CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE(B)

ART AND ARCHITECTURE
SOUTHERN INDIA

A. ARCHITECTURE (A.D. 320-985)

1. CAVE ARCHITECTURE

The creative impulse of Indian genius appears to have found one of its most vigorous expressions in the rock-cut architecture. The cave excavations were known to many civilizations of the past, but nowhere had the rock-cutters shown such audacious scheme as in the southern part of Indian sub-continent, especially in the Deccan. In this period, as in the earlier, there was an abundant activity in cave excavation pertaining to all the three religious systems popular in the region, viz. Buddhism, Brahmanical Hinduism and Jainism.

1. The Buddhist Caves

(i) Chaitya: From the very beginning two types of caves were excavated by the Buddhists: The Chaitya shrines which were their chapels and, secondly, the vihāras or saṅghārāmas which served as monasteries. "A Chaitya shrine in its typical form consists of a long rectangular hall, apsidal at the rear-end and divided into three sections by two rows of pillars along the length of the hall meeting at the back end. The votive chaitya is always found as situated at the apsidal end and the entrance to the shrine in front, i.e. opposite to the votive chaitya. The nave is covered by a barrel-shaped vault and the two aisles by two vaults, each half the section of that of the nave. Over the entrance doorway in front is placed a huge arched window, shaped like a horse-shoe, known as chaitya window, dominating the entire scheme of the facade".1 The chaitya type, thus described, came to be gradually crystallised in the examples at Bhājā, Kondāne, Pialkhorā, Bedsā, Nāsik Kānheri Ajanṭā (Caves IX and X) and Kārle, all in Western India, between second century B.C. and second century A.D. The roofing, the design and setting of the pillars, doorways, facade decorations etc found in the examples apparently betray copious imitation of the technique and patterns of structural practices in wood, bamboo, etc. The

1 Age of Imperial Unity.
plan and execution of these caves show that, instead of evolving a
new form, they followed the contemporary structural shrines made
of less durable materials. In the said four hundred years, mostly
under the stable rule of the Sātavāhanas, the rock-cut chaityas de-
veloped as a type from its beginning at Bhājā to an early culmina-
ation at Kārle, though all through the basic plan remained the same. But
after these centuries of flourish there is a gap of about three hun-
dred years in the evolution of the chaitya type.

From the middle of the fifth century A.D. a new wave of rock-
hewn chaitya cave came into being at Ajanṭā, a place already known
for its chaityas and vihāras excavated during the early centuries
preceding and succeeding the Christian era. Of the twenty-eight
rock excavations found at Ajanṭā, five belong to the earlier phase
and they are chaityas Nos. IX and X and vihāras Nos. VII, XII &
XIII. The remaining twenty three belong to our period, but out
of them only two, i.e. Caves Nos. XIX and XXVI, are chaitya halls
and others are vihāras. Again, the chaitya Cave No. XIX is earlier
and finer of the two. The facade of the cave is 38 ft by 32 ft, while
its interior measures 46 ft by 26 ft; and thus it is not a large hall.
The interior of the chaitya is divided into a nave and two aisles by
fifteen closely set pillars, in addition to two pillars at the entrance,
all eleven feet high. These pillars, with their richly patterned
shafts, cushion capitals and massive brackets, support a broad tri-
forium or frieze, five feet wide and divided into panels, and con-
tinued all around the nave. Above these rises the vaulted roof with
the ribs cut out of the rock. In contrast, the ceilings of the aisles
are flat, a characteristic also noted in the earlier chaityas of the place.
The votive chaitya stands on a slightly elevated platform in the cen-
tre of the apse and being 22 ft high almost reaches the vault above.
Though carved out of a monolith, its body shows a drum and a
dome placed on a vedikā, and the dome carries above a tall finial
in tiers, consisting of a harmikā, three diminishing parasols and a
vase at the top—all indicating an emphasis on the vertical thrust.

The other chaitya hall of the series, i.e. No. XXVI, was excavated
some fifty years after the Chaitiya No. XIX. It is, however, larger
in size and measures in interior 68 ft long, 36 ft wide and 31 ft
high. Here the number of columns increases to twenty-six in addi-
tion to two at the entrance. So far as architectural treatment is con-
cerned, this chaitya hall is same as the chaitya No. XIX, and in all
respects it is nothing but an elaboration and extension over the ear-
lier one. From the minute carvings of the interior, rhythmic pro-
portions of the pillars, harmonious arrangements of different com-
ponents and from their total integration, it is apparent that as an
architectural type the excavated chaitya hall came to be perfected in the fifth-sixth centuries A.D., especially in Cave No. XIX at Ajanta. But what seems to be very much significant of the cave shrines of this phase is an overall change in the psychology and attitude of the Buddhist votaries—their transformation from a believer in aniconism to one of overwhelming idolatry. And this change determines the modification in ornamentation of the interior as also of the facade of the shrines. In the earlier chaitya halls the ornamentation of the facade was limited to repetitive architectural motifs like the rail, stupa, chaitya-window, pilaster, etc. with the enormous horse-shoe aperture over the doorway dominating the entire scheme of the frontage. In the ornamental plan of these two chaityas figures, mostly of the Buddha, appear to stand out as the predominant and recurring theme in marked contrast to that in the earlier. They are made to cover every possible space, eliminating or reducing in scale and import the earlier architectural motifs. Even the votive stupa at the apse shows in front a Buddha in high relief in each one of the Ajanta chaityas of our period. Another significant progress marked in these chaityas is their total freedom from earlier dependence on wooden practices. Except for the wooden frame-work of the huge chaitya window, and the carved ribs of the vaulted roof retaining appearance of wood works, the wooden ancestry has been totally discarded. Instead, the workmen engaged in excavation appear to have had fully realized the inherent difference of the material they were handling, and, as such, they evolved a new technique to exploit the effects of volume and void by a judicious quarrying and chiselling of the rock. “The later halls thus present,” says Percy Brown, “a definite style of architecture, more flexible, sophisticated, and plastically ornate, than any which had hitherto prevailed.”

Although almost contemporary of the later phase of Ajanta caves, the Buddhist rock architecture of Ellora show a slight difference in character, and it is noticed both in chaitya and vihara types. Ellora, is the most important centre of rock-excavated architecture in India, and here flourished three distinct groups of cave architecture associated with Buddhism, Brahmanical Hinduism and Jainism. Among the followers of these three faiths, the Buddhists were the first to work at the site and thus their establishments were cut out in the most favourable location. Here in between A.D. 450 and 650 a group of twelve rock-hewn halls were made to meet the growing demand of the monks. This group may again be divided into two sub-groups: Caves nos. I to V are known as

3 Brown, Percy Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu), Bombay, 1965, p. 58.
"Dhedwada sub-group", and Caves nos. VI to XII form a slightly later sub-group. Each sub-group comprises a chaitya hall and a number of vihāras. The ‘Dhedwada sub-group’ as its prayer hall, i.e. chaitya, in Cave V, locally known as Mahanwada, and by combining a prayer hall and a monastery it presents an unusual type. It is an extensive establishment measuring 117 ft deep and 58½ ft wide, and is divided into a nave and two aisles by twenty-four pillars in two rows. The hall has twenty-three living cubicles on its sides, while at the far end is a transverse vestibule beyond which is a square cella containing a seated Buddha along with his attendants. Along the centre of the nave run two parallel platforms extending over the whole length of the hall. It is a unique feature having only one instance in the “Durbar” hall at Kānheri. In all likelihood these platforms served as seats for the monks during their worship.

Cave no. X, known as the Viśvakarmā cave, provides the prayer hall for the latter sub-group of the Buddhist caves at Ellorā. Although it represents one of the latest examples of the excavated type of chaitya halls, and is larger in dimensions, the Viśvakarmā closely resembles the two Ajantā chaityas described above. Its internal arrangement is almost the same, but it lacks in decorative carvings when compared with the Ajantā chaityas. In two respects, however, the Viśvakarmā cave at Ellorā marks a significant stage in the development of rock-cut chaitya type. First, the apsidal end of the hall is entirely blocked by the votive stūpa which, being itself completely relegated to the background, bears a colossal image of the Buddha, seated in pralambapāda āsana between two standing attendants. This image not only stands out as the frontpiece of the stūpa, but also represents the principal object of veneration. Secondly, this chaitya shrine shows a facade that is substantially different in layout from those found in the Ajantā chaityas. In the Viśvakarmā cave, writes S. K. Saraswati, “The facade itself is divided into two sections, the lower consisting of the portico with its range of pillars, and the upper exhibiting a composition which is quite unusual in this context. The enormous horse-shoe opening which gave such a distinctive character to the frontage of such shrines, is missed here for the first time. The design is not eliminated altogether, but being reduced in size, as we find it in the small, almost circular opening, it loses its distinctive meaning, and also apparently its traditional significance”.3 This alteration seems to have not only marked a stylistic innovation but to represent also a

changed outlook of the Buddhist votaries. For since the advent of the anthropomorphical representation of the Master as the “worshipful one”, the sanctity of the chaitya hall along with its stūpa began to diminish, and it is no wonder that after the Viśvakarmā cave at Ellorā the chaitya hall as the shrine par excellence seems to have gone out of use.

(ii) Vihāra or saṅghārāma: A structural monastery, known to the Buddhists as vihāra or saṅghārāma, in its mature form was usually planned as a private dwelling consisting of four ranges of cells or sleeping cubicles on four sides of an open courtyard. In the rock-cut version of the monastery a slight, but obviously necessary, modification may be noted. The typical plan of the rock-cut monastery shows three ranges of cells on three sides of a central hall opening out into a pillared gallery in front. As in the case of chaitya shrines, the monasteries may also be divided into two distinct phases of development. The earlier phase is represented by the Western Indian vihāras excavated at Bhājā, Ajanṭā (nos VIII, XII, and XIII), Nāsik (nos. X and III), Junnar (the Gañēśe Leṇā), Kondāne, Pītalkhorā, Bedsā and Kārle. All of them belong to the centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era and are marked for their simplicity in ornamentations, which were usually confined to the facade and the doorways of the monastic cells. Motifs used are essentially of architectural character, i.e. chaitya-window, rails, latticed screen etc., and, no doubt, betray their dependence on the forms associated with woodwork. Introduction of the pillars, however, took place in this phase. In fact, the pillars forming a square at the centre of the hall in the Kārle monastery and its storeyed elevation are two significant aspects of the rock-cut type that were further developed in the subsequent ages.

A prolific expression of the rock-hewn vihāras had its beginning in our period sometime in the fifth century A.D. A study of the plans of different vihāras excavated at Ajanṭā in this phase would reveal certain stages of evolution of the type. The earliest sub-group of vihāras executed at Ajanṭā in the Mahāvāna style includes three caves numbering VI, VII and IX, and they represent the transitional phase between the early Hīnāvāna types met with at various Western Indian centres on one hand and the final Mahāvāna type noted at Ajanṭā in the sixth-seventh century on the other. Cave XI shows, as if following the Kārle example, four pillars creating a square at the centre, while Cave VII next in order of excavation, contains two sets of four pillars, placed side by side, to provide support to the roof of a larger hall. The lower storey of Cave VI, which follows Cave VII in execution, combines the system of four central
pillars of Cave XI with an additional series of pillars around the main, resulting a cumbersome arrangement of pillars in the plan. The next stage in the experimentation may be marked in the upper storey of Cave VI. It shows a highly satisfactory system of columnation by providing a colonnade on each of the four sides of the central hall, a plan that had been adopted in all the subsequent rock-cut vihāras at Ajanṭā. After these experiments the plan of the monastic hall became more or less standardized, although variations in the details, resulting from fertility of innovations, are not unknown in the succeeding groups. Of such later examples significant are Caves I, IV, XVI, XVII, XXI and XXIII, and, again, among them the high water mark in the vihāra excavation at Ajanṭā was reached in Cave XVI in the first half of the sixth century. But the rock-cut vihāra type appears to have reached its supreme aforescence in Cave I at Ajanṭā. Both Caves XVI and I are approximately of the same size and planned much on the similar lines. Each of them contains an exterior verandah 65 ft long and a main hall 65 ft square, the latter having a surrounding aisle formed by a colonnade of twenty pillars. These are the usual measures in approximation of the Ajanṭā vihāras of later phase. An innovation of the phase may be noted in the introduction of a sanctuary containing an image of the Master carved out in the depth of the rock, and this measure no doubt qualitatively changes the character of previous vihāras which were exclusively used as dwelling shelters.

