form with soft and delicate modelling and properly co-ordinated contours. The lines, particularly those defining the form, are softly gliding and rhythmically flowing. These lines, as well as the various planes of the form, melt into one another. The plastic treatment of the body is delicate and sensitive with a luminosity of texture. The physiognomy is elegant and devoid of any pathological blemishes. The physiognomical form and its anatomical specifications are conceived mostly as an idea, and not necessarily as an optical proposition. The drapery is invariably transparent, and hence does not disturb the plastic effect of the part of the body it is supposed to cover. Ornaments, very sparingly ascribed to the body, are mostly well-integrated with it. The facial expressions, irrespective of the actions, are mostly serene and contemplative with obliquely cut eyes having drooping eyelids. What counts most for the excellence of Gupta sculpture is that here every form expresses itself within a definite line-motive; the figures admit of consolidation within a definite silhouette. This silhouette is more than the fortuitous cessation of the visibility of the form. The contours are co-ordinated in such a way as to effect the correct degree of the play of light and darkness, which eventually is subordinated to the plastic form. In fact, a unique sense of proportion and relevance pervades almost each and every production in which there is hardly any element of exuberance or superfluity.

Evolution of Gupta Sculpture

The maturity that Indian art acquired during the Gupta period was no doubt an outcome of its adolescence in the Kushāṇa art of Mathurā and the art of Amarāvati of the Veṅgī school. In the former, a high degree of excellence in plasticity was achieved, whereas the latter excelled in elegance. In the Gupta art, these two elements were synthesised, but only after they were rationalised to the extent of their relevance and validity to the expressive content. In fact, the socio-cultural aspirations of the Gupta period were best ex-
pressed through the ideology of a 'conquered mind residing in a
disciplined body'. In this there was no scope for excesses, imper-
fections, and disorderliness. In the sculptural art of the Gupta
period, therefore, the stolid dignity and mundane bearing of the
plasticity of the Kushāṇa idiom had to be contained and the idul-
gent grace and elegance of Amarāvati restrained by the spiritual re-
demption and efficiency in technique. The Gupta sculptors having
succeeded in performing this, the art of the period acquired ripe
maturity, and practically the fruition and culmination of all anterior
aspirations.

The lead, and in fact, the major orientation in this direction were
given at two places; Mathurā and Sarnath, leading to the emergence
of the two fundamental styles of Gupta sculpture known after these
two places of their origin, and of a number of their geographical
variations of subsidiary importance. The Mathurā style represents
the phase of transition from the grandeur of monumental bearing of
the Kushāṇa idiom to the grace and serene dignity of the Gupta
Classical ideal upheld by the sculptures for Sarnath. Mathura
sculpture was made of moderately fine red sandstone admitting
detailed carving but not a very defined treatment. At Sarnath, the
material used was a cream coloured sandstone which was quite suit-
able for intricate details and a fine finish.

Although sculptures assignable, on veritable indication of chro-
no-logy, to the initial phase of Gupta art are few and far between, it is
perhaps an anticipated coincidence that the earliest dated example
of Gupta sculpture, so far known, belongs unmistakably to the
Mathurā style, although the sculpture concerned has been found
from Bodhgayā. It is an image of a Bodhisattva, dated in the year
64 of Mahārājā Trikamlā. Although controversy hangs over the iden-
tification of this king and the era to which the date of the inscription
should be referred to, the palaeography of the latter and also the
style of the sculpture would suggest a fourth century date, which
will also be the case if the date of the inscription is referred to in the
Gupta era. The Bodhgayā Bodhisattva, however, is not only exec-
cuted in the red sandstone of the Mathurā type, but has also some
characteristics of the Kushāṇa style of Mahurā: massiveness, and
heavy stolidity of the physical form, and the schematic treatment of
the folds of drapery on the left shoulder and forearm. But it con-
tains some stylistic innovations as well: the body has been trans-

4 Saraswati, op. cit., p. 133.
5 CA, fig. 35.
6 Saraswati, op. cit., p. 133.
formed in terms of a stern discipline, the three folds of the neck have
been clearly shown to convey the sensitivity of the plastic surface,
and the deep navel has been emphatically shown although that part
of the body was supposed to be concealed beneath the robe hanging
from the left shoulder downwards. This is indicative of the trans-
parency of the drapery. Above all, the eyes with drooping eyelids
and the glance directed to the tip of the nose are conspicuously
indicative of the figure being absorbed in deep meditation. The
plasticity of the modelling, the sensitivity of the plastic surface, the
transparent drapery, and above all, the serene contemplative mien of
the Bodhgaya Bodhisattva conform to all the basic requirements of
a Classical Gupta sculpture, and hence, their co-existence with some
veritable features of Kushāṇa art of Mathurā, as underlined above,
was unmistakable symptom of an escalating change that was des-
tined to result in the fulfilment of the Gupta Classical ideal in the
sculptures of Sarnath.

It has to be remembered that the Bodhgaya image cannot be ex-
plained away as an aberration. In some other sculptures of the
Mathurā school of the early fourth century a.d. also the symptoms
of an impending change in the aesthetics of figure-sculptures can
be noticed. A reddish brown sandstone head of uncertain identity,
found from Mathurā and now in the Los Angeles County Museum
of Art, is far advanced from similar Kushana forms, particularly
in the rotundity of form in the modelling of the region of the chin.
A somewhat similar treatment is noticed in the head of Siva in the
stèle from Kaushambi, where also symptoms in alignment with the
approach towards Gupta Classical ideal are evident. The calm and
concentrated inner absorption noticed in the fourth century Śaivite
head from Mathura, now in the Calmann Gallery, London, antici-
pates similar traits of the Bodhgaya Bodhisattva, also of the Ma-
thurā atelier. The calm expression of tranquility articulated by the
sculptor through the drooping eyelids, and also the idealised plas-
ticity of modelling, which bring about the idea of the meditative con-
templation, were presumably what the sculptors of Mathurā were
busy in accomplishing in the fourth century.

The achievements of the fourth century Mathurā sculptures, best
expressed in the Bodhgaya Bodhisattva image, presumably caught
up the attention of the sculptors of the other centres including those
outside India. Some sculptures from Sarnath, belonging to the

8 K. Fischer, Schöpfungen Indischer Kunst, Köln, 1959, fig. 126.
9 CA, fig. 39.
fourth century, seem to be the cognates of the Bodhgayā Bodhisattva. A remarkable example of such a possible derivation is the celebrated fourth century Buddha image in dhyāna-mudrā at Anurādhapura in Śrī-Lankā. This figure, however, shows a greater degree of emancipation from the stolid and mundane bearing of the Kushāṇa art. But it was at Sarnath that the seeds of the Gupta Classical ideal in sculpture drawn out from Mathura had their proper germination leading to a glorious harvest of numerous sculptures having inimitable mastery over technique and aesthetic diction. This seems to have been achieved in the fifth century, when the sum total of the achievements of the Classical idiom amounted to a delicate and sensitive treatment of the plastic surface making it smooth, supple, and shining, a slender and seemingly weightless physiognomy, a relaxed and rhythmic attitude of the body expressing certain amount of liteness and movement, a transparent drapery clinging to the body, and, above all, a calm and reposeful expression in the face seemingly lit up with wisdom. Not only the figures of the Buddha, but those of the divinities of the other faiths, including even the secular figure sculptures of Sarnath, belonging to the fifth century, had these characteristics common in them.

But unfortunately, there does not exist sufficient dated evidence for the ‘pre-Classical’ Sarnath sculptures, and similarly, very few of the major works of the Mathurā atelier in the mature Gupta style bears a dated inscription, leaving virtually no scope for the understanding of the phase of transition from Mathura to Sarnath. But on the basis of whatever dated evidence we have at our disposal, it will appear that the median date for the ‘Classical’ phase of the latter was around A.D. 475, as is evidenced by three dated sculptures of the standing Buddha, all of them from Sarnath and now preserved in the museum at the same place. One of them is dated in A.D. 473-74, and the other two bear a date in A.D. 476-77. These figures show an interesting combination of a distinct hieratic frontality and a subtle contraposto, and their bodies have the quality of liteness and equipose together with a felicitous melting and blending of the various planes of the body surface. The drapery is transparent and hence the sensitivity of the plastic surface is eloquently expressed. Moreover, the faces, with eyes cast downwards, as through in introspection, preserve a benign expression. But in spite of these, the persistence of the influence of the Mathurā school in terms of the hieratic frontality and statuesque dignity in these figures is