After the experimentations at Ajanṭā, certain new developments were also recorded at Aurangabad and Ellorā. In Aurangabad Cave VII and Ellorā Cave VIII, the image sanctuary in each case has been carved out in the middle of the monastic hall as a free-standing shrine. In the second storey of Cave XII at Ellorā; and also in Cave II of the same place, another new feature is noted. The cells radiating from the central hall in the lateral sides are found to be replaced by the image galleries, “each in the form of a kind of iconostasis”. Stored excavations may be found in Ajanṭā Cave VI and Ellorā Cave XI and XII, the last two rising to three storey each. Of these, again, Cave XII of Ellorā, known as the Tin Thal, i.e. “thir storeved”, is the most striking and also the most commodious of all. The Tin Thal has sufficient cells to lodge at least forty priests, while its assembly hall is big enough to provide a space for the congregation of hundreds. Sober and dignified in treatment, the facade of the vihāra shows three rows of plain square pillars rising in stages. The massive pillars in their plain execution offer a clear contrast to the brilliantly sculptured galleries in the interior. In its totality, the Tin
Thal stands out as one of the most remarkable examples of rock-cut architecture found anywhere in India.

2. The Brahmanical Caves

The rock-cut mode of architecture was also carried on by the followers of Brahmanical and Jain creeds. In South India the Brahmanical caves were at first cut at Bāḍāmi, under the rule of the western Chālukyas. Evidently carved in the sixth century A.D., the cave shrines at Bāḍāmi, four in number, show clear advance over the caves at Udayagiri in Madhya Pradesh. In their general appearance and internal arrangements, all the Bāḍāmi cave shrines represent a common type, and each of them includes an open court in front, a pillared verandah, a columned hall, and a small square cella cut deep into the rock. The facades show a classic simplicity and in contrast the pillars and walls inside are profusely carved to represent various designs and mythological figures.

In the far south, cave style was introduced in the first quarter of the seventh century by Mahendravarman Pallava at Mandagapattu in the District of South Arcot. The style found its exponents also among his successors. Each of these shrines consists of a hallow rectangular pillared hall or mandapa with one or more cells cut deep in one or more of the interior walls. The mandapa, in its turn is often divided into proximal and distal sections, the mukha-mandapa and the ardha-mandapa, either by a row of pillars corresponding to the facade row, or by differing in floor-levels or ceiling heights. The shrine-doors are generally flanked by pairs of dvārapālas or guards, a feature sometimes found repeated on either side of the entrance to the mandapa. Appearing already in one of the cave-shrines at Bāḍāmi, the dvārapālas constitute an invariable feature of the Brahmanical cave temples of later days. Towards the latter part of Mahendravarman’s rule, storeyed caves began to figure, but no appreciable advance in the design can be recognised. The caves excavated by his son Narasimhavarman Māmalla show similar plan, but the facade of these caves are usually marked by the more elaborate ornamentation of their pillars and cornices.

This rock-cut activity was also pursued in the Andhra region. On either bank of the Krishna, at places like Undavalli, Penamaga, Sitarampuram in Guntur District, and Vijayawada and Mogalrajapuram in Krishna District, about a dozen cave temples are found to form a separate series in the Chalukyan territory dating from A.D. 700. Each of these cave temples consists of a rock-cut hall or mandapa with one or more, often three, shrine-cells behind. The
hall is either astylar or multi-pillared, and sometimes found as divided into front and rear sections by two rows of pillars and pilasters, the usual facade row and the inner row. Although these cave temples are ascribed to the Eastern Chāḷukya line that ruled in Veṅgi, the general Pallava impression on the plan is undeniable. A series of eight cave temples also occur in the Bhairavakoṇḍa hills in Nellore District, but they are not so important from the point of architectural interests. The Pāṇḍya contemporaries of the Pallavas started rock-architecture in further south by about the beginning of the eighth century and continued it in the two succeeding centuries till they were overthrown by the Cholas. Their cave shrines are to be found all over in Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Trivandrum and Quilon Districts and also in the southern part of the district of Tiruchirapalli. They are larger in number than the Pallava examples but are essentially similar to them in plan. Besides, they show certain characteristic features of their own.

Under the Chāḷukyas and their Rāṣṭrakūṭa successors flourished the great Brahmanical caves at Ellorā. Dating from about A.D. 650, the sixteen excavations belonging to this faith (Caves nos. VIII to XXIX) extend along the west face of the rock. The Daśāvatāra (no. XV), the Rāvaṇa-kā-Khāi (no. XIV, the Rāmeśvara (no. XXI) and the Dhumara Leṇa (no. XXIX) are the most important excavations, not to speak of the great Kailāsa—“an entire temple complex completely hewn-out of the live-rock in imitation of a distinctive structural form”. The Brahmanical cave temples at Ellorā may be divided into three types. The first, best illustrated by the two-storeyed Daśāvatāra shows a multi-columned hall with the sanctuary dug out at its rear end, and the lateral sides of the hall representing sculpture galleries. It has a marked similarity with the scheme of the Budhist vihāras and, possibly, being the earliest among the Brahmanical shrines of the site, was inspired by them. In the places of monastic cells on either side of the hall, a kind of iconostasis, containing divine images in high relief in the large sunken panels flanked by pilasters, has, however, been introduced. In the second type the sanctum, a free-standing cela with a passage of circumambulation around, is shaped out of a mass of rock situated in the centre of the rear end of the hall. Of the two caves of this type, the Rāvaṇa-Kā-Khāi and the Rāmeśvara, the latter one is better known for its magnificent sculptures abundantly carved on its walls and the exquisitely designed massive pillars of the facades with their charming bracket figures.

The third type, appearing from the second half of the eighth cen-
tury, may be recognised in the Dhumara Leṇā the last and the most elaborate in the series of the Brahmanical caves at Ellora. It consists of a cruciform pillared hall, (the main hall alone being 150 feet by 50 feet in measure), having more than one entrance and court, with the free-standing square cella hewn out of the rock near the back end. "In architectural arrangement as well as the gracefulness of its ponderous pillars and sculptures this cave is probably the finest among the Brahmanical excavations, not only at Ellora but also at other sites."4 The Brahmanical caves in the islands of Elephanta and Salsette, near Bombay, reveal designs similar to Dhumara Leṇā, but in comparison they are smaller in conception and irregular in execution. It may, however, be noted that the main hall of the Dhumara Leṇā is axially driven into the depth of the rock, while that of Elephanta is found to be excavated parallel to the face of the rock. The temple of Jogisvara in the island of Salsette is an inferior execution, but its significance lies in the fact that it is the latest of its type and dates about A.D. 800.

The cave-temples were never as suitable for the Brahmanical worship as the structural ones, and that seems to be the reason why of about twelve hundred cave excavations not more than a hundred are Brahmanical. The structural temples were so appropriate to the needs of Brahmanical worship that even in the mode of rock-cut architecture, the excavators were steadily moving towards the perfect imitation of structural temples, and as a result we get the grand Kailāsa temple at Ellora executed in the rock-cut style.

3. The Jain Caves

The earliest phase of Jain rock architecture, found at Udayagiri and Kanḍagiri in Orissa, has already been mentioned, and the second phase has been represented by two caves, one at Bādāmi and the other at Aihole, both in Western India and belonging to the seventh century. They are essentially similar in plan and arrangements; and each of them consists of a pillared quadrangular hall with a cella cut out at its far end and chapels on either side, a scheme not far off from those of the Buddhists and Brahmanical counterparts of the age.

The most important group of Jain caves was excavated at Ellora and date from the ninth century. There are five shrines in the group and among them the Chhoto Kailāsa (no. XXX), the Indra Sabhā (no. XXXII) and the Jagannātha Sabhā (no. XX) are of greater significance. The first one is a small imitation of the renowned Brahmanical...

4 R. C. Majumdar (ed.), Classical Age, p. 491.
nical temple of the same name, while the second and the third shrines are partly a copy of the structural form and partly cave excavation. In the forecourt of each stands a monolithic shrine preceded by a gateway, both carved out of the rock, and behind it rises the facade of the cave in two storeys. Each of the storeys, in their turn, reproduces the usual plan of a pillared hall with a chapel at the rear end and cells at the sides. In spite of identical plan and arrangement the Indra Sabha, particularly its upper storey, is superior both in balance and organic character to the Jagannatha Sabha which presages a decline and ultimate disappearance of this mode of architecture in the following centuries.

II. TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Almost simultaneously with the experimentations of Central and Northern India during the days of the Guptas, the builders of the Deccan started constructions of shrines under the early Chalukyas, whose contribution to the development of temple architecture in India appears to have not yet been fully appreciated.

1. The Deccan

The patronage to the early architectural movement in the Deccan came from the Western Chalukyas between A.D. 553 and 642; and during this period a number of places flourished as important centres of the movement, and among them Aihole, Pattadakal, Mahakalu, Badami, and Alampur are especially noted for their structural shrines. The first efforts of the Chalukyas are represented by about one hundred stone-built temples at Aihole, their old capital, now a somewhat decayed village in the Badami taluk of the Bijapur district of Karnata. The temples of Aihole are remarkable for their archaic forms and pronounced virility. Chronological and stylistic considerations place them in the earliest phase of Indian temple architecture, and so far as the Deccan is concerned, they seem to represent the very beginning.

Although it is customary to regard the Ladh Khân temple as the oldest among the shrines at Aihole, the ground plans of the temples of Konti-gudi group, as also some of their architectural designs, suggest that they precede the Ladh Khân in date. The Konti-gudi group consists of three temples, of which two are connected by means of a pillared portico and stand facing each other in the east-west direction. The third temple of the group is adjacent to the temple facing the east, which, in its turn appears to be earliest of the three. This east-facing earliest temple of the group shows a rec-
tangular ground plan with a series of six pillars in front, three of which are on each side of the central entrance. There are eight more pillars, arranged in two rows in a transverse fashion, to support the ceiling. The shrine is set clumsily to the backwall and its approach is through two of the central pillars of the rear row. The temple is without any mukhamandapa, sabhāmandapa and antarāla, and as such appears to be primitive in conception. The other temple, connected to it by a pillared portico and standing facing the west, is squarish in plan. It also shows similar absence of formal components like mukhamandapa, etc., but is significant for having a surmounting square structure above the main hall. This square structure may be counted as the rudiment of śikhara that gradually developed at the site in the following years. The third temple of the group is similar in dimension and shows a ground plan similar to that of the first temple. It seems to be latest of the group and introduces a transverse wall, of course, late in date, following the line of the first row of pillars. This wall, however, radically changes the interior plan of the temple, for it provides an enclosure or antarāla to the garbhagrha or the shrine in one hand and a mukhamandapa-like verandah to the temple on the other. Later on this mukhamandapa emerged distinctively as one of the major components of Aihole temples.

It is, however, the Lād Khān that shows the maturest form of the early temples at Aihole. Though the temple is simple in plan, it is undoubtedly better conceived than those of the Konti-guḍī group, and marks an advance over them by introducing a mukhamandapa and a sabhāmandapa. In shape it is a low, flat-roofed square building with a small supplementary storey of later date above. Three of its sides are completely enclosed by walls, and two of them are found to the relieved by perforated stone grills. The fourth side, forming the eastern face, projects out with an open-pillared porch. The interior of the temple is dominated by a hall that resembles a pillared pavilion, as it contains two square sets of columns, one within the other, providing a double aisles all round. A large bull (Nandī) in stone occupies the central bay, while the shrine proper, a shrine not leading off the main hall, is found to be built within it against the back-wall. The pillars of the hall are massive as they are supposed to support a heavy stone-roof, the weight of which was further aggravated by introducing a śikhara-like square storey above. Though it appears to have been conceived in terms of an assembly hall, rather than a temple, the overall impact of the Lād Khān is formidable, and its plan as well as elevation shows a clear discipline. In the words of Percy Brown, “it is stark, strong, and enduring, the
utterance of a robust and vigorous people having great potentialities but, at present, of undeveloped powers.”

Though in a direct contrast with the Lād Khān, the Durgā temple at Aihole is extremely significant for marking an experimentation in the evolution of Indian temple architecture. This example follows the model of a Buddhist chaitya hall standing at Ter, a place not far from Aihole. The Durgā temple was erected sometime in the sixth century A.D. and is an apsidal structure measuring externally sixty feet by thirty-six feet. There is a twenty-four feet portico on its eastern front, and thus in its entirety the temple is eighty-four feet long. Standing on a high and heavily moulded plinth, the top most tier of the temple rises up to thirty feet in height from the ground; and over the tier a short pyramidal tower was subsequently added. The notable features of the temple are its peripteral exterior and the passage formed by the colonnade of the verandah that is carried round the building and joined with the similar pillars of the portico. This portico is approached by two staircases, one on each side of the front, and from it entrance to the main hall is made. The interior of the main hall, which is forty-four feet long, follows the usual form a chaitya shrine and consists of two rows of four pillars that divide it into a nave and two aisles, and an apsidal shaped cella at its rear end; the aisles continuing round the cella as a processional passage. The roof of the nave is raised higher than that of the side aisles, and as such, almost in all details the temple follows the plan of a standard chaitya shrine of the Buddhists. Another temple of similar type is the Huchchimalligudi also at Aihole. This temple shows a smaller and simplified form of the Durgā temple, for it has no apsidal end nor a peristyler verandah. But as noted in other temples of the place, it also bears a subsequently added sikhara above. The most significant aspect of this otherwise simple temple is the introduction of a vestibule or antarāla, that separates the main hall, i.e. mandapa from the cella, i.e. garbhagriha.

The next stage in the evolution of temple architecture at Aihole may be noted in the construction of the Tārabasappā, the Nārāyaṇa. the Huchchappavā-gudi, the main temple of Galaganātha group, and the temple adjoining to Huchchimalli-gudi. Their advance is marked in the ground plan that shows the sanctum-cella as almost detached from the main hall, a step which was definitely taken to meet the growing religious requirements of the Brahmanical worshippers, and led the temple architecture to their functional fulfilment.

The final phase in the development of temple structure at Aihole

was, however, reached in the Meguti temple, which stands
in a graceful dignity on the imposing eminence of Meguti hill, situ-
ated three furlongs east to the Aihole village. This is a Jaina temple,
and it is known from an inscription that it was built in A.D. 634 by
one Rāvikirti during the reign of Pulakeshin II, and thus was the
latest among the Chālukya temples at the place. The temple is sig-
nificant not only for its improved constructional technique as may
be noted in the use of smaller blocks of stone in the masonry work,
but also for its refined and delicate ornamentations of the outer walls
in the intervals between the pilasters. In plan also the temple is im-
pressive and registers a marked progress towards an organized and
balanced scheme. It is a long rectangular building consisting of two
parts, the shrine with its surrounding gallery and the large pillared
hall, i.e. mukhamandapa. A narrow vestibule, i.e. antarāla, connects
these two parts. The pillared mukhamandapa has a staircase to
reach the roof above, where, on the main shrine of the ground
floor, stands a second shrine containing a Jaina image. The sikhara
main hall supported by pillars, and the cella in its back-wall. This
over the upper shrine is, however, now totally lost. The overall
impression of the temple is that of a unified design, which is, no
doubt, a logical outcome of the earlier attempts made at Aihole.
The Meguti temple is significant specially for its impact on the
history of subsequent temple architecture in the south.

In spite of divergence in plan and execution in the temples at
Aihole, it is possible to trace a line of evolution through the years.
The beginning of the evolution shows temples, as in the Konti-gudi
examples, having a rectangular transverse plan with a sanctum-cella
built in the back-wall of the hall. The next stage, as marked in the
Lād Khān temple, exhibits a plan consisting of a pillared portico, a
stage has been replaced by the temples of Tārabasappā, the
Nārāyaṇa, the main temple of the Galaganātha group, etc. These
temples show a pillared portico, a main hall supported by pillars.
and, more particularly, a sanctum cella detached from the main hall.
Finally, we get the developed plan consisting of a pillared portico,
a main hall, an antichamber or vestibule and a cella, the last com-
ponent being with or without ambulatory passage. The Meguti
temple is the example of this last stage of evolution at Aihole. There
is, of course, another distinct type noted at this place, the best
example of which is the Durgā temple showing a rectangular ground
plan with an apsidal back. But this type is nothing but an adaptation
of the Buddhist chaitya form, and, being abandoned by the subse-
quently temple-builders, seems to be less significant from historical
viewpoint.
A survey of these early temples of Aihole would immediately lead one to connect them with the main stream of architectural movement of the entire country dating at least from the days of the Guptas. And it would be marked that the Aihole temples represent some of the Gupta types noted in other centres. The type represented by the Durgā has its parallels in the temples of Chezarle, in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. From the consideration of the development of Indian temple architecture much more important is, however, the Gupta type described as the flat-roofed square temple, with a covered ambulatory around the sanctum, and preceded by a porch in front. sometimes with a second storey above. These characteristics, which seem to form the nuclei of the elaborate Drāviḍa type of temples of the medieval period, are noted as basic features of a large number of temples at Aihole. The plan apart, in the sphere of designs and motifs, too, the temples of Aihole appear to have left a lasting impression on the Drāviḍa temple style. The kudu motif, the bold mouldings of the plinth and of the cornice, and the deep niches on the outer walls, all noted in the Meguti, may be cited as typical Chālukya features which the Drāviḍa temples retained. In elevation, the second storey above and the tiered pyramids are also important for their role in the development of huge vimāna of the Drāviḍa temples. Again, when the regular sikhara with paga division are noted among the temples at Aihole, one has also to admit its relation with the tradition of Gupta temples of the North.

Following a political catastrophe of the Chālukyas, i.e. the defeat of Pulakesin II in the hands of the Pallava ruler Narasimhavarman I in A.D. 642, the architectural activities of Aihole came to be discontinued. It was only after thirteen years that Vikramāditya I (A.D. 655-81), son of Pulakesin II, recovered the Chālukya dominion from the hands of the Pallavas and began architectural activities anew, but the venue was shifted from Aihole to Paṭṭadakal. The change of place seems to be connected with the change of faith of the latter Chālukyas; for while the early Chālukyas were followers of Viṣṇu, the latter ones are found to be devotees of Śiva; and Paṭṭadakal, place for the Sivaites. There are ten temples of significance at Paṭṭadakal, and, beginning in the middle of the seventh century, they were built in a period of one hundred years and more. Of these temples five are in the Nāgara or North Indian style, while the remaining five are in the Drāviḍa or southern. The temples in the Nāgara style are Pāpanātha, Jambuliṅga, Galaganātha, Kāśivīśveśvara, and Kāḍasidheśvara.

The Pāpanātha, dated c. 680, is important for the stage of evolu-
tion it represents in the development of Indian temple styles. Both in plan and elevation, the temple shows its conceptual limitations, which may be marked in the failure of correct disposition of the main elements of the structure. For instance, the vestibule or antarāla that forms the shape of a square court, containing four widely set pillars, is too large a component to serve the actual purpose of it, and rather becomes a supplementary assembly hall. In appearance the temple seems to be a combination of both the Nāgara and Drāvida styles. The śikhara above, though stunted and small, unmistakably connects it with the former, but the entire composition is essentially Drāvida and has a general likeness to that of the Virupākṣa temple standing nearby. The Pāpanātha in its entirety, some ninety feet in length, is raised over a plinth of several bold string courses. Its sanctum is enclosed within a covered ambulatory and is preceded by two axially arranged halls, the first one occupying the place of vestibule or antarāla and the second constituting the forward assembly hall or maṇḍapa, both of them containing pillars and of square shape, and, finally, an open portico projects in front. The roof is flat and has its diversion in the shooting up śikhara over the sanctum at the eastern end. A series of decorative grills set on the side walls provides light for the interior of the vestibule and the assembly hall, while the ambulatory of the sanctum is lighted by the boldly projecting windows, one on each of the three sides. In spite of some minute decorative works, the overall impression of the Pāpanātha is that of a massive solid character, and this seems to be true from outside as well as inside, where the bulk of its walls and shape of its pillars testify to this characterization. Among the temples at Paṭṭāḍakal bearing northern type of tower, Kāśivīśeśvara and Galaganātha are also notable for their proportionate disposition and matured treatment of the śikhara, that shows regular paga division on its body and a pronounced curvilinear shape. From stylistic considerations these two temples are assignable to the eighth century A.D.

The transitional phase in the development of two major Indian temple styles represented by the Pāpanātha has its further manifestation in a group of temples found at Alampur, a village on the west bank of the Tuṅgabhadrā river in the Raichur district of Karṇātaka. The Alampur temples, six in number, appear to have been produced in the wake of architectural movement that had its chief centres at Aihole and Paṭṭāḍakal, and somewhat also at Bādāmi. Although situated at an appreciable distance from the chief centres of the movement, the Alampur temples are found to be built inside a fortified enclosure in a manner already noticed at Aihole. In plan and composition all the six temples are essentially identical and show a gene-
ral similarity with the Pāpanātha at Paṭṭaḍākal. The best preserved temple of the Alampur group is the Viśva-Brahmā temple, which is basically identical with the Pāpanātha, though it is found to be in better proportions and in the disposition of different adjuncts much more coherent. The Alampur temples are usually placed in the period of the Pāpanātha at Paṭṭaḍākal, but it would be better to assign them a slightly later date.

The final flourish of the Chālukya temple took place at Paṭṭaḍākal about the middle of the eighth century A.D., particularly during the reign of Vikramāditya II (A.D. 733-744). In his time were built the magnificent temples of Lokeśvara, better known as Virupākṣa, and Trailokeśvara, also known as Mallikārjuna, by his two wives Loka- mahādevī and Trailokyamahiādevī respectively, to commemorate his victory over Kāṇchī, the capital of the rival Pallava rulers. Of all the temples at Paṭṭaḍākal, the Virūpākṣa is the most matured and ambitious expression; and it is undoubtedly a milestone in the evolution of Drāvida style. The other temples of the style at the place are Saṅganesvara, Mallikārjuna, Chandraśekhara and the Jaina temple situated to the west of the village at a distance of two furlongs. Some early attempts at giving form to the temples broadly conceived in the Drāvida style may also be found at Bādāmi and Mahākūṭa.