10 Sherman E. Lee, History of Far Eastern Art, New York, fig. 135.
11 Artibus Asiae, XXV, 1962, p. 182, figs. 3-5.
clearly discernable. In basic stylistic and iconographic considerations, these figures have proximity with a standing Buddha figure from Mathurā (now preserved in the National Museum), although the latter has some differences from the former as well. The standing Buddha figure from Mathurā, as mentioned above, is perhaps one of the most remarkable productions of the Mathurā school of the Gupta period. It stands in samapada, the left hand holding up a portion of the saṅghāti, while the right, which is broken now, presumably showed the abhaya-mudrā. The head of the figure has behind it a huge decorated also. Unlike the Sarnath Buddhas, the figure has the pleats of the saṅghāti delineated in string-course formulations across the chest and down the front of the body. Moreover, the facial expression of the figure, although serene and contemplative, does not have the same spirit of enlightenment as is noticed in their Sarnath counterparts. Although the Sarnath pieces seem to be of a superior intellectual expression, what transpires from the study of the three dated Buddha figures from Sarnath, discussed above, is that since these are not positively the best products of the Sarnath schoo, till as late of A.D. 477 Sarnath presumably could not achieve the stylistic excellence for which it is so famous. It appears that those works which are generally considered as the best expressions of the Classical phase of Sarnath were produced at least a quarter of a century later than the three dated standing Buddha figures from Sarnath mentioned above. This will mean that the Classical phase of Sarnath was reached in round about A.D. 500, a period when the imperial power of the Guptas had virtually collapsed.

Undoubtedly one of the best productions of the Classical phase of Sarnath, and the most celebrated in view of the ‘appropriateness of its iconographic content to the Sarnath sanctuary’, is the sculpture representing the Buddha as delivering his first sermon. It shows the Master as seated in the vajraparyaṇka attitude with hands disposed in the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā). He is seated on a throne with two leonine supporting a lintel having makara ends. On the plinth of the throne is the representation of the Wheel of the Law, flanked by two deer, indicating the Deer Park (Mrigadāvī=Sārnāth), and by seven figures, five of them no doubt represent the first adherents of the faith, and the remaining two, possibly the donor couple. Behind the head of the Buddha is the circular halo

12 Lee, op. cit., fig. 119.
13 CA, fig. 37.
14 Saraswati, op. cit., p. 136. It has, however, to be pointed out that all the seven figures represented on the plinth of the seat of the Buddha are not ‘kneeling’. Only the two figures on the extreme left are shown as kneeling, whereas the other
(prabhā) decorated with a broad band of intricate floral designs within beaded borders. On either side of this nimbus, there is a flying figure of a gandharva.

In spite of its frontal orientation and an apparently static bearing, the image is no doubt one of the best plastic expressions of the Classical idiom of the Gupta sculpture. Its narrow chest and shoulder, soft and delicate modelling, easy and flowing contours, melting planes of the plastic surface, transparent drapery, and the countenance of calm and peaceful contemplation are eloquently expressive of the restrained grace and spiritual dignity which the image symbolises. Its frontality and to some extent the symmetrical precision in the disposition of the limbs betray admittedly some architectonic air about the image, nevertheless, these could not undo the overall effect of an aesthetic charm contributed by the simple and austere plastic treatment of the body of the Master and its contrast with the lavishness of the exquisitely carved ornamentations on the throne and the aureole. Composed between the two flying gandharvas on top and the seven figures in adoption below, the image of the Buddha with its reposeful dignity is conspicuous as a form not only devoid of any frivolous mobility like that of the gandharvas, but also of the affection of the lifeless pattern of the gestures of the monks in adoration. The face lit up with a contemplative inner absorption conveys the idea of wisdom (bodhi), and the surface texture of shining smoothness of Chunar sandstone has contributed to the sophisticated bearing of the entire body of the image.

Although very few other sculptures from Sarnath could attain a similar, not to speak of a superior, aesthetic and technical achievement as noticed in the Buddha image discussed above, mention should be made of some of them in order to understand the aesthetic standard that was achieved at the Sarnath atelier. The head of the Buddha, now preserved in the National Museum, is a veritable example of Sarnath art. The face is sensuous with full lips, aquiline nose and eyelids drawn with sinuous curves. But at the same time, its dispassionate expression with eyes looking inwards effectively parallels the formal properties of the sensuous with those of the realm of metaphysics. There is a taut discipline in the geometric, five seem to be seated on some kind of a raised seat, pointing to their difference in status from the other two figures on the extreme left. Interestingly, if these two kneeling figures, one is that of a female, and the other one seems to be that of a child. The latter is very much damaged, and this led, Sherman Lee to count the total number of figures flanking the Wheel as six. See Lee, op. cit., p. 107.

highly abstract forms which underlie the shape of the head or the hair-curls, neck and eye-brows; yet the total effect of the face is that of a humane and benign power.’16 Three standing Buddha images from Sarnath,17 now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, preserve the evidence for the evolution of the Sarnath idiom towards a new direction. These figures, on the surface, seem to be allied to A.D. 476-77 images from Sarnath mentioned above, but on a closer analysis, they appear to be their successors in point of style. The head is comparatively smaller, the limbs further elongated, the torso ‘narrower, shorter and less articulated and weighty,’ and, above all, the figures seem to strive for more elegance. They no doubt belong to a different aesthetic vision and workmanship than that the Sarnath artists had been engaged with in the preceding years, and they presumably hold out the symptoms of the movement of the Sarnath idiom towards a striving for the realisation of the body as an unified organism and its movement closer to reality, though betraying a predilection for elegance, sensuousness, and formal grace.

The excellence of the sculptural attainments that Sarnath had during the fifth century, did also touch upon the plastic activities of Mathurā during the same period. But qualitatively speaking the artistic activity at Mathura, particularly in terms of the production of Buddhist sculptures, during the period from the fifth century onwards was considerably at lower ebb than that at Sarnath. It seems that already in the sixth century, Mathura was seized upon with a degree somewhat retrogression, as is evident from examples like the Buddha image,18 dated A.D. 549-50, from Mathura, in which are to be noticed features like squat and heavy proportions, pre-Gupta type of simple radiate halo, a lotus between the feet—all reminiscent of the standing Buddha and Bodhisattva images of the Kushāna period.

REGIONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GUPTA IDIOM

What was achieved in the fourth, fifth, and early sixth centuries at Mathura and Sarnath could not remain confined to these two places alone. The experience gained at these centres was presumably shared by various other places throughout India, and all the regions naturally produced sculptures which qualitatively approximated the

17 Artibus Asiae, V. XXV, 1982, p. 182, figs., 6-8.
standard reached at Mathura and Sarnath, except for the few occasional fallings resulting mostly from socio-religious pre-conditions or variations of technical skill. Nevertheless, the sculptures all over India during these centuries had the Gupta Classical ideal as the common denominator. To study the reverberations of the Gupta Classical art in northern India, three broad geographical divisions of the entire region can be postulated, viz., Madhyadeśa, Eastern India, and Western India.

Madhyadeśa

A few interesting sculptures; like the image of Kārttikeya19 from Banaras, the head of Śiva or Lokeśvara from Sarnath,20 the Ekamukhaliṅga21 from Khoh (Madhya Pradesh), the Apsara22 from Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh), the image of Gaṅgā23 from Besnagar (Madhya Pradesh), and the sculptures in the Śiva temple at Bhumara24 (Madhya Pradesh)—all belonging to the Gupta period—have no doubt the registration of the distinctive Śāṃkhī idiom of poise and balance, but they seem to be plastically heavier and spiritually inferior, for lack of refinement in modelling and felicity of the contours. The figure of Kārttikeya from Banaras, referred to above, betrays many of its inadequacies to bring it down to the aesthetic norms of the preceding centuries, although the image has an overall charm and elegance. Not only the laterally spread up face and the broad flattened chest, but also the crudity of the plastic form, as noticed particularly in the delineation of the feet, are the features reminiscent of the characteristics of Kushāna art. The idea of serene contemplation as has been articulated in the head of Śiva of Lokeśvara from Sarnath, referred to above, seems to have undergone a transformation by the time the same concept was arrested in the Ekamukhaliṅga from Khoh. In the latter, the meaningfulness of the plastic expression has been enhanced by the sensitivity of the modelling and the delicacy of the gliding linear contours. The Apsarā from Gwalior and Besnagar Gaṅgā deal with an artistic proposition viz., the delineation of the female form, which does not seem to have been the favourite subject with the sculptors of Sarnath of the Classical period. Nevertheless, the unmistakable

19 CA, fig. 44.
20 Ibid., fig. 46.
21 Ibid., fig. 48.
22 Ibid., fig. 45.
23 Ibid., fig. 49.
Classical note about them cannot escape notice. The flexions in the body and the elongation of the limbs, particularly in the figure of the river goddess, together with the fully rounded contours are the reverberations of the Gupta Classical ideal. The figures and floral scrolls on the door-jamb at Bhumārā are characterised by the refinement of delicate carving emphasising the rhythm of the movement of the floral designs and of the other forms. The reliefs carved on the architectural pieces from Garhwa25 (near Allahabad) have veritable Gupta characteristics in plastic treatment and overall effect. The figures, even in group combinations, breathe an air of detachment, although they retain the spontaneity of existence and relevance to the narrative content. An interesting seated Buddha image26 found from Mānkuwar (near Allahabad) is dated in the Gupta year 129 (= A.D. 448-49). Apart from its conspicuous shaven head and webbed fingers of the hands, this image has some very interesting stylistic features. The drapery of the figure has affinity with the Sarnath mode, but, plastically speaking, it is of a different level of achievement than that reached at Sarnath. Massive and squat proportions of the body, stiff and heavy hands, a facial expression of self-awareness and assertiveness—these characteristics of the image invariably link it with the style of Mathurā, and point to the survival of the anterior trends in the works belonging to the Classical period of the Guptas.

The Daśāvatāra (Vishṇu) temple at Deogarh (Uttar Pradesh) has some sculptures depicting interesting formulations of the Gupta Classical ideal. This temple, hence its sculptures, should be dated round the last quarter of the sixth century, although some scholars suggest a later date.27 The temple has sculptured friezes adorning the sides of the basement, and three beautiful alto-relivo sculptures in the niches, one on each of the three sides of the sanctum. The friezes, depicting mostly the stories of the epics and the Purāṇas, speak of the nature of transformation that had occurred in the field of narrative reliefs during the past few centuries. Following the older tradition, the figures are executed with a rustic simplicity, but there has been by now an infusion of some element of sophistication in them. That due to a dignified bearing and disciplined vigour these figures breathe an air of calm detachment is evident from the examples like the panels depicting the birth story of Krishṇa or the

25 CA, figs. 40-42.
26 Ibid., fig. 48.
episode of the release of Ahalyā by Rāma. The impact of the Gupta Classical ideal is more evident in the sculptures contained in the niches of the temple. One of them, know as the Nara-Nārāyaṇa panel, belongs to the same sublime plastic conception and spiritual experience of Sarnath. The figures, both of Nara and Nārāyaṇa, are characterised by effeminate elongation of limbs, flowing linear contours, organic movement, refined modelling, and also a calm detachment. The figures in the Gajendramoksha panel, have an interesting sense of organic movement created by the varied directions of the parts of the body of Viṣṇu seated on Garuḍa. This sense of movement is more apparent in the figure of Viṣṇu in the Anantasayi panel, where, although the representation is of Viṣṇu lying reposeful on the World Serpent, the plastic statement, surprisingly, partakes of a sweeping sense of line suggested not only by the counter-directions of the head, the legs, the arms, and the torso of the figure of Viṣṇu, but also by the serpentine quality of his garland.

The Classical Gupta plastic tradition as received and interpreted by the sculptures of the Malava region is best expressed through the examples like the images of Gaṅgā from Besnagar, Apsarā from Gwalior, the standing Śiva from Mandasor, the image of Narasimha in the Gwalior Museum, the sculptures on the lintel of the torana at Pawaya, the celebrated carved figures on the live rocks of the Udaygiri caves near Bhilsa, and also the Buddhist figures sculptures of the caves at Bagh. In the overall artistic vision, all these sculptures have no doubt a general affinity, particularly in respect of their somewhat sturdy physical types, but. nevertheless, they hold out equally the various modifications and interpretations that the sculptors of this area were giving to their inherited experience of the Sāñchi days through the technical

30 Zimmer, op. cit., pl. 110.
31 CA, fig. 50.
32 Ibid., fig. 49.
33 Ibid., fig. 45.
34 Ibid., p. 522.
35 Coomaraswamy, op. cit., fig. 170.
36 Archaeological Survey of India, 1924-25, p. 165, pl. XLIII (c) & (d).
37 Some scholars hold now that the famous Udaygiri Varāha should not be regarded as a Gupta contribution. See Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, special number on Western Indian art, Calcutta, 1965-66, pp. 56-58.
38 CA, p. 522.
efficiency imparted by the Classical Gupta art. While all these sculptures cannot be rated on the same level from the consideration of artistic excellence, particularly in view of the differences between one another in respect of their artistic proposition, a few of the sculptures stand out for special attention not only because of the conspicuity of the content, but also of the form. The relief sculptures of the Udaygiri caves, particularly the Varahavatara relief, can be cited as an example. In representing the myth of the rescue of the Earth from the ocean by the Boar incarnation of Visnu, the artistic proposition involved was no doubt to express in terms of the carved rock, the emergent cosmic force, which by itself is huge and comanding but not awesome in the least. The artist has very efficiently given a convincing expression of this cosmic episode not only by the monumentality of the form, but also with the compositional sobriety. The figure of Varaha-Vishnu, carved in bold relief, stands in contrast to the series of figures in very low relief, represented in four tiers. These figures represent the gods, the Adityas, Vasus, and Rudras, who stand in breathless attention obviously with reverential curiosity, to the magnificent performance of Visnu. The broad chest of the Varaha-Vishnu, his rotund but resilient hands and legs, and perhaps the posture that he assumes, bring out the picture of gigantic grandeur coupled with, paradoxically though, a sense of benign dignity. The almost semicircular configuration of the part of the body between the nose and the palm of the right hand of the figure of Varaha-Vishnu and the diagonality of the placement of his emergent form no doubt express the idea of the supra-propensity of the cosmic force involved in the mythical event. To this has been added the movement of his rounded and serpentine garland which, due to the convulsions of the divine body is, as if, falling off the left shoulder. The figures of the Naga worshipping the Lord at his feet, and of the Earth goddess clinging to his body, offer the picture of a contrast—perhaps a contrast between the primordial and the emergent. The numerous figures of gods, particularly in their somewhat unusual serried composition, probably spell out another sense of contrast, as if, between the ceaseless flux of the Universe and its mute static antecedent.

The Varahavatara relief of Udaygiri has connectedness with the Bhaja Surya relief of the earlier period; but this link is only on their sharing a common psychological air. The Udaygiri relief is far advanced in maturity of technique and diction of articulation—no

39 Ibid., fig. 55.
doubt, a contribution of the Gupta Classical idiom which touched upon the sculptural activity of central India through the preceding few centuries, and which made it stylistically relevant and vital to the subsequent art scene, particularly in the Deccan.

Mention should be made in this connection of a few interesting metal sculptures which will give us an idea regarding the prevalent stylistic trend, as reflected in metal images, in Madhyadeśa during the Classical period. Two bronze images of the Buddha are known from Dhanesar Khera (Banda district, U.P.), one of them is now preserved at the Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, and the other belongs to a private collection. The former is an inscribed one, and on its basis the date of the sculpture in the Gupta period is almost a certainty. In these can be seen the continuity of the Gandharan style: the conventional folds of the drapery, the predominant āṇā on the forehead, and the star type halo round the head. Some other bronze images of the Buddha with similar stylistic formulations have also come down to us from Phopnar in Madhya Pradesh. These sixth century bronze images, although betraying the echoes of the Gāndhāra style in respect of the plastic treatment of the folds of the lower garment, seem to stand out as the prototypes of the later Nālandā school in many respects of stylistic affinity: the convention of regularly incised folds on the chest, sharp features of the face with a hook-like nose, eyes inlaid with silver, and pupils painted black. The Dhanesar Khera and Phopnar Buddhas presumably represent a phase of experimentation in the style of metal images in which the touch of the true spirit and technical diction of the Classical Sarnath idiom was still to come. Only when this style had undergone the experience of the sublimity of the Classicism of the Sarnath school, it was possible for the sculptors to formulate images like the celebrated Sultangunj Buddha, which no doubt inspired many metal images of the Buddha of the Nālandā and Kurkihar studios of the subsequent period.

**Eastern India**

Eastern India seems to have given a different interpretation to the Classical idiom of Sarnath. Here the spiritualism and sublime delicacy of the art of Sarnath yielded to an emotional and perhaps also

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41 Rowland, op. cit., fig. 86 (B).
44 M. Venkataramayya, ‘Sixth-Century Bronzes from Phopnar’, *Lalit Kala*, No. 12, October, 1963, pp. 16-20 and pls.
a sensuous accent which was an obvious reflection of the ethничal and temperamental bearing of the people of the East. But surprisingly, it did not mean a change or replacement of one art idiom with another, but it was, so to say, an integration of the two, resulting in the production of numerous sculptures which synthesised the sublime spiritualism of Sārnāth with the emotional and even the sensuous import of the Eastern mind.