But none of these temples is comparable with the Virupākṣa, which shows signal progress over the others both in conception and execution. Although the Chālukya territory had its own experience and role in the development of Drāvida type of temples there are reasons to believe that the design and construction of Virupākṣa were thoroughly inspired by those of the Kailāsanātha at Kāṇcipuram. From the epigraphic record found both at Paṭṭaḍākal and Kāṇcipuram, it appears that Vikramāditya II, entering the Pallava capital as a conqueror, was deeply impressed by the art of the latter temple; and it is, therefore, assumed that he brought builders from the South to undertake construction of temples for his own. This assumption finds a logical basis in the essential identity of plan and composition of the Kailāsanātha with those of the Virupākṣa.

The Virūpākṣa shows a comprehensive scheme, which consists of a central structure, preceded by a detached nandī pavilion, contained in a walled enclosure entrance to which is made through an impressive gateway. It is larger in size than previous examples and measures one hundred and twenty feet from the front of the porch to the back of the shrine. But for proportionate and harmonious arrangement of various components, and for plastic decorations on the outer walls, it is very much pleasing to the eye. What is more commendable
of the temple is the fact that it retains the heavy solidity, characteristic of all such early constructions, but at the same time ushers in the future development of the style that is remarkable for balancing plastic embellishment with the overall plan of the structural background. If the Virūpākṣa owes its plan and composition to the Kailāsanātha of Kāñĉipuram, it also sets example in plastic decoration for such a great creation as the Kailāsa at Ellorā. Among the Drāvida type of temples, at Paṭṭaḍakal there are two other notable examples. The Saṅgāmesvara, also known as Vijayesvara in the memory of its builder Vijayāditya, was constructed in the previous reign, and from the compositional point of view the temple appears Trailokyēśvara or Mallikārjuna that stands adjacent to the Virūpākṣa and follows the same general plan and overall treatment.

A survey of the temples found at Aihole, Bādami, Mahākūṭa, Alampur and Paṭṭaḍakal would reveal that nuclei of the preceding centuries, usually associated with the Guptas of the North, attained certain logical advance. At the Chāḷukya centres all architectural tendencies marked in the different Gupta temple types made certain definite forward steps in formulating distinctive temple styles that had their fulfilment in the subsequent ages. This is true not only with regard to the Drāvida style, a formidable achievement of which is clearly noted in the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭaḍakal, but also in the development of Nāgarā style; for here we find the formalisation of the śikharā tower with its salient characteristics like paga divisions. bhūmi-āmalakas placed at the corness, the crowning āmalaka, laced chaitya motifs, etc. And what seems to be further significant is the laying of the foundation of a distinctive expression that is designated by Cousens as the Dakhanese. This latter style is born of an admixture of two major temple conceptions, the Nāgarā and the Drāvida, and had its fulfilment in the upper Deccan during the following centuries.

The political power of the Deccan shifted from the hands of Chāḷukyas to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas sometime in the middle of the eighth century A.D., but the architectural activities of the region continued unabatedly under the new rulers. Of the structural temples built during the days of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the one on the outskirts of the temple city of Paṭṭaḍakal, and dedicated to the Jaina worship, may specially be noted. It is a Drāvida type of temple consisting of a three-storeyed vimāna, square in plan from the base to the surmounting pyramid, the ground storey contained the principal sanctum, which is, in its turn, double-walled with a closed circumambulatory between the walls. The temple faces cast and comprises following components: mukha-māṇḍapa or the portico, māṇḍapa or the inner
hall, a short antarāla or the vestibule, and garbha-grha or the sanctum. The temple is remarkably simple in disposition and one of its highlights is the half elephants in stone, mounted by persons, in the outer hall or the portico. These are life-like sculptures and remind one the similar sculptures of the Indra Sabhā at Ellorā. According to Cousens, this Jaina temple was constructed in the days of Amogha-varsha I (A.D. 814-877), but from stylistic considerations it appears to have been executed sometime towards the closing years of the eighth century.

By far the most significant contribution of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas to the development of Drāvida temple style is undoubtedly the grand Kailāsa and Ellorā. It is a magnificent creation of Indian architectural genius and, so to speak, it has no parallel in the entire history of world architecture. An extensive temple complex, covering an area of 300 feet by 200 feet, is found to have been completely hewn out of a living rock. This stupendous work possibly began in the reign of Dantidurga, the founder of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa house, and was completed by his successor Krishṇa I (A.D. 758-773). The scheme of the temple follows the fundamental pattern of a Drāvida temple as represented by the Kailāsānatha at Kāņchipuram and still more closely the Virūpākṣa at Paṭṭadakal.

The temple complex of Kailāsa and Ellorā consists of four principal characteristic components of the Drāvida style, viz. vimāna, maṇḍapa, nandi-maṇḍapa and gopuram. The main unit, comprising of the vimāna and the maṇḍapa, occupies an area of approximately 150 feet by 100 feet, and is raised over a lofty plinth nearly 25 feet high, which forms the ground storey. The plinth is heavily moulded at the bottom and at the top, and over this substantial superstructure stand the vimāna and the maṇḍapa, and the latter is approached by grand flights of steps in the front, that is, the western side. The flat roof of the maṇḍapa is supported on sixteen pillars arranged in small groups of four each at the corners, thus dividing the hall into cruciform aisles. From the maṇḍapa a vestibule leads to the sanctum cella, the tower of which rises in four storeys and ultimately ends in a dome-shaped stūpikā. From the level of the court to the apex the vimāna is 95 feet in height. Around the sanctum cella and enclosing the ambulatory, so to say, are arranged five lesser chapels, each repeating, on a smaller scale, the principal theme standing at the centre. In front of this main unit on its axis stands a detached flat-roofed maṇḍapa for the Nandi. On either side of the mandi-maṇḍapa is a free-standing column (dhvaja-stambha) nearly 50 feet high from the level of the court bearing at the top the trisūla or the sacred emblem of the god. All these components are situated within
a rectangular court surrounded by cloistered galleries, containing a
series of life-like sculptures of Śiva and his consort Pārvatī, and ap-
proached in front by a double storeyed gatehouse, the precursor of
the imposing gopurams of the later days. Acclaimed as 'the world's
greatest rock poem', the Kailāsa and Ellora appears to have achieved
the sanctity of the great god's abode by the dint of sheer labour and
devotion of its excavators. Viewed as a whole, it represents the most
ambitious and articulated piece of sculpture ever executed in India,
and is one of the most magnificent examples of Drāviḍa architecture.

2. Tamil Land

The foundation of Drāviḍa temple style was laid down in the
seventh century A.D. This fact is attested not only by the temples at
Aihole but also by the monuments of Mahābalipuram, the sea-port
of the Pallavas, who flourished sometime in the closing years of the
sixth-century and were the masters of the Tamil country and its ad-
jacent regions for about two hundred years. They were great patrons
of arts and one of their early monarchs, Mahendravarman I, has al-
ready been noted for his contribution in the development of rock-cut
architecture, and presently we shall refer to the free-standing mono-
lithic structures, known as rathas, at Mahābalipuram, which were
cut out of the granitic boulder-like out-crops during the reign of
his son Narasimhavarman Māmalla.

Altogether there are eight rathas at Mahābalipuram and all of them,
except the Drupadi ratha, show storeyed elevation of the roof. Each
storey is terminated by a convex roll cornice ornamented with repeated
depiction of a motif, locally called kudu, which represents a
chaitya-window arch enclosing a human head. To break the mono-
tony of the flatness of outer walls, pilasters and sculptured niches are
introduced, while the upper storeys are found surrounded with
small pavilions. These are the common elements noted in all the rathas,
but there are also marked divergences among them emanating from
the basic plan of their sanctum cellas. The Nakula-Sahadeva ratha
exhibits a rectangular ground plan rounded off at one end and a
storeyed roof surmounted by a vault with an apsidal back. This
type is, no doubt, an imitation of the Buddhist chaitya hall, exam-
ple of which may be noted among the ruins discovered at Nāgar-
junikonda. But this type, as also the Draupadi ratha showing the
humble form of a thatchroofed hut, has no bearing in the subsequent
development of temple architecture in the region.

Among the other rathas are found two types of plan, one square
and the other rectangular. The Dharmarāja and the Arjuna repre-
sent the square type, while the Bhīma and the Gāñēśa rectangular. The former is surmounted by a pyramidal elevation capped by a domical member; and the latter bears an elongated barrel-shaped vault with gables at the two ends as a roof. These two forms appear to be vital in the growth of Drāvida temple type, because one may recognize in them the geneses of the vimana, representing the sanctum with its pyramidal tower, and the gopuram or the imposing gateway leading to the temple enclosure, respectively.

Of the square type of rathas, the Dharmarāja appears to be the most impressive as well as the most perfect example. It consists of a square ground storey with an open pillared verandah all round. Above the ground storey rises a pyramidal tower of receding storeys finally topped by an octagonal stūpikā. A convex roll cornice decorated with chaitya-window motifs (kudus) demarcate each of the storeys, and the upper storeys are found surrounded by decorative pavilions (pañcarams). The sanctum appears to be situated in the upper storey, while the pillared verandah of the ground storey provides an open ambulatory. In it one may recognize an adaptation of the storeyed form of the Gupta temple types that shows an ambulatory around the square cella. The decorative details are, however, of local origin and some of them seems to be legacies of the Buddhist architecture of Andhra country. The stūpikā which tops the pyramidal tower is, for example, a derivation from that of the rock-cut relief shrines found at Undavalli in the Guntur district. The roll cornice appears in the Mahendravarman period or even earlier and is also evident in some of the temples of Aihole. The decorative pavilions (pañcarams) were introduced, so to speak, to fill up vacant spaces around the horizontal stages for concealing the storeyed character of the roof and thereby to lend it a pyramidal shape. From all considerations the Dharmarāja ratha may be regarded as the heralding point from which the Drāvida temple style began its long and variegated march that continued for about a thousand years to complete its evolution.

While the square type of the rathas provides the basic plan for the sanctum of the Drāvida temples, the rectangular type with its storeyed elevation surmounted by a barrel-vaulted roof anticipates the distinctive characteristics of gopuram, i.e. the enormous gateway to the spacious temple enclosure. The rectangular plan is clearly suitable for a gateway building and the barrel-vaulted roof with a gable at either end offers an effective covering for a building of this plan. The fundamental resemblance between the plan and design of the type of rectangular rathas, as illustrated in the Gāñēśa, and those of the monumental gopurams of the subsequent Drāvida temples is very
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apparent. It seems that the square and rectangular types of rathas were excavated side by side at Mahābalipuram, and it was the genius of the later Drāvida architects that combined these two independent structural forms in a composite scheme. With these two distinctive types of rathas, square and rectangular in plan, the foundation of Drāvida style was laid down in the first half of the seventh century A.D. And through the passage of time, from the days of the Pallavas till the end of Vijayanagara empire in the sixteenth century, and even later, the style continued its prolific activity.