Quite a number of instances can be cited wherein this union between Classical Gupta trend and a regional predilection was effected. But this phenomenon is perhaps best illustrated in the colossal metal image of the Buddha (now in the Birmingham Art Gallery) from Sultanganj (Bihar). Its graceful abhanga posture, transparent drapery, luminosity of the texture of the plastic surface, and, above all, the suavity of the linear contours are no doubt the contributions of the ideology of the aesthetics of the plastic traditions of the Classical Gupta are of Sarnath. But the sensitivity of the bent finger-tips, the deep shadow round the eyes, and also the lines drawn from the nostrils to the mouth mark the figure with a distinct emotional fervour which obviously is an Eastern Indian introduction. The reflection of this Eastern Indian emotionalism is also to be noticed in another metal image of the Buddha, most probably belonging to the Classical Gupta period, as is presumable from the inscription on the pedestal of the image, which contains a date in an uncertain era. This image, now preserved in the Cleveland Museum of Art, also stands in the same attitude and shows the same gestures in the hands as those of the celebrated Sultanganj Buddha. The hieratic frontality of the figure is, however, eased by the subtle flexion in the body. The figure is characterised by almost all the well-known features of Gupta sculptural art: the sensitivity and plasticity of the body, the torso swelling with inner breath, the eyebrows softly rounded, the lips fleshy and full, the eyes with semi-open heavy eyelids displaying well defined eyeballs underneath, and the transparency of the drapery. The face has a contemplative expression, a

45 CA, fig. 58. In some recent studies, this sculpture has been assigned a date in the early eighth century. See, for instance, Artibus Asiae, XXVI, 2, p. 118, Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, February, 1970, p. 55. But according to Professor S. K. Saraswati, "The figure is equivalent to the fifth-century stone Buddha of Sarnath, not only in stance and physiognomical treatment but also in spiritual import, humanised, in a certain measure, by the emotionalism of the eastern version of Sarnath Classicism". Op. cit., (second revised edition 1975), p. 177ff (n. 37).

46 Czuma, op. cit., fig. 8.

47 The date of the inscription has been read variously by different scholars. These scholars seem to differ also regarding the identification of the era to which the date of the inscription refers. See for a discussion, Czuma, op. cit., pp. 81ff.
veritable Gupta tendency to give the figure a spiritual content. The overall stylistic type of the figure bears interesting similarity not only with the Sultanganj Buddha figure and a few Gupta Buddhas from Sarnath, but also with some metal images of the Buddha from Nepal. Although this makes the confusion regarding the provenance of the figure worse confounded, the Cleveland metal image of the Buddha, particularly in view of its being inscribed and dated and because of its stylistic affinity with several known types and forms, serves as an important evidence regarding the nature of acculturation in artistic styles and conventions during the Gupta period.

The characterisation of the figure-forms in sculpture having the sublimity of the Sarnath conception, or even the sturdiness and pent-up energy as in its Mathurā counterparts, with emotional note, in varying degrees, is reflected in numerous sculptures from Eastern India, as for example, the Nāgini figure from Maniyar Math48 (Rajgir, Bihar), the standing image of the Buddha from Biharail49 (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh), the gold-plated image of Mañjūśrī in bronze from Mahāsthān50 (Bogra district, North Bengal), the figures of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, carved on the door-frames of the temples at Dāh Pārvaṭiyyā51 (Darrang district, Assam), and also the terracotta plaques52 (now in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta) from Tamulk (Midnapur, West Bengal). The figure of Nāgini from Maniyar Math has the overall bearing of the Gupta Classical idiom, but it betrays also some elements of sensualism and a somewhat contrived elegance. The river goddesses from Dāh Pārvaṭiyyā, on the other hand, although they have a similar sensuousness contributed presumably by the elongated limbs, do not lack the spontaneity of bearing and movement. A similar phenomenon of an indigenous are tradition having been reinterpreted in terms of the Gupta Classical ideal can be seen in Eastern India even in relief sculptures. The physiognomical types, noticed in the reliefs on the pillars from Chandimau53 (Bhagalpur district, Bihar), though stumpy and blunt, are distinguished nevertheless by the Classical idiom of the sensitivity of form and graceful linear contours. The deep and oblique cut in the decorative carvings of motifs and their graceful undulations add to the overall aesthetic effect which amounts to the desired

48 CA, fig. 59.
49 ibid., fig. 57.
50 ibid., fig. 61.
51 ibid., figs. 60 and 62.
52 Saraswati, op. cit., p. 143.
53 CA, fig. 56.
frivolity to make the figures humane and alive, and not slumbered in metaphysical elusiveness.

Western India

Western India was also experimenting with the various facets of the Gupta Classical idiom and was trying to adapt the same to its own indigenous tradition. It has, of course, been pointed out by some scholars that the heritage of the sculptures of Western India of the Gupta period should not be traced back only to the repertoire of Mathura and Sarnath; their real ancestry lies with the Kshatrapa-Satavahana art represented by the objects hailing from Devni Mori and Mirpur Khas, and this idiom contributed to the development of the sculptures of the Samlaji-Dungarpur region. But it is also of interest to note that the Western Indian sculptors drew heavily from both Mathura and Sarnath idioms of the Gupta Classical norm. If we look at the Govardhana-dhara panel from Mandor and the door panel from Nagri, both in Rajasthan, the unmistakable Mathura type of sturdy and massive physiognomy of the figures becomes evident. But at the same time, one cannot possibly miss the disciplined rendering of the plastic form together with certain amount of grace and poise which definitely come from Sarnath. The bronze figure of Brahmā (now in the Karachi Museum) from Mirpur Khas in Sind is a veritable example of the artistic production in Western India with a positive bearing of the Sarnath Classical diction, both in plastic form and in spiritual import. The plasticity of subtle and sensitive modelling, the gracefully flowing linear contours, the luminosity of the texture of the body revealed through the transparent drapery, and also the serene contemplative expression of the face—all these are the nuances of the Sarnath idiom. With these, of course, two striking features, presumably the contributions of the iconographic exigency and regional fancy, co-exist: the flabby abdomen of the figure and its full round face; and, slender effeminate fingers, which, together, hold fast the figure to mundane and humane levels, in spite of its potential aesthetic charm of the spiritualism of the Sarnath type.

It is well known that by the fourth century, all the characteristics regarded as typical of Gupta Buddhas had appeared in many Buddh

55 CA, fig. 47.
56 Stella Kramrisch, Indian Sculpture, Calcutta, 1933, fig. 61.
57 CA, fig. 54.
images found at Devni Mori\textsuperscript{58} in Gujarat. Moreover, the sculptural discoveries made in South-western Rajasthan, particularly at Samlaji, Kalyanpura, Amjhara, and Tanesara-Mahadeva,\textsuperscript{59} establish the existence of a vital sculptural tradition in that area which was as significant as the more renowned schools of Sarnath and Mathura. These sculptures are mostly carved of a soft schist of greenish blue (locally known as \textit{pavena}) that abounds in the Dungarpur area. The most significant of these sculptures is perhaps the Tanesara group, so far as their proximity with the style of the Classical Gupta schools of Mathura-Sarnath is concerned. Of the important examples, mention should be made of the figure of a male divinity,\textsuperscript{60} figure of Kaumāri,\textsuperscript{61} and the representations of the mother and child.\textsuperscript{62} The male divinity stands in graceful contraposto with his left hand resting on the thigh. The drapery is transparent and his body is adorned with ornaments well integrated with the body. The head is set off against a plain circular halo. The body is relaxed, and the softly modelled face has an expression of tenderness and beatitude. The figure of Kaumāri is interesting not only because of its equally effective Classical diction and charm, but also because of an unusual feature of this figure: the goddess has been shown with an emphatically swollen abdomen—no doubt to indicate the pregnancy of the goddess to emphasise her mother aspect. The sculptures representing the mother and child are also replete with many interesting elements of motherhood. All these sculptures, as also those from Samlaji, Kotyarka, Jagat, and Amjhara, seem to be the products of the same stylistic tradition. They show some distinctive features: grace and elegance in the gestures and and postures of the figures, poignant expression of intimacy between the mother and child, sensitive rendering of the faces, and the Classic simplicity of the figures, both in terms of modelling and surface embellishment. The female figures seem to be the descendants of the Yakshis of Mathurā or similar such types found in the arts of Karle or Kanheri of the early centuries of the Christian era, but they are not as monumental or earthly as their ancestors. The bulky bearing of the bodies can no longer be seen and the forms seem to be well defined with a flowing linear movement of the contours. These are, indeed, the characteristic features of the Gupta Classical tradition as reflected in the sculptures of

\textsuperscript{58} R. N. Mehta and S. N. Chowdhary, \textit{Excavations at Devnimori}, Baroda, 1956.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum}, Oberlin College, winter, 1971, fig on p. 104.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}, fig. 6 on p. 109.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}, fig. 5 on p. 107 and fig. 7 on p. 109.
Mathurā, Sārnāth, Bhumārā belonging to the fifth and the sixth centuries A.D., a period assignable also to the sculptures discussed above.63

DECORATIVE MOTIFS AND ORNAMENTATION IN GUPTA ART

Although during the Gupta period the sculptor’s attention was more towards the representation of the human forms, in various moods and actions, he nevertheless showed great mastery in the representation of some decorative art-motifs, giving an account of his technical acumen of good workmanship. These decorative motifs are carved invariably with taste and elegance and with deep oblique cut to show play of light and shade. These motifs can be classified broadly under two heads: those consisting of patternised vegetal or animal forms or their fanciful combinations, and those which pertain to the depiction of geometric designs and symbols. The former includes representation of outlined beads and rosettes, arabesques, flowers, stalks and foliages, twisted rope design, intertwined creepers, figures of man, woman, grotesques, and all possible imaginative things. In the latter group of themes are to be included the swastika, diamond or lozenge-shaped motifs, criss-cross or parallel line designs, chess-board patterns and the like. Both these types of decorative motifs are to be seen on the body of the celebrated Dhāmekh stūpa of Sarnath belonging to the sixth century A.D.,64 and also in the door-frames of some contemporary temples.65 All these geometric designs have invariably been cut with an angular accent so as to bring out the effect of variegated play of light and shade on the patterned surface. The exquisitely carved halos66 of many of the images of this period show the mastery of the Gupta sculptors in the fineness of delicate carving of intricate designs and motifs. Although ornaments and jewellery in the figure sculptures during the Gupta period are sparingly ascribed, and they are invariably integrated to the body-form, the Gupta sculptor never considered them as superfluities, but he interpreted all such ornamental accessories as the complements to the body of the human form in its perceptual structural connotation. As a matter of fact, this conception led the Gupta sculptor to carve the ornaments and

64 Rowland, op. cit., fig. 78(A).
65 *Ibid.*, fig. 79.
jewellery with equal care and attention as he did for the representation of the human forms.

GUPTA TERRACOTTA SCULPTURES

The other popular mode of plastic expression during the Gupta period was through terracotta art which seems to have been widely practised throughout North India, particularly in the Ganga-Yamuna basin, obviously because the riverine plains were the most potential source of materials for the art, viz., malleable earth and clay. During the Gupta period, the scope of the art of terracotta was vastly widened because of the increasing popularity of structural constructions in brick. Not only that, carved bricks were used often to decorate both the interior and exterior walls of buildings, but various types of terracotta plaques and figurines were actually employed for architectural beautification. References to the art of terracotta and clay figurines found in the writings of Kālidāsa and Bānabhaṭṭa, the two literary stalwarts of the period, are no doubt indicative of the great popularity of this art during the period. And this is attested to by the great treasures of terracotta figurines discovered from numerous sites of North India: Harvan in Kashmir, Hanumāngarh and Bikaner in Rajasthan, Sāri Bāhol, Takht-i-Bahi, Jamalgār in the Punjab, Brāhmaṇābād and Mīrpur Khās in Sind, Pāwayā in Madhya Pradesh, Sāhet Māhēth, Kāsia, Kośām, Bhiṭārgāon, Bhiṭā, Ahicchatra, and Rājghāt in Uttar Pradesh, Basārh in Bihar, and Mahāsthān, Tamluk, and Bānagar in Bengal.

Although the art of terracotta, technically speaking, has its own mode, method, and also problems which are somewhat distinct from those involved in stone sculptures, this art, particularly in the period under review, seems to have followed the styles and trends of the contemporary plastic practices in stone. For the obvious reasons of differences in the nature of the material and of technique, there has been, of course, a basic distinction in the aesthetic note between the two forms of plastic expressions. The terracotta figurines perhaps do not have the sophistication of their lithic counterparts, but the former far excels the latter in the richness of human appeal and in the powerfulness of simple expressions. Analysis of a few examples of terracotta figurines will not only bring out their stylistic proximity with many of the sculptures in stone belonging to this period, but will possibly also enable us to appreciate the aesthetic charm and distinction that qualify them.

The human face depicted in a temple plaque from Bhiṭārgāon

67 Saraswati, op. cit., fig. 125.
has the rotundity of form and sensitivity of the plastic surface reminiscent of similar trends in lithic expressions. But the wide open eyes and the eyebrows indicated by simple incised lines, and also a slight tilt of the head together with the fleshy lips partly open, as if in conversation, are the features through which this piece of art has entitled itself to distinction. The head of Pārvatī from Ahicchatra is a charming delineation of the female face. The hairdo consisting of ringlets of hairlock serriated into a huge bun with an ornamented knot at the back presumably is a specimen of one of the concomitants of female beauty of the aristocratic society of the day. The intimacy of the artist’s sensitive observation is perhaps more vividly recorded in a terracotta medallion from Mahāsthān (Bengal) showing a human couple in an amorous gesture. The grace and dignity of the theme of conjugal love have been expressed by the artist with his rare mastery of the subtlety of the visual language. The standing male figure on a plaque from Mirpur Khas in Sind, although somewhat stiff and characterised by a conventional affectation, does also contain the Classical nuances of the plastic fabric and perhaps also an element of spiritualism about it. The interesting plaque depicting Viṣṇu on Ananta, found from Bhīṣṭārgaon, is no doubt a crude and unsophisticated counterpart of its lithic contemporaries, but the rotundity of all the forms and their compositional distribution cannot escape notice. Moreover, the overall thematic sentiment has been convincingly expressed by the artist through the postures of the various figures. The two demons, Māhu and Kāṭtabha, emerging diagonally from the left corner of the plaque, seem to be a very lively representation of the immediacy of the purpose and action. But what a contrast is there, truly as was the need, in the very casually lying figure of Viṣṇu! The artist’s intention in glorifying Viṣṇu’s divine complacency has been thereby fully served. In fact, the large number of terracotta sculptures belonging to this period precludes exhaustive enumeration and permits mention of only the most interesting, as has been done above. But the study of the vast storehouse of the terracotta art of the period shows that the artists followed to the extent it was possible through their medium, the style of the Classical Indian sculpture in stone in the terms basically of volume and plasticity, but they deviated quite frequently in matters of gestures, postures, ethnic types, and similar other areas.

68 Ibid., fig. 133.
69 Ibid., fig. 132.
70 Ibid., fig. 114.
71 Ibid., fig. 128.
The disintegration of Classical art idiom followed similar trends and tendencies as in the political set-up of India, from about the beginning of the last quarter of the sixth century. The absence of any strong ruler or dynasty to control the political destiny of the country as a whole during this period onwards gave rise to separatism, and to some extent individualism, in not only the political life of the country, but also in all other spheres. The reflection of this state of affairs could not but have its impact on the art scene of the country as well. In Classical Gupta art all parts of India shared some basic norms and forms. Local preferences of predilections did also exist, but there was hardly any symptoms of assertive tendency on their part. Moreover, during that period, even these elements of regional moods and bias were well integrated in the art form in such a way that the product did seldom lose its homogeneity. This was because of the existence, during that period, of an overall political, and as such cultural, authority in operation throughout the country. But this ceased to be the case soon after the Guptas lost ground, and a series of short-lived political adventurism emerging from different parts of India came into operation leading to political competitions between one territory and the other and the consequent regional consciousness among the peoples of the respective territories. The obvious outcome of this was a tendency towards assertion of the regional preferences, beliefs, and prejudices. This was reflected in the art of the age, particularly in the plastic art. About the middle of the eighth century A.D., the process in operation seems to have been completed, and thenceforth is noticed the rise and growth of a number of ‘provincial’ Schools of art, spread over the length and breadth of the country, in each of which there was very little eagerness to open up new avenues in artistic pursuits but to remain content with the past achievements in a mechanical way, so to say. The sculptural output of this period, particularly of North India, was mostly repetitive, devoid of graceful modelling, or refinement of plastic texture due to the emphatic stylisation and over-burdening of ornament and was characterised by heaviness of form without much of spiritual element in it.