Most of the rock-cut rathas at Mahābalipuram appear to have been left unfinished by the excavators. It seems probable that with the death of Narasimhavarman Māmalla in A.D. 674 the patronage to this particular mode of art ceased, and, as a result, the rathas had to the abandoned in their incomplete state. However, a new trend came into vogue under his successors. In the last quarter of the seventh century Paramēśvaravarman started experiments of constructions in dressed stone, for the shrine of Vedagirīśvara on the top of the hill at Tirukkalukkuram in the Chingleput district, modified during his days, shows introduction of the structural stone-work. The apsidal temple at Kuram in the same district, and also built in the time of the same ruler, employed granite slabs along with brick work reinforcement. It was, however, during the reign of his successor Narasimhavarman II, also known as Rājasimha Pallava (c. A.D. 695-722), the prosperous days of structural temples began. He was a great builder and the six temples associated with him were the shore, Iśvara and Mukunda temples at Mahābalipuram, a temple at Panamalai in the south Arcot district, and the temples of Kailāsanātha and Vaikunṭha Perumala at Kāṇchipuram. In the construction of temples he was possibly inspired by the Chāluakyas of Bādāmī, and it seems that in plan and design the Bhūtanātha temple at Bādāmī stands between the Dharmarāja ratha and the shore temple, both at Mahābalipuram. Whatever may be the fact, three of the six Rājasimha temples are of extreme significance. For they not only mark an important stage in the evolution of Drāvida temple style as a whole, but also furnish some valuable data regarding the early formation of the style. These three temples are the shore temple of Mahābalipuram and the Kailāsanātha and Vaikunṭha Perumala of Kāṇchipuram.

The shore temple, so named as it stands on the brim of the sea at the ancient port, is the first significant temple in dressed stone and belongs to the closing years of the seventh century. A formal temple scheme appears to be already in the process as the temple
is placed within a spacious rectangular court enclosed by massive walls. The principal features of the plan show two shrines, asymmetrically attached to each other, each having a pyramidal tower completed with the stūpikā and a pointed finial. Of the two shrines the eastern one, facing the sea, is larger in dimension and seems to be the main shrine dedicated to Śiva, while the western one, apparently less significant, was consecrated to the worship of Vishnū. Each of these towered sanctuaries shows a storeyed elevation terminated with a dome-shaped stūpikā, and roll cornices and small pavilions demarcating each stage of elevation. These elements are, no doubt, derived from the square type of rathas of the place, the best example of which is the Dharmarāja. In fact, in principle the monolithic Dharmarāja and the structural shore temple belong to same category, because both of them consist of a square lower storey and a pyramidal tower in diminishing tiers above. But there is some unmistakable originality in the visualization of the shore, which may particularly be marked in the shape and design of its twin towers. The horizontal demarcation lines of the tiers are less pronounced here than those of the Dharmarāja, and, instead, the overall emphasis is on the verticality, which has resulted “more rhythm and more buouney” of the towers. It is certain that the architect enjoyed a greater freedom in the process of building up the temple in dressed stones; but this alone does not explain the elegance attained in it. This can only be justified by recognizing a new inspiration that began to work during the days of Rājasiṃha.

Not long after the construction of the shore temple at Mahābalīpuram, the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchipuram, also dedicated to Śiva, came into being. Here for the first time we find a unified conception of a temple scheme along with its all components and characteristic as fully expressed. The principal features of the temple complex consist of a sanctum with a pyramidal tower and a mandapa, i.e., pillared hall, with a flat roof preceding it; and both of them situated within a rectangular court enclosed by a peristyle composed of a series of cells. Standing near the western end of the court and facing the east, the sanctum bears a tower of extreme beauty and elegant contours. Though of same character, in comparison with the tower of Dharmarāja, that of the Kailāsanātha shows greater harmony and balance in the disposition of different stages. The sharp swing from somewhat compressed forms of the monolithic rathas to the loosely knit composition of the shore seems to have found a balanced mean in the mature shape of the Kailāsanātha. In fact, the Kailāsanātha is a landmark in the development of Drāvida temple style and it offers for about a hundred
years a schema that had to be emulated in distant centres of the Western Deccan. Among the components of the temple we find, apart from the towered sanctum or vimāna and the pillared hall or mandapa, an antarāla or vestibule connecting them, which, of course, is a later addition. Access to the enclosed courtyard containing the temple complex is now made through two passages in the eastern wall on two sides of a rectangular building with storeyed elevation and a barrel vaulted roof above. Though it now functions as a subsidiary chapel, originally it seems to have been planned as a gatehouse, i.e. gopūram, which is an indispensable part of a fully developed Drāvida temple. Another significant element introduced in the Kailāsanātha is the peristyle cells ranging all round the inner face of the courtyard. Hence, in the Kailāsanātha we find at least four basic components of the style, viz. vimāna, mandapa, gopūram and an array of vimānas along the walls of the court, i.e. peristyle cells.

The Vaikuṇṭha Perumala at Kāṇchipuram is another great temple attributed to Rājasimha Pallava, which was constructed sometime after the Kailāsanātha. The temple stands within a court that can be approached through a portico in the east. On the outside the walls of the court shows pilasters and niches to break the monotony of their extensive flatness, and on the inside runs a continuous colonnaded cloister separated from the central components, i.e. the sanctum and the mandapa, by an open circumambulatory passage. Of the two central components the mandapa is interiorly a square hall with transverse aisles of eight pillars, and it leads through a vestibule to the sanctum, a square chamber above which rises the pyramidal tower crowned by a stūpikā. The sanctum is in four storey, each containing a passage round its exterior, a cella in the centre and a corridor encircling both of them for circumambulation. When compared with the Kailāsanātha the Vaikuṇṭha Perumala lacks in overall freshness, but surpasses the former in the sense of economy as noted in the disposition of various elements.

In the second half of the eighth century A.D. the power of the Pallavas began to decline; and the Western Chālukyas came into prominence by defeating them. The Western Chālukyas were, however, admirers of the Pallava achievements in the field of art and architecture. The most pronounced testimony to this admiration appears to be the Virūpākṣa temple of Paṭṭaḍakal which was constructed on the model of the Kailāsanātha at Kāṇchipuram. The temples of Kailāsanātha and Vaikuṇṭha Perumala at Kāṇchipuram and the Virūpākṣa at Paṭṭaḍakal represent a very significant stage in the evolution of Drāvida style, that further developed under
the Rāstrakūtas in the Deccan and the Cholas in the south. The Rāstrakūta contribution to the style is best noted in the rock-cut temple of Kāilāsa at Ellorā, and it has already been fully discussed. The contribution of the Cholas, who replaced the Pallavas in the Tamil country in the second half of the ninth century A.D., is so significant and momentous that it deserves a close study.

Most of the temples built by the Cholas during the ninth and tenth centuries, before the accession of Rājarāja in A.D. 985 are small compositions in stone. If the number is an index of any activity, the early Chola rulers, starting from Vijayālaya right up to Uttahachola, appear to be the great patrons of temple architecture. In fact, under these rulers the Drāvida style seems to have gone through new experiences and, though the temples of the period were basically connected with the Pallava ones, there are ample evidences to show fresh thinking in relation to their layouts and embellishments. Of the innumerable temples attributed to the early Cholas significant are the Vijayālaya Choliśvara at Melamalai, Bālasubramanya at Kannanur Śundaresvara at Tirukkattalai, Muvar Kovil at Kodumbalur, Nāgeśvarasvāmī at Kumbakonam, Brahmapuriśvara at Pullamangai, Kuraṅganatha at Śrīnivāsanālur, the twin temples of Agastyiśvara and Choliśvara at Kailaiyur and the Śiva temple at Tiruvaliśvaram. Among these Vijayālaya Choliśvara was built in the reign of Vijayālaya (A.D. 850-871), while the Bālasubramanya and Sundaresvara; may be placed during the days of his son Āditya I (A.D. 871-907). Vijayālaya's grandson, the great builder Parāntaka I (A.D. 907-955) is credited for the Nāgeśvara, Kuraṅganāth and Brahmapuriśvara; and it appears from the general style that the twin temples of Agastyiśvara and Choliśvara were completed before the accession of Rājarāja I (A.D. 985), and thus possibly in the reign of Uttamachola (A.D. 969-985).

The earliest of Chola temples, the Vijayālaya Choliśvara stands elegantly on the eastern slope of Melamalai, at a distance of ten miles from Pudukottai. The main temple is raised on a strong double lotus base with walls running round the vimāna and mandāpa, the monotony of which has been broken with slim pilasters topped by planks. But with the exception of the dvārapālas, that flank the entrance of the mandāpa, there is no figure sculpture in the ground floor, and as such the spaces between the pilasters are empty. The main shrine or garbhagṛha is circular in plan, and is enclosed within a square hall that provides a narrow passage for circumambulation. The vimāna together with the mandāpa gives the building a rectangular shape, and both the components are so integrally connected that in totality the temple shows a rare unity
and balance. The temple complex is, in its turn, enclosed by walls having sub-shrines facing it.

Over the pilasters, the flanking stones and the cut-in typical angular corbels is the curved roll cornice with its chaitya arches or kudus showing laughing faces all round. On every tier under and over the roll cornice are rows of ganus, gargoyles or yālis, apsaras and gods. The superstructure of the vimāna rises in three tiers above the garbhagṛha and is topped by a stūpikā, lower two tiers being square and the upper one circular in shape. The lower tiers have broad parapet walls, the recesses of which contain apsaras showing the graceful poses of southern Bhāratā Nāṭya dance. On the third tier, below the stūpikā are great stone bulls or Nandis, and in between the bulls are four elaborate chaitya arches with niches containing portraits of Siva in his various aspects. The mandapa is flat-roofed, and there are monolithic pillars crowned with bracket capitals to support the roof. The Vijayālāya Choliśvara is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of early Chola temples, and by combining a superb sense of restraint, as found in the outer walls of the ground floor, and a discerning choice for embellishments noted in its superstructure, it clearly testifies to the aesthetic vision of its builders who were destined to bring the ultimate formulation of the Drāvida temple style.

In comparison with the Vijayālāya Choliśvara, the temples of Bālasubramanīya and Sundareśvara appear to be less accomplished. Both of them show similar treatment of outer walls of the ground floor with pilasters, heavy roll cornices containing chaitya window or kudu motifs, and integrated disposition of the sanctum and the mandapa as noted in the Vijayālāya Choliśvara. But they are single storeyed buildings; the Sundareśvara showing graded terraces right up to the śikhara, while the Bālasubramanīya having a bell-shaped superstructure just above the sanctum. Aesthetically, however, these two temples resemble the austere appearance of Vijayālāya Choliśvara.

In the next phase of development of the style this austere gravity makes room for a charming sensuousness. This phase is especially represented by the Kuraṅganātha and Nāgeśvarasvāmi. The Kuraṅganātha at Śrīvāsanāllur is one of the finest examples of Chola architecture. It is of modest proportions, and its sanctuary with the attached mandapa covers a total length of fifty feet. The whole temple stands in a built-in pit, wherefrom springs the moulded base curved and shaped like an inverted lotus. From this lotus base the vimāna soars high up. The vimāna is double-storeyed, and, sig-
nificantly, the upper storey is built in brick. The temple is topped by an elaborate square stūpikā, having four prominent chaitya-niches projected at the four sides. While the outer walls of the manḍapa retains the severe plainliness of the earlier temples, the walls of the sanctum are found to vibrate with a number of figure sculptures set in niches flanked by pilasters. Deep is the carvings of the mouldings at the base, and so also of the roll cornices and the parapet running above the manḍapa. The niches and chaitya-windows, which decorate the second storey and above are, however, without any figure sculpture. The entire temple is remarkable for proportionate distribution of parts; and an overall restraint in embellishment, in spite of introducing some life-size figures on the outer walls of the sanctum, characterizes it as a classic creation. A similar simplicity is also marked in the disposition of various elements in the temple of Nāgeśvarasvāmī at Kumbakonam; but in it life-size figure sculptures, some of which are remarkable pieces, are found to enliven even the walls of the manḍapa. The Brahmapurīśvara at Pullamangai also represents the same phase. Like the Nāgeśvara, this temple is also single-storied, but shows further elaboration in detail in comparison with the Kuraṅganāthā. In the temples of Kuraṅganātha, Nāgeśvarasvāmī, and Brahmapurīśvara, a return to the early Pallava simplicity may be noted, but at the same time a more rational attitude is marked in relations to purposeful distribution of plain spaces and architectural decorations. Besides, by introducing brick in the construction of upper storey, the Kuraṅganāthā anticipates the great phase of Drāvida temple style that was to follow immediately.