But in spite of this dismal picture, some sculptors, evidently those few above the average, showed their mark in some productions spread over different regions of North India. In this connection mention can be made of the figure of the Buddha seated in the *pralamb-
bapādāsana, hailing from Sarnath. Although the figure contains all the nuances of the Classical Sarnath idiom, the aesthetic import is lamentably poor in view of its rarified plastic treatment and almost a 'drowsiness' in the facial expression in contrast to the introspective mien of its Classical counterparts. Even the mode of sitting, no doubt an innovation to add some relaxation to the posture, does not click. The sculptor evidently lacked the experience to appreciate that a novelty if not attuned to the proposition loses relevance and as such its effectiveness. The figure of the Buddha, as such, could neither be a convincing picture of serene contemplation, nor a sublime dignity. The lower part of the female figure\textsuperscript{73} from Mathura assignable to the seventh century, of course, ranks with the productions of the Classical phase, particularly for its smooth and refined plastic texture, and flowing linear contours.

The transition from the Classical idiom of sculpture to the medieval is perhaps more clearly evident in the productions of Eastern India during the period between the middle of the seventh and that of the eighth century. In the centres, particularly like Bengal and Bihar in Eastern India, the Classical idiom of Sarnath had been already having a transformation with an accent on emotionalism and sesuousness. But nevertheless, there was not possibly and conscious attempt, till the beginning of the seventh century, for negating the Classical legacy; on the contrary, some Eastern Indian sculptors of the day seem to have been busy carefully incorporating in the sculptures elements of their own preferences and predilections consistent with the legacy of Classicism, as is evident in the representation of a lady on a door jamb\textsuperscript{74} found from Bhagalpur in Bihar. But this tendency presumably could not have a long run, and, from the seventh century onwards, is noticed the emergence of new aesthetic formulations, which, although rooted in the Classical heritage in the ultimate analysis, do in fact prophesise the ushering in of what was destined to be the medievalism of Indian sculpture in its eastern manifestation, in the sculptures of the Pāla regime.

Some idea about the nature of sculptural activity during this period of transition can, however, be had from the sculptures from the Munḍeśvarī temple in Bihar or the sculptures discovered from Benīsāgar, a small village in the Singhbum district of Bihar. All these sculptures are now housed in the Patna Museum. The Munḍeśvarī sculptures, belonging most probably to the seventh century,\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{73} ibid., fig. 118.
\textsuperscript{74} ibid., fig. 109.
pertain mostly to the representation of figure sculptures like those of Brahmā, Siva, Sūrya, Agni, Caṇḍi, Harihara,76 etc. These sculptures seem to be similar in some respects to the sculptures of the Gupta temple at Deogarh. The similarities are mostly in the areas of the delineation of the torso, in the treatment of the facial features, in the hairdressing and ornaments, and on such other sundry items. But the sculptures from the Mūḍēśvarī temple seem to have been executed by inferior hands. These sculptural forms are characterised by a lack of agility and we notice in them an increased stiffness. The sculptures from Beņśāgar are all Brahmanical, and almost all of them are Saivite.77 These sculptures, by and large, follow the stylistic trend noticeable in the Mūḍēśvarī group of sculptures, and thereby they perpetuate the phase of experimentation when the sculptors showed their perfunctory allegiance to the Classical Gupta norms.

But it is of interest to note that even in the seventh century, the eastern version of the Gupta Classical idiom persisted, as a parallel trend, with the gradually emergent medievalism, as is documented by the sculptures in the great temple at Pāhārpūr (Rajshahi district). These sculptures can be classified into three groups from the stylistic point of view. In one group, for instance, in the representation of an amorous couple or the figure of the river goddess,78 the smooth and graceful contours of the sensitively modelled form, although undoubtedly swayed by Eastern Indian sensuousness, are nevertheless reminiscent of the Classical counterparts in respect of some formal proximity, if not in the overall aesthetics. But in another group,79 not far removed from the first in point of chronology, there is virtually nothing left of the plasticity and grace of the Classical idiom. That this style was drawn more towards the formulations of the conventional hieratic cult images is clearly evident from the proximity of style of a few isolated examples of cult images, belonging to this period, as for instance, the bronze image of Śiva80 from Sunderbans, the Kādīghī Viśṇu81 and the Chauddagāṃ metal images of Sarvāṇī and Sūrya.82 This style, no doubt, is the precursor of the medieval hieratic sculptures of the Pālas of the

77 Ibid., figs. 25-29.
78 Ibid., p. 153 and SIIS, fig. 123.
79 Ibid., p. 154.
80 Ibid., fig. 127.
82 N. K. Bhattasali, Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum, Dacca, 1929, p. 204, pl. LXX; p. 172, pl. LIX.
subsequent days. The third group of Pāhārpur sculptures, seem, in point of style, to have been the lithic replica of numerous terracotta plaques on the walls of the Pāhārpur temple. These sculptures, although crude and coarse in execution and unsophisticated in bearing, are documents of an autochthonous art idiom, in workmanship and composition and naive in bearing, but very powerful in emotional content and aesthetic appeal. As visual documents of the many facets of the mind of the people and of their day-to-day humble life, these sculptures have no doubt deep social significance.

In central India, as well as in the west, in Rajasthan and Gujarat, the transition from the Classical to the medieval was also through a gradual desiccation of the Gupta Classical ideal and infiltration of the so-called medieval factor. The Māṭrikā figures from Bheraghat (Jabalpur district, Madhya Pradesh) and the image of Avalokiteśvara from Sāṇchī, assignable to the seventh-eighth centuries A.D., are coarse in treatment and lack the gracefulness of the contours. The bust of the female figure from Gwalior retains the rounded form of the Classical idiom, but fails to be equal in respect of the plasticity of the modelling. Rajasthan and Gujarat seems to have shared the contemporary plastic trends and tendencies of central India. That even the centres of art in the Punjab hills followed a similar course is evident from the seventh-century sculptures of Chambā, as for instance, the wooden reliefs of the Brahmor temple or the metal image of the Buddha from Fāṭhpur. In fact, throughout North India, there seems to have been in the art scene during this period, an apparent compatriotism in so far as everywhere there was either an incompetent handling of the Classical norm or the failure to spell out expressly what new message, if at all, the sculptors intended to come out with. As a result, there was neither a proper continuation nor a new orientation of what had been achieved earlier. Nevertheless, one striking feature of the age which should not escape notice is that almost all the regions of Northern India which got celebrity in sculptural activity during the Classical period continued to produce sculptures, which might not have been equal to their Classical counterparts in quality but probably are not far less in numerical strength. This shows that the sculptors did not feel

85 CA, fig. 77.
86 Ibid., fig. 75.
87 J. Ph. Vogel, Antiquities of Chamba State, Calcutta, 1911, p. 7, fig. 2.
88 CA, fig. 78.
spent upon the dominant impact of the Classical aesthetics melted away, rather they seem to have kept the how alive within their own capacity to fulfil the requirements of the transition from the Classical scene to the medieval.

THE MEDIEVAL TREND

Despite the endless struggles and strife among various rulers or dynasties in North India during the period following the end of the rule of Harṣavardhana, the tradition of the art of sculpture continued as has been seen above. Each dynasty seems to have encouraged the construction of temples, one more stupendous and lavish than the other. This made the period quite significant in architectural activity. The temples required sculptural embellishments and also the cult images and their litany for the sanctum cells and for the various walls. This gave a good inspiration for the advancement of sculptural art. But the impact of the political fragmentation of the period was nevertheless reflected in the arts, particularly in sculptural art. There emerged various styles, each of them upholding the respective regional predilections and preferences.

From about the middle of the eighth century, symptoms of some new orientation in artistic practices became evident. The uncomfortable grooving for a direction during the period of transition seems to have terminated, but what emerged out of it was, of course, in no way as brilliant as what had preceded. Nevertheless, there was the rise of a different approach towards art, and the elemental distinctiveness of this new approach is what is referred to as the 'medieval' factor or 'medievalism' on Indian art.

In sculpture, this so-called distinctiveness amounted to the loss in gradual progression, of the two most essential and vital characteristics of Classicism, viz., the roundness of the form and its flowing linear rhythm. As a corollary, the plasticity of modelling and the suavity of the contours also had to give way. Consequently, the sculptural productions were virtually denuded of the essence of Classicism, and they no longer partook of a visual language intelligible equally to all. No longer they were redeemed by the homogeneity of purpose and performance, and perhaps the glory of creativity was substituted by the glamour of ostensible.

That was the account of the loss of Classicism. But this was, of course, substituted, if not compensated, by the plastic characteristics like flat surface, sharp linearised edges often giving rise to intriguing angular configurations, stiff and formalised attitudes and stances of the figures, and the sum total of all these—the representation of a
series of lifeless living forms which occupy space but seldom perform the occupation that they were supposed to do, aesthetically speaking.

This is, of course, by and large a generalised view of the artistic situation, and it cannot be said that exceptions, to highlight the character of the rest, were not there. But sculptural productions with genuine creativity were very rare in North India in the medieval period till the beginning of the tenth century.

It has, of course, to be appreciated that the medieval sculptors' approach towards art is rooted in their antecedent endeavour in the last two centuries for changing the axis of artistic preference and predilection. The influence of the Gupta Classicism outlived its anticipated span. There was a change in the political and social set-up ever since. In the new context, the 'reminiscences of the past' achievements did no longer click for obvious reasons. The sculptors of the age with their successive loss of efficiency through generations could not also justify their claim to the glory of the Classical heritage as its worthy successors. Moreover, an appalling reflection of the political and the socio-economic frustration of the two centuries following the termination of the fairly peaceful period of the Guptas, was destined to give rise to similar attitudes in every expression of the popular mind. Presumably, art during this period had to attune itself to the physical realities of life for its acceptance by the society, and as such it could not afford to indulge in the luxury of intellectualisation of the preceding ages. The aesthetics of art had to compromise with the functional relevance, because the artists now onwards had to seek sustenance from patrons, who, in the changed circumstances, had altogether a different view of art, and of life as well. The medieval Indian sculptor, unlike his Classical predecessors, therefore, seems to have been more a professionalist devotedly discharging his vocational responsibility to the patron by doing things mostly corresponding to the latter's need and not possibly much as he himself felt.

During this period there was a proliferation of architectural activity in the form of structural temples, occasioned either by the regional competition or by similar spirit among the votaries of various cults and sects nurtured by the affluence of their royal or mercantile patrons. These temples needed for each of them the image of the cult icon to be installed in the garbhagriha, and also the representation of the entire litany consisting of the pārśvadevatās and the pārvādevatās. For this, the artist's services were commissioned and the latter could entitle himself for praise and payment, and also for future commissions, only if he had done the work exactly corres-
ponding to the patron’s knowledge and understanding, which no doubt were based on the liturgical injunctions of the faith of his affiliation. Naturally, therefore, the sculptor became subservient to the iconographic formulations. Being a professionalist, the sculptor could not at the same time restrict himself to such works pertaining to a particular religion only. This demanded his knowledge of iconographic norms of various religious orders in all possible details. To help him the iconographic canons were codified in different texts like the Śilpaśāstras and the Vāstuśāstras. The sculptural art of the medieval period, particularly in North India, is virtually a lithic transliteration of the contents of many such texts.

The temples required to be embellished with sculptural decorations on their walls. In this regard also the sculptors had to follow the codifications of the liturgical and allied literature. But here only they were possibly allowed some liberty for individual expressions but, understandably, within a permissive limit. Some of the medieval temples have got on their exterior walls occasional glimpses of such deviations.

The cult images, which seem to have been the major theme for the sculptures of this period, were characterised mostly by a rigid frontality, because the totality of the presence of the divinity, of which the image was supposed to be a visual replica, was a concomitant for the concentration of the mind of the devotee. Moreover, the sculptor had to ascribe to the icon all the attributes or emblems or jewellery as prescribed in the canons, because these were supposed to be the symbolic reminders of the deity’s divine grace and greatness. Such conception required the ascription of an aureole to the icon and the incorporation of the latter within a stele in which the central position is occupied by the principal deity and the others by the members of his litany. All these could not but make the whole expression highly schematic and formalised, and the sculptor virtually had no scope to rise above this limitation and somehow transmute elements of naturalism to it. The mode of worship of the deity together with a host of its associates required the representation of the litany in various forms of māṇḍalas (mystic compositions), and this made the sculptural composition many a times overcrowded and look bizarre.

During this period, there was also a great development of tantricism which permeated the mental attitude of almost all the sects and cults of the period in varying degrees. This contributed to the esoteric character of the art as well. The import of the elements of esoterism, thus introduced into art, were appreciated only by a limited few who were initiated into the doctrine. Consequently, many of
the sculptural expressions were tending towards non-communicability and the sculpture of this period was virtually denuded of all the qualities of excellence of the earlier periods; it lost much of the aesthetic charm and became highly mechanised and conventional; it was no longer illuminated by the spiritual experience of the sculptor; and being addicted to the esoteric rigmarole of tantricism, it ceased to be intelligible to the people at large. Art, particularly sculptural art, of this period with its prolific productive spree, patronised by the affluent religious treasuries, continued to exist, but failed to share the hope, aspiration and contemplation of the people in general.

The above survey pertains to the general situation in the are scene in North India from the middle of the eighth to that of the thirteenth century, and the picture seems to have been virtually the same everywhere, occasional exceptions notwithstanding. During this period, art movements in the different regions were separated from one another, and there seems to have been no dialogue between one artistic zone and the other for sharing a common artistic vision and for undertaking a journey towards a common goal. In fact, the art scene was seized upon, so to say, by a sort of bankruptcy in creativity. The art expressions were merely gestures without conviction, performance without feeling. But fortunately, from about the tenth century, some sculptors started showing promise of new hopes, and quite a number of sculptures with distinctiveness of their own were produced in various parts of North India. A critical estimation of these early medieval sculptures of Northern India will necessitate their grouping in terms of the following geographical distribution: Eastern India, Ganga-Yamuna valley, Central India, Western India, Punjab and the Himalayan tracts.

**Eastern India**

The medieval sculptures of Eastern India can broadly be distributed under two geographical divisions, viz., Bengal and Bihar as one, and Orissa as the other. This classification is made only to distinguish between the two in the matter of the extent of the persistence of Classical elements in either of these areas. And since the sculptures of both these areas seem to retain their link with the Classical heritage, however distant or debased that might be, we have to admit some overlapping of styles of art operative in these two artistic zones, at least in the early medieval period. The similarity is, however, not only in respect of the legacy of Classicism, but also in view of an emphatic tantricism that characterise the sculptures. Nevertheless,
it is interesting to note the subtle differences in the apparently similar artistic propositions handled by the sculptors in these two zones.

The important centres of art of the first zone were Nālandā, Kurukshetra, Bodhgaya, Rājgir, and Champā in Bihar, and Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra, Dacca and Sylhet in Bangladesh. The second zone yields sculptures from Lalitgiri, Kendrapara, Udaygiri, Khiching, Ratnagiri, and Jajpur, and also from a few early temples of Bhuva-
neswar. There was, of course, a prolific output in the sculptural produc-
tions in the medieval period, particularly in Orissa, but they are mostly outside the purview of the period ending in the tenth century.

The more known specimens of sculptures of Bengal and Bihar consist mostly of cult images, in stone and metal, and occasionally in wood and ivory. The stone sculptures are mostly carved out of black chlorite (kaśtipāthar) and the metal images are cast in brass or acto-alloy (astadhātu) by the lost wax process. Whatever the ma-
terial and whatever the theme represented, the sculptures seem to be largely allied to the eastern version of the Classical idiom of Sarnath. They retain, in varying degrees, the plastic qualities of the Classical sculptures, but they lack the spiritual experience of the latter. The spiritual element seems to have been substituted by physical charm and sensuousness, no doubt a reflection of the sexoyogic practices of tantricism which were gaining ground during the period. But the most striking feature of the sculptures seems to be their indubitable metallic precision, which, combined with the texture of black chlorite, often adds elusive character to the material. The stone image of Avalokiteśvara89 from Nālandā, although a bit sturdily conceived, is characterised by a soft and pliable fleshiness within definite outline. Moreover, a somewhat elongated physiog-
omy, the subtle flexion in the body and the facial expression have added to the figure elements of grace and tenderness. Another signifi-
cant piece, the figure of the Cakrapurusha,90 found from Apshad near Gayā, has also the Classical grace and tenderness, particularly in pose and proportion. But its sensuous modelling is an unmistakable indication of its being allied to the early Pāla idiom. The sensuously fleshy body was later on disciplined under the control of definite lines which, however, compelled the pent-up vigour tend to outflow the defined form, as for instance, the seated figure of the Buddha

89 R. C. Majumdar (ed.), The Struggle for Empire (henceforth SE), Bombay, 1957, fig. 96.

90 Handbook of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, 1966, p. 232, fig. 3.
from Ujjaini,91 now in the Dacca Museum. But the same treatment has yielded a different effect on the figure of Pārśvanātha92 from Kāntābeniā: to a certain extent a petrification of the flesh and a relativley integrated vigour of the body. Of the many metal images belonging to this period, those from Nālandā and Kurkihār, both in Bihar, deserve mention. All such specimens are characterised by the moulding of the form with vitality and sensuousness disciplined by an accommodative outline. The facial types are full, occasionally a bit longish, and the flexions of the body attuned to the overall plastic intent. The figures of Tārā and Bhairava,93 both from Kurkihār, and some similar images from Nālandā,94 are examples in point.