The twin temples of Agastyāśvara and Choliśvara at Kiliaivur, the triple shrine or Muvar Kovil at Kodumbalur and the Valiśvara temple at Tiruvalisvāra are also remarkable for their individual treatments. For example, the Agastyāśvara shows a square stūpikā, while the Choliśvara a bell-shaped superstructure of extreme simplicity: the lotus petals of the base of Muvar Kovil is deeply cut, and the Tirubaliśvara shows a temple which is elegant as well as ornate. But none of them shows any advance over the Kuraṅganāthā as an architectural establishment. In fact, the next phase of the Drāvida temple style after the Kuraṅganāthā began only with the great Cholas after A.D. 985.
B. SCULPTURE IN SOUTH INDIA

I. DECCAN

1. Ajanṭā, Athole, Bādāmi and Paṭṭadakal
   (c. A.D. 450-750)

An interval of about two hundred and fifty years separates the flourishing days of early rock-cut art and architecture in the Deccan, witnessed at Ajanṭā, Bhājā, Kondāne, Pītalkhorā, Nāsik, Kārle and other places, and executed in a period between c. 200 B.C. to A.D. 200, from a second phase that began to work again at Ajanṭā sometime in the middle of the fifth century A.D., when the region was under the rule of the Vākāṭakas, the illustrious contemporaries of the Imperial Guptas of the North. The earliest rock excavations at Ajanṭā in its second phase include the monasteries bearing Cave nos. XVI and XX and the Chaitya hall with No. XIX, all of which are significant for containing commendable relief sculptures. These relief-bearing caves are, however, of about hundred years late and were evidently executed by the officers and ministers of the Vākāṭakas sometime around A.D. 550. The contact that existed between the houses of the Vākāṭakas in the Deccan and the Imperial Guptas of the North appears to have been extremely effective in ushering a new age of cultural efflorescence in the life of Indian people. It is no accident, therefore, that some of the basic traits of Indian classical art that developed in the Āryāvarta also found their expression in the contemporary reliefs of the Deccan. Thus, the figures, mostly of the Buddha, carved on the facade of Cave XIX show their unmistakable closeness to the sculptures executed at Sarnath in the same period. The fully developed plastic treatment of the forms along with a tempered psychological attitude towards life permeates the sculpture of both the centres. But this should, however, be admitted that the intellectual luminosity marked on the faces of Sarnath Buddhas is totally absent in their counterparts at Ajanṭā. Insead, certain doctrinal injunctions seem to have turned them somewhat mechanical in expression. The depression of the dimly lit caves seems to have left a lasting impression on them. Otherwise, there is no dearth of sympathy in the delineation of the Master, as may be noted in the scene wherein he has been shown as offering his begging bowl to his son Rāhula at Kapilavastu. In comparison with the Buddha forms much more relaxed and worldly is the depiction of Nāgarāja along with his consort and a Chaurī-bearer. Two Yakṣa figures, flanking the huge chaitya window of the facade of Cave XIX, are likewise lively in expression and show a commendable treatment of mass in
rhythm. Their massive forms are profusely ornamented, and thus, they offer a spiritual contrast to the severe plainliness of the Buddha forms carved in abundance on the various parts of the facade of the cave. Among the reliefs of Cave XVI especially noteworthy is the representation of a celestial couple for its extremely pleasing plastic treatment.

The figures in the later caves at Ajanta, such as I, II, IV, XX and XXIX, appear to be of slightly different taste. They are usually treated in an expansive scale and sometimes in an activated form, too. In this phase, which represents the latest of the rock-carvings at Ajanta and comes down to the seventh century A.D., an additional exuberance may be marked in the delineation of forms. For instance, the reliefs of Hariti and Paschikā in Cave II, the Buddha in dharmachakra pose in Cave I, and the huge and extended Buddha in his mahāparinirvāṇa in Cave XXVI, are examples of massiveness that found its further expression in the rock-carving of Ellora and Elephanta. The scene depicting Mara's daughters as tempting Buddha, found in Cave XX, is also significant for its bearing on similar scenes of group dancers and musicians noted at the latter centres. It seems that many of the norms displayed at Ellora and Elephanta were already set forth at Ajanta in its last phase and this is particularly true so far as the physiognomical types of female beauties are concerned. Take for example, the sensitive and relaxed shapes of Yamuna in Cave XX and the apasaras at the right upper part of the door-frame of the chaitya, bearing Cave no. IV. Both the figures show tri-bend flexions, characteristic bulge of the hip and globular shape of the bosoms, which are, no doubt, typical traits of female forms met with in the early medieval Deccanese sculptures of Ellora, Aurangabad and Elephanta. The sculptures found at Aihole, Bādāmī, and Paṭṭaḍakal also testify to the fact that the basic concepts of depicting figures in stone in the Deccan were formulated in the seventh century A.D., when the region was politically guided by the Chāluṅgas of Bādāmī.

In the annals of the Deccanese art and architecture of the sixth-seventh century A.D. Aihole, where the Western Chāluṅgas had their beginning, both as a military power and a patron of arts, seems to have been the counterpart of Mahābalīpuram of the South. For the genesis of a new art movement that was destined to have a full play not only at Bādāmī and Paṭṭaḍakal, but also in the far distant centres like Ellora, Aurangabad and Elephanta of the subsequent period, had its humble start at this old township on the river Mālaprabhā. The art activities of Aihole thrived in two distinct phases, first in the sixth and the seventh centuries and again in the twelfth and the
thirteenth centuries. The entire art movement of the place in its early phase was confined to the reign periods of the four Chālukya kings, viz. Pulakesin I (A.D. 553-567), Kirtivarna (A.D. 567-597), Maṅgaleśa (A.D. 597-609) and Pulakesin II (A.D. 609-642), and continued without interruption for about one hundred years. As in the evolution of temple types, so in the development of the art of sculpture, a number of stages may be marked here. The earliest sculptural stage has been represented by the reliefs noted in the Kont-guḍi group of temples. Several divine and human personages are found carved on the facade and in the interior of the temples. Unfortunately, most of the figures are severely damaged and, thus, leave no scope for stylistic consideration. However, in the veranda-like maṇḍapa of the temple group, on three huge ceiling slabs are found three interesting sculptures of Brahmā, Umā-Mahēśvara and Viṣṇu, arranged left to right keeping Mahēśvara couple at the centre, almost in situ. Each of the principal deities shows fully developed iconic type. Brahmā with his three faces, frontal one in a pleasing smile, seats on a clearly chiselled fully blossomed lotus and holds his known āyuḍhas. Siva in his jaṭāmukuta bears in hands triśūla-dhvoja and serpents, while Umā seats on his left lap in an uncomfortable manner. Viṣṇu is shown lying on Ananta; but for the downward direction of the panel the god appears to be in a standing posture, while the coils of the great snake provides a decorative background. Stylistically, each of these sculptures betrays a feeling for details and the artist responsible for them appears to have sufficient control over the chisel. This is particularly evident from the minute carving of the snake Ananta, and also in the representation of the lotus-seat of Brahmā. Although the sculptor was aware of the expressions of gods, all of whom appear to be in a benevolent mood, his capacity in depicting psychological aspect of an anthropomorphic form remains to be limited to a mere smiling countenance. Despite its slim and proportionate shape, the plastic treatment of the Viṣṇu is rather stiff. The trunk of the Brahmā image is obviously stunted; but the figure of Siva is undoubtedly much more balanced and elegant. The overall impression of these examples is that of a stage when certain early conventions restrict a growing plastic conception. The growing elements are, of course, the plastic norms that were to be developed in the next phases not only at Aihole but also at Bāḍāmī and Paṭṭādakal. The sculptures noticed in the Lād Khān temple at Aihole include at least three interesting couples and an image of Yamunā. These sculptures are stunted in form, but their plastic treatment is essentially classical in tone. The application of the laws of various degrees of flexion imparts to them a rare grace
that could not be marked in the examples of Kontguḍi. Two of the three couples are shown in clear frontal pose and appear to be reminiscent of the healthy pair carved on the face of the rock-out cave at Kārle. But the Yamuna figure and the couple depicted on its corresponding pillar base are of extreme interest for their clear display of the characteristics usually associated with the Gupta classicism. Fully developed rounded plasticity and pliability of their limbs, along with a pronounced feeling for linearism, and especially the cadence noticed in the female figure of the couple, focuses on the fact that the classical idioms of the North received a new impetus in the Deccan sometime in the closing years of the sixth century A.D. In the next century, too, classicism continued at Aihole as the chief expression. For instance, the representation of Kārttikeya on a peacock, carved on the ceiling of the manḍapa of the Huchimalligudi temple is, despite its swaying movement, a clear reverberation of the Gupta type of Kārttikeya discovered at Banaras. Similarly, the Nārāyaṇa on Anānta, found on the ceiling of the Huchchappayya-Matḥa, reminds the Viṣṇu images carved on the niches of the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarh. But a tendency for elongating the figures, in a manner noticed in the Pallava style, is also witnessed in some examples of the Huchchappayya-Matḥa reliefs. And this tendency appears to have been further strengthened in the rock-cut shrine of Ravana-phadi, situated in the vicinity of the temple site at Aihole. The images of Śiva as dvārapāla, dancer, Harihara and Ardhanārīśvara, and specially the Mātriṅa forms of the cave show characteristics of the Pallava sculpture, such as slim and attenuated figures with an overwhelming emphasis on linearism, which has been accentuated by the full play of the hands and legs, as well as the tapering shape of the headgears. Lines incised on the clothes of the figures are also indicative of a new element in the domain of Chālukya sculpture. It is not unlikely that the Ravana-phadi shrine was cut out in a period when the Pallavas were ruling at Aihole after the devastating defeat of Pulakeśin II in their hands in A.D. 642. Thus, a steady stylistic evolution of the sculptures worked out at Aihole may be traced, and in this evolution at least four marked stages are clearly discernible in the examples of Kontguḍi, Lād Khān, Huchimallagudi and Huchchappayya-Matḥa and Ravana-phadi.

The Chālukya capital was shifted from Aihole to Bāḍāmī by Pulakeśin I, and, to speak from the viewpoint of sculpture, too, this movement was extremely effective. It is because Bāḍāmī shows a clear advance over the experiences recorded in the art of Aihole. Among a number of rock-cut caves at Bāḍāmī, at least three are significant
for containing reliefs of a very formidable standard, and they are Caves I, II and III. Cave I, which is a Śaiva shrine, is apparently the oldest, while Caves II and III follow it and they are presumably contemporary to each other. As an inscription of Maṅgalesa dated A.D. 578 has been found on a pillar of Cave III, it is believed that the cave along with Cave II belong to the latter half of the sixth century A.D., while Cave I is stylistically assignable to the middle of the same century.

The reliefs found in the caves at Bādāmī are, admittedly, finest among the Chālukya sculptures. For instance, look at the multi-armed dancing Śiva in Cave I for movement and cadence, the Harihara of the same cave for pent-up energy, the dvārapāla of Cave II for relaxed mood, and the Trivikrama and Varāha forms of Viṣṇu in the latter for surging vigour vocalized through their diagonal thrust. The Trivikrama carved to shape in Cave III is, however, much more monumental in form and definitely of a higher grade. Here a classical detachment on the part of the deity makes him a real god, and his ornamentations, as found in the huge headgear, broad necklace, and pendent earrings, and also in flowing garland and the sacred threads, are the works of minute details. This love for details noticed in the delineation of ornaments as well as in the treatment of individuals seems to be a characteristic of the art of the Chālukyas, and it was first evident in the depiction of three major deities, viz. Brahmā, Umā-Maheśvara and Viṣṇu, on the ceiling of the maṇḍapa of the Kont-gudi temples at Aihole. This aspect of the Chālukya sculpture will be further apparent when they are compared with the plainness of the Pallava reliefs noted at Mahābalipuram. The images of Harihara and Narasimha also in Cave III, are equally significant as sculptures of a very high order. The slightly bent stance of the half lion and half human incarnation of Viṣṇu remains to be the most dignified expression of the deity so far depicted in Indian art. These sculptures of Bādāmī represent some of the best examples of the Deccanese version of Indian classical expression, and they clearly show that the version was never aesthetically inferior to that of the Āryāvarta. The Śaivite image from Parel, Bombay, famous for the god’s multiple representation and remarkable for its vital force, seems to be plastically connected with the experience of Bādāmī sculpture.

If Bādāmī was the logical development of Aihole, Paṭṭaḍakal seems to be a worthy successor of Bādāmī. Paṭṭaḍakal, standing on the left bank of the river Malaprabhā and some five miles farther down in eastern direction from Bādāmī, had been significant as a place of coronation of the Chālukya rulers and grew up as a temple city in
the seventh-eighth century A.D. Among the temples erected at the place, the most renowned are Pāpanātha, Virupākṣa and Mallikārjuna. The Virupākṣa and the Mallikārjuna were originally named as Lokeśvara and Trailokeśvara, respectively, and were constructed by the two queens of Vikramāditya (A.D. 733-744). From the stylistic consideration the Pāpanātha should be placed before these two temples, sometime towards the end of the seventh century A.D. The sculptures of the temple, for instance, the panel depicting the dancing Siva with Pārvatī, immediately remind the sculptures of Bādāmi for their composition as well as treatment of mass. It is, however, interesting to note that the Pāpanāth introduces the illustrations in relief of the episodes from the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Purāṇas, the practice which found further encouragements in the temples of Virupākṣa and Mallikārjuna. However, the best examples of the Paṭṭaḍkāl sculpture are found in the Virupākṣa temple. The amorous couples, carved on the lower parts of its sixteen pilasters, are almost lifelike and bear the testimony to the artist’s awareness of the social environments. Among the amorous couples may be noticed Kāma and Rati, marked by their iconographic characteristics. A medallion representing a mounted elephant charging a horse, is of extreme significance for its realistic execution reminding the similar in the Mughal miniatures. The Śaiva dvārapālas flanking the shrine door of the temple display monumental strength in relaxation, a mood of expression frequently met with among the sculptures of Bādāmi. The physical movements shown in the figures of Naṭarāja and Rāvana as shaking the Kailāsa are undoubted precursors of the whirling actions found at Ellorā. Whether in the selection of subject matters, or in the setting of physiognomical types the art of the Western Chālukyās, noted at Tihole, Ajaṇṭā, Bādāmi and Paṭṭaḍkāl, appears to be the forerunner of the art of Ellorā, Aurangabad and Elephanta that flourished immediately after.

2. Ellorā, Aurangabad and Elephanta
   (c. A.D. 650-985)

   In the annals of rock-cut art in India, the position of Ellorā is unrivalled. The place flourished for about six hundred years as a centre of great artistic activity and all the major faiths prevalent in the time, viz., Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, found their vigorous expressions on its rocks. There are three distinct groups of rock excavations at Ellorā, indicating separate marches of the faiths, and among them the Buddhist caves appear to be the earliest in date, covering approximately a period stretching from A.D. 600 to 900 The
Brahmanical group followed the suit and they flourished between A.D. 650 and 1000, while the Jain group, beginning its work in the eighth century, extended the activity of the centre up to the end of twelfth century A.D.

Although the Buddhists initiated in carving the rocks at Ellorā, their art adds nothing commendably new to their achievements already recorded at Ajanta in its late phases. In spite of technical assurance and iconographical precision, noted for instance in the mānushi Buddha and Bodhisattva sculptures carved in rows in the Tin Thal Cave (no. XII), the Buddhist figures show an unmistakable conventionalization resulted from the domination of religious doctrine over the inspiration of the artist. The sharp chiselling and high polish of the form fail to inspire emotive feelings in the spectator, and this failure seems to be not only of the sculptor but also of the moribund state of the religion concerned.

The Brahmanical enterprises at Ellorā, however, brought into effect a new artistic wake that has no parallel in the domain of art of the entire sub-continent. The Brahmanical caves excavated in the seventh century A.D. include Rāvana-Kā-Khāi (no. XIV), Daśāvatāra (no. XV), Rāmeśvara (no. XXI) and Dhumar Leṇā (no. XXIX), all of which are significant for containing sculptures of great merit. The physiognomical types experimented at Aihole and finalized at Paṭṭāḍakal appear to have set norms for the figures worked out in these caves. But the success of the sculptor of Ellorā does not rest on the types but in a rare capability of infusing life to the figures carved out of stone. The figures once confined to their respective places, now appear to be freed from their lithic background, and like living forms they move in different directions. In short, the reliefs of Ellorā of the period are permeated with a liveliness that is not usually found even in Indian sculpture. A steady transformation in composition, from setting the main figure in vertical to diagonal, may be traced through the sculptures of Aihole, Bādāmī, Paṭṭāḍakal and Ellorā. At Ellorā, this diagonalism seems to have taken its final shape in the excellent reliefs of the Daśāvatāra cave. The panels depicting Andhakāsura-vadha and Tripurāntaka aspects of Śiva, and also his role as the protector of his follower Mārkaṇḍeya from Yama, the diagonal representation of the god is found to be made with a geometrical precision. But this compositional set-up appears to have reached to its finality in the panel representing Śiva as dancing Lalita in the same cave. His rhythmic stance as well as the swing of his right front hand has been represented with a skill that is not usually noticed even at Ellorā. Of the relief-panels found in the
Rāvana-Kā-Khāi Cave specially noteworthy are those portraying Siva dancing lalita and Rāvana shaking the mount Kailāsa.

From the plan of the caves and some of their sculptures it appears that the rock excavations at Aurangabad took place sometime in the second half of the seventh century A.D. and, thus, they fall between the above discussed Ellorā caves and the famous rock-hewn temple named Kailāsa which is evidently datable in the first half of the eighth century A.D. The sculptures of Aurangabad caves are remarkable for their plastic treatment. Here the figures, the worshippers of Cave III in particular, show a clear predilection for mass, and their placing in an advancing row along with carvings almost in the round testify to the introduction of a new element in relief sculpture. An worshipped female figure, with her fully developed lip and breast, may be cited as an example of the love for plastic volume borne by the Aurangabad sculptor. Another interesting aspect of the reliefs at the place relates to the compositional layout of one of its panels. This panel, belonging to Cave VII, presents a dancing female figure of extreme elegance at the centre along with female accompanists three on each side. The composition of the panel shows a half circle, at the middle of which stands the dancing form. So lively is the scene that one feels the cadence of the dancer and the bits of the music when he stands before it. A number of Bodhisattva and Tārā images, noted in the Aurangabad caves, are also significant for their balanced and proportionate execution. From the plastic qualities of the figures it seems that the Buddhist art in the Deccan showed its last flash at Aurangabad.

From the high rock of Aurangabad we must move to Elephanta, an island six miles away from the shore of Bombay in the Arabian sea, to trace the line of stylistic development of the Deccanese sculpture. For whether in posture or in form the fabulous figures of the Elephant cave are undoubtedly connected with the images found at Aurangabad. But the over all spirit as well as scale of Elephanta is, no doubt, far above the reach of the sculptors responsible for Aurangabad reliefs. This will be more than evident from the Mahēsa-mūrti, the three-faced bust of Siva, to which the island owes much of its fame. In this sculpture, Siva, the supreme god, has been represented in his full manifestation. His calm central face, resting on a chest of stupendous proportions, which is, again, adorned by rows of necklaces, bears on it mountain-like locks of hairs encircled by an elaborate tiara, and having a crest above in the shape of a

1. The nomenclature Mahēsa-mūrti does not seem to be accurate. The image is syncretistic one combining Siva in his placid and terrific aspects with his consort Umā. See ante, pp. 912-18, Kedg.
kitimukha. The expression of the face is that of yogin: a meditative mind permeates the oval countenance and the eyes are closed in deep concentration. One of the hands of this central form, which represents the god as a preserver, holds a citron, while the other is damaged. To the left of the spectator is the grim face of Bhairava, an aspect of Śiva representing destruction, and, significantly, it is in the shadow. The protruded forehead, curved nose, twirling moustache and cruel mouth hold terror. Symbols of death, a skull and serpents, adorn his hair, and, again, he bears another serpent in his hand. In contrast, the face to the right of the spectator, representing the god in Vāmadeva form, shows a pleasing feminine aspect of creation. The face itself is female and found to blossom in a sensitive and relaxed expression with soft cheek and fully developed lips. This aspect holds a lotus in hand, while the hair is bedecked with festoons of pearls and fresh flowers and leaves. Thus in this grand representation the supreme god Śiva is depicted in his full cosmic circle as destroyer, preserver and creator. This eighteen-feet high lofty form, which inspires veneration in its spectator by a sheer existence, is, no doubt, one of the magnificent human creations and an eloquent testimony to the spiritual ascendency of Indian art in the line already set by the Parel example. Thus, it readily reminds the much celebrated Buddha image of Sarnath, another climax of spiritual expression in India. But, in spite of a common meditative yogic stance, the sculptures are unmistakably different, and this difference is religious and metaphysical, regional and cultural, and thus, relates to the evolutionary background of the respective images. Though classical in expression, the sculptures in the cave of Elephanta are lineally inseparable from the Deccanese tradition of mighty rock-cut art, the early beginning of which is marked in the examples of Bhājā and Kārle. And this affinity seems to be undeniable when we approach the panels cut out in the cave representing some significant mythical exploits of Śiva. In these panels the experiences of the Deccanese artists, who worked at Bhājā and Kārle, Ajanṭā and Bādāmī, appears to have finally crystallized, and, so to speak, in the finalization of the technique the experiences of the sculptors of far south, that is of Mahābalipuram, were also taken into account. This will be borne out by the panel, wrought on the wall to the right of the spectator facing the Maheśamūrti, and representing descent of the heavenly river Gangā on earth at the behest of Bhagiratha, the legendary king, for sanctifying the mortal remains of his forefathers who died of the wrath of the great sage Kapila. The entire panel is found compositionally divided into two parts and at the centre, in the background of a vertically running
crevice stands Śiva in the action of receiving the violent impact of the river in her descent from heaven. The Gaṅgā has been depicted as a three-headed goddess just above the hairlocks of Śiva, while Bhagiratha is shown as kneeling at the bottom to the left of the great god. The swaying figure of Śiva symbolizes the flowing river, while Pārvatī, standing near by, humanizes the entire panel by turning his face to other side. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and other companions of the god are also presented in the scene. Overall impact of the panel, and its composition in particular, is that of a miniature of the huge Kirātārjunīyam scene of Mahābalipuram. The very division of the entire panel with the help of a vertical crevice clearly indicates that the sculptor of Elephanta was quite aware of the great lithic experiment of the Pallava counterpart. To the opposite of the Gaṅgā vatarana panel is the relief of Ardhanārīśvara. In it Śiva has been shown in unison with Umā as leaning on his mount Nandin. Here, too, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and other companions of Śiva are found depicted surrounding the main Ardhanārīśvara form. Compositionally compact and plastically pronounced, the scene leaves pleasing impact on the viewer. Two panels, executed on two side walls at the rear of the chapel that enshrines liṅga, are also significant for their classic grandeur and epic scale. One of them represents Śiva as the destroyer of Andhaka demon, and the other his marriage with Pārvatī. These two panels, depicting two themes of contrasting sentiments (rasas), display the high aesthetic attainments of the sculptor. In the former, Śiva has been shown in his fierce ruthless aspect as a destroyer of the demon with a physical vehemence very much suitable for the action. The full play of his numerous hands, particularly one brandishing a heavy sword, and his grinning teeth are really awe inspiring. And what a contrast has been achieved in the panel just to the opposite of this cruel one. Here Śiva has been represented in his most pleasing mood, as the Kalyāṇa-sundara, in the act of marrying Pārvatī. In the presence of heavenly members he is shown as accepting the girl from Parvata, the father of Pārvatī, while Brahmā is found to act the religious performance. An interesting aspect of the scene is the fully developed forms of Śiva and Pārvatī, which are, no doubt, the best examples of anthropomorphic types carved in the cave. And it is undeniable that they immediately recall the shapes so precisely chiselled out in the caves of Aurangabad. Indeed, Śiva of the panel is nothing but a follow up of the Bodhisattva form depicted in Cave VII at Aurangabad.