The sculptures from Orissa during the same period seem to be allied more with the Classical trend which preceded the culmination of the same in Sarnath. They show a preference for a heavy physiognomical form together with its plasticity of modelling. The sculptures from Lalitagiri,95 for instance, lack the subtle delicacy and spiritual grace of their contemporary counterparts from Nālandā. The heavy appearance and treatment, together with their sturdier build, and perhaps also a tight modelling, have endowed the sculptures from Udaygiri and Ratnagiri, belonging to the ninth century a character that is almost of the same idiom as that of the Lalitgiri works. But the latter seems to be comparatively more graceful due perhaps to the forms being slender. Some sculptures from Khiching96 show admirable grace and tenderness, even though their heavy bearing often diminishes the total aesthetic effect. But that the Orissan sculptors were soon destined to prove their genius is already indicated in the sculptures of a few early temples of Bhuvaneshwar. The sculptured panels on the walls of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple97 are already replete with the symptoms of this trend. The graceful figures on the walls of the Muktesvara98 and the Rājaśrānī temples testify to progress of the move towards the superb achievement of the sculptures of the Lingūrāja temple of Bhuvaneshwar and of the Sun temple of Kōnārka in the twelfth century.

The sculptures of Eastern India, combining the plastic excellence of the Gupta period with the refined elegance of the new period, in-

91 Struggle for Empire, fig. 92.
92 Ibid., fig. 95.
93 Ibid., fig. 94. and SIS, fig. 134.
95 Art of the Indian Subcontinent from Los Angeles Collection, ed. Davidson 1968, fig. 98.
96 Saraswati, op. cit., fig. 160.
97 Ibid., fig. 153.
98 Ibid., fig. 165.
fluenced the style of the statuaries of Burma, Nepal, Tibet, Thailand, Cambodia, and Java, and became the prototype of the local schools, particularly in Nepal and Tibet.

Ganga-Yamuna Valley

Very few sculptures, assignable to the early medieval period, are known to us from the Ganga-Yamuna valley, which formed the hub of the empire of the Gurjara Pratihāras in the medieval period. Successive political turmoil, to which this area was subjected, presumably destroyed many of the art objects which could otherwise serve as documents of the achievements of the artists under Pratihāra patronage. Obviously, many portable pieces of sculptures were also removed to different parts of India from this area in the trail of circumstances, and since the sculptures of this region shared similar stylistic features with some of their geographically contiguous neighbouring areas, many art objects belonging to this region lost their identity of provenance and got mixed up with the others. This might partially explain the phenomenon of the surprising paucity of sculptural materials from the Ganga-Yamuna valley. But fortunately, a few well-known specimens of sculpture from this area give a glimpse of the then artistic situation existing in the Ganga-Yamuna valley. Two basic trends seem to have been current there, either simultaneously or in successive order. In one, represented by such sculptures as as the head of Ardhanārīśvara\(^9\) from Mathurā, and the head of a female figure\(^10\) (now in the Boston Museum) from Uttar Pradesh, indications of the survivals of some elements of the Gupta plastic conception, although in a somewhat stiffened and desiant manner, can be seen. A similar stylistic note is also evident in the headless figure of Ṛṣabhanātha\(^11\) (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) found from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh. The figure is seated in the attitude of meditation and is represented with the simplicity and quality of inner resonance for which the Gupta style is celebrated. In this respect, the trend of plastic practices in this area seems to be of the same nature as observed in contemporary Eastern India, in spirit at least, if not in technical specifications as well. Mention should be made in this connection of the figure of Pārvatī\(^12\) in red Sikri sandstone found from Mathurā (now pre-

\(^9\) Ibid., fig. 173.
\(^10\) SE, fig. 110.
\(^12\) The Museum News Series, published by the New Ark Museum, Vol. 22, No. 4, Fall 1970, fig. 3 on p. 8.
served in the New York Museum). It shows the four-armed form of Parvatī in the stance of a dance. The elongated limbs, attenuated waist, and the gracefulness of posture have rendered the form sensuous. But the softness of modelling and the serene expression in the face are unmistakably Gupta. But the other trend, represented, for example, by the so-called Rukmini from Noklās (Etah district, Uttar Pradesh), shows a greater proximity with the Classical norm in respect of smooth and sensitive plasticity of modelling and graceful linear contours. A number of headless figures in buff sandstone from Mathurā (now preserved in a private collection in the U.S.A.) presumably are also the documents for this stylistic trend. There is, however, no doubt that in this area also the impact of medievalism gradually outdid, even though later than in many other areas, all vestiges of Classicism, and the artists had to fall back upon the representation of cult icons following the socio-economic exigency.

Central India

Central India extending between Rajasthan and Gujarat in the west and Allahabad in the east, was a centre of prolific sculptural activity, particularly in the latter half of the medieval period. In the period under review, this area seems to have drawn heavily either from the eastern or the western Indian norms of the contemporary period. This was evidently the impact of the geographical contiguity of central India with the eastern and the western Indian artistic zones. Eastern Indian vision of the day inspired the sculptors to produce the works like the image of Śimhanāda Lokesvara from Mahobā, in which physical charm through attitudes and moods has been arrested, but there is not much of excellence in plastic quality. The figure of the Vṛksha Devatā from Gyarspur has also all the possible nuances of physical charm and of the exuberance of ornamental attributes. The exaggerated axial torsion of the body and the cumbrous ornaments and detailed coiffure are the distinctive features of the figure, but they have disturbed its liveliness. This work, however, cannot be regarded as the index of the nature of artistic excellence in this area during the period under review. In many other examples of sculpture, this predilection for slender forms accentuated flexions is totally absent: they draw heaviness and gross exuberance from the contemporary western Indian repertoire.

103 SE, fig. 109.
104 Davidson, Op. cit., figs. 60 A-D.
105 SE, fig. 119.
106 Kramrisch, Art of India, fig. 119.
As examples of this type, mention can be made of the representation of the Vāmana form of Viṣṇu¹⁰⁷ (now in a private collection) or the figure of Brahmānī¹⁰⁸ (now in the collection of Mrs. and Mr. Harry Lenart of the U.S.A.). A synthesis of these two trends, and the consequent birth of an idiom replete with all elements of mediaevalism were however the contribution of the subsequent sculptors, who worked under the care and patronage of the Candelmas of Jejakābhukti, the Paramāras of Dhārā, and the Hālayas of Tripuri.

**Western India**

The situation was not much different in western India, comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kathiawad. The remnants of the Classical trend are noticed side by side with the emerging note of mediaeval symptoms. In Rajasthan, of course, the persistence of the elements of the Classical norm is seen even in the tenth century sculptures from Sirohi,¹⁰⁹ Osia, Baroli, and Harshagiri.¹¹⁰ But Gujarat seems to have fallen, much earlier, in the grip of the mediaeval trend. There, the sculptures are characterised by lines with nervous tensions, sharpness of angularity in the flexions and curves, and perhaps also by a disorganised and disintegrated composition which takes out the vitality from even the most apparently bold forms.

But it has to be noted that in western India, particularly in Rajasthan, in the ninth century, a new fascination with the representation of beautiful female forms began, and such form emerged as a separate decorative element. These female forms have, almost always, large spherical breasts, sharply indented waists, and wide ample hips. One of the legs is rather stiff while the other is bent slightly at the knee. The lower torso is thrust forward and lifted to one side, while the feet remain facing forward. These stylistic innovations can first be noticed in the sculptures at Baroli, and these characteristics are carried further by the sculptors of Harshagiri. But at the latter site there emerges a new facial type with prominent and sharply arched eyebrows. The figures there have large eyes, oblong in shape, which tend to dominate the face. This mode gained wide acceptance and can be noticed in almost all the later sites in Rajasthan.

**Punjab Hills and Himalayan Tracts**

In the Punjab hill states and in the regions situated in the western as well as the eastern Himalayan belts, a similar simultaneous exist-

¹⁰⁷ Davidson, *op. cit.*, fig. 58.
¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, fig. 43.
¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, fig. 53.
ence of the two trends was noticed: one, which cast a lingering look to the Classical past for its sustenance, and the other, which, shaken off of all lure for the heritage, showed a compromising leaning towards medievalism. This is what one can read in the sculptures from the Punjab hill states, like those from Kangra, or the sculptures from Kashmir, or even those from Nepal. But these hilly regions, particularly Nepal, preserved for a considerably longer period the Classical norm alive, though of course that Classicism is to an extent percolated through the Eastern Indian art of the Pālas of Bengal and Bihar. Nevertheless, as was the case elsewhere, in these areas also, Classicism, following the logic of acculturation, had to bequeath its mantle to medievalism, and consequently, from about the eleventh century onwards, almost everywhere in Northern India, there was a virtual substitution of the Classical norm with the Medieval.

112 The Art of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, fgs. 50-61.
113 Ibid., fgs. 77-97.