In spite of the magnitude of the reliefs of Elephanta, the final achievement of the Deccanese sculpture waited to be executed in the Kailāsa temple at Ellora. The entire temple complex of the
Kailāsa, the abode of and, hence, dedicated to Śiva, was excavated out of the live rock in the third quarter of the eighth century A.D. under the patronage of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Krīṣṇa I (A.D. 756-78). As a work of art the temple itself is a unique example of sculpting and the superb carvings, depicting the myths and legends associated with the god (Śiva) and stories from the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata which it bears on its walls, are grand in conception and facile in execution. Indeed, these reliefs have substantially contributed to the rich repertoire of Indian art. By way of illustrations one may refer to the exquisite example like Rāvana's shaking of the mount Kailāsa, Naṭarāja, Kalyāṇasundara and Gajāntaka forms of Śiva, various incarnations of Viṣṇu including Varāha and Nṛsiṁha forms, and several incidents from the Epics. It appears that some of the basic themes which recurred time and again in the Deccanese art reached to their final form in the reliefs of the Kailāsa. For instance, the incident of Rāvana's shaking of Kailāsa had been depicted in the Virupākṣa temple at Paṭṭaḍakal, and this has also been represented in the Kailāsa. In both the representations the incident has fully been realized by showing Rāvana as uprooting the mount Kailāsa. But while the Virupākṣa panel shows a simple composition made out more or less in vertical terms, the Kailāsa relief displays altogether a different mode of expression. Here Rāvana is depicted as attempting to whirl the mount above his head with his ten pairs of hands on the axis of his trunk which, in its turn, is solidly squatted on the ground. Though limited is his success, the tremor of the rock has been felt by the divine pair, and being shaken up Pārvatī leans back on Śiva for support, while one of their attendants is clearly shown as fleeing. But the god keeps himself calm and unagitated and saves the situation by the simple gesture of pressing down a foot. This scene, no doubt, has been visualized in a full epic scale and thus is far advanced in plan and execution from the one noticed in the Virupākṣa temple. It seems that between these two representations comes the third one carved in the Dhumar Lena cave. It is possible that this example of Dhumar Lena inspired the sculptor of the Kailāsa to take up the theme. For, in both the representations dramaturgical personae are same, but while the figures in the Dhumar Lena are shown as totally unconcerned of Rāvana's fit, and thus extremely idealized, those of the Kailāsa panel appear to be fully activated by the action, and thus the latter scene is decidedly realistic. In similar manner some of the well-known themes of the Śaiva, Vaiśṇava and Sākta mythology are found to have reached to their culmination in the works executed in the Kailāsa. Thus, for example, come the Mahīśamardini panel on the north
wall of Raigamahal and the dancing Siva on the ceiling of the same component. These two reliefs, as also the Andhakāśuravadha-mūrti of Siva, seem to be some of the best examples of the Kailāsa sculpture. Besides, there are a few isolated panels which may draw attention of a discriminating spectator. Among them to be noted first is the couple in ‘kiss’ found on the balustrade of Lāṅkeśvara and remarkable for its passionate embrace. The panel representing Jātāyu preventing Rāvaṇa in his abduction of Śīta is another brilliant example of the debt attained by the Kailāsa sculptor. And the leaping Hanumān, on a plain extensive surface of the wall, shows the high aesthetic ability of the Kailāsa artist in utilizing open space. Hence the Kailāsa at Ellorā, expresses myriad moods, be it the ecstatic dance of Siva or the fury of Siva-Bhairava, with appropriate and consummate sincerity. The figures, usually depicted in deep niches between high pilasters, show detailed and differentiated modelling made effective through deep and graduated cutting of the stone. And in the physiognomical types of the figures may be noted a happy absorption of the slender shapes of the south by the mighty and ponderous forms of the Deccanese rock-cut tradition.

But this was a short lived period, and immediately after the creative phase in the Kailāsa, the art of Ellorā became insipid and conventionalized in the caves of the Jainas. And after a few hundred years the stolidity and volume of the Deccanese art found a new expression in the mechanical and florid but otherwise a deftly executed art of the Hoysalas in Karnāṭaka.

II. TAMIL LAND

1. Mahābalipuram (c. A.D. 600-668)

Mahābalipuram stands out as one of the most prominent art centres of south India. Its importance as a place of experimentations in the development of South Indian temple style has already been discussed. The illustrious reign periods of Mahendravarman I (c. A.D. 600-30) and Narasimhavarman Māmalla (c. A.D. 630-668) are equally significant for contributions in the field of plastic art. Nourished essentially on the rich harvest of the Āndhra school, the Pallava sculptor made himself acquainted with the experiences of his counterparts in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Valley, Malwa and the Deccan and, then, by virtuosity of his own genius introduced a new standard to be known for its prolific and variegated output, the bulk of which was executed at Mahābalipuram, the ancient port, from where the influence of the school spread across the Bay of Bengal to different islands.

The Pallava sculptures noticed at Mahābalipuram may be divided
into following categories: (i) the great Kirāṭarjunīyam relief executed on a live rock; (ii) rectangular panels of the maṇḍapas, i.e. the rock-cut cave-shrines; (iii) the relief figures on the walls of the monolithic rathas; and (iv) a number of isolated sculptures in the round. Conceptually as well as technically most significant work of Mahābalipuram is the extensive panel that has been identified as depicting the mythological story of the feud between Arjuna and Siva in his disguise of a Kirāta. The genesis of the story is found in the Vana-parpan of the Mahābhārata. But in this relief the sculptor appears to have followed the version of the famous Kāvyā, Kīrtarjunīyam, by Bhāravi. The work was executed during the reign of Mahendravarman I, who happened to be an admirer of the poet.

The story of the 'Kirāta's feud with Arjuna', also known as 'Arjuna's penance', is found carved on the surface of a rock measuring 90' × 50', of which three-fourths are completed and one-fourth at the lower left end remains unfinished. The power of imagination of the master-artist is more than apparent from the very selection of the carrier that is to bear on it a challenging theme already dealt with successfully by a great poet of the age. A fissure running vertically divides the entire surface of the rock into two almost equal halves. This fissure could have posed an unsurmountable problem in unifying two parts of the rock to an average sculptor. But the genius of the master-artist turned it into a flowing Gaṅgā and, thus, instead of separating the theme into two, it brings together two different myths, both occurring on the banks of the sacred river, by bridging the gap of the intervening time. Of the two myths, one is 'Arjuna's feud with Siva as a Kirāta, and the other is the story of Nara Nārāyaṇa representing the third Pāṇḍava as Nara and Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa. The importance of the vertically flowing Gaṅgā is, however, not limited only to the theme of this huge panel; it also plays a pivotal role in the entire composition, for all the figures, human, divine and animal, are found to move laterally from two sides to the flowing river. Hence this adoption of a crevice as an integral element of the entire panel appears to be one of the most marvellous examples of ingenuity shown by the Indian artists.

The layout of the grand panel divides the entire surface of the rock in four to five tiers in which figures of various categories are depicted as moving horizontally. It seems that these tiers represent different worlds, such as terrestrial, nether, aerial, stellar and celestial in ascending stages, and each of these worlds is shown with its usual inhabitants. For example, in the regions that may be termed terrestrial, one may witness wild animals including lions, elephants, deer, monkeys, rabbits, squirrels, rats, etc. in their respective beha-
viour, and in the aerial and celestial regions the *gandharvas* and *kinnarases*, *ganases* and *devases*, *vidyadharases* and *siddhases*. The sympathy of the artist is, however, equal to all beings and he remains the same painstaking executioner all through in depicting any of the figures, whether a grinning monkey or an elusive squirrel on one hand and the flying *vidyadharases* and the worshipping ascetic on the other. The figures are in high relief and they are carved in abundance to cover the entire face of the cliff; but such is their arrangement that the panel in its entirety never appears to be over worked. No artificial frame or boundary delimits the composition which overflows the rock to the ground, as in the monkey family situated to the left. Here the rock itself has turned into the material, every feature of which, whether it is a bulge or a cavity, and not excluding the crevice running vertically, has been judiciously utilized to suit needs of the theme. It seems that earlier conception of rock-carving noticed at Bhājā and Udayagiri has reached to a culmination at Mahābalipuram. Here the concept of rock-carving attains a supreme expression in which the entire mass of the rock, as Kramrisch observes, "allows itself to organize into relief." 2 The vast composition is full of figures, almost all in life-size, representing men and animals, birds and trees, gods and semi-divine beings. Every figure has, however, been visualized in plastic terms and executed with a loving care. One may, for instance, note the life-like elephant family moving towards the Gaṅgā along with the calves, the hermit approaching the river with a pitcher on his left shoulder to carry back its sacred water, or the deer couple the male member of which is shown as scratching his nose with a hind leg. It seems that the animal forms are of especial interest for the sculptor of the great panel. Though figured in idealised proportions, each of the anthropomorphic forms also breathes an air of clear realism. Usually the figures are shown in supple and graceful slenderness and with refined contours which could scarcely be improved upon. But there are also instances, as in the case of the ascetic Brahmin or that of Arjuna's penance, where the artist's approach is sheer naturalistic. Indeed, he seems to be a keen observer of the nature, nay, almost a naturalist, and, therefore, succeeded in portraying the behaviour even of the lower animals like squirrel, rat, rabbit, cat and tortoise—not to speak of elephant, deer and monkey—with a sympathy and knowledge seldom found elsewhere in Indian representational art. Although innumerable figures of various kinds are found to crowd the extensive composition, everything appears to be well placed and all

2 *Indian Sculpture, Calcutta, 1933*, p. 79.
of them well integrated. A restraint movement permeates the figures with poise and dignity, and nowhere they are found to be vehement in actions and gestures.

The overall impression is one of joy and ecstasy of existence, and yet a high sense of detachment pervades all through and breathes an air which is essentially classical. It seems that "the epic myth serves as the vehicle, not for any spiritual quest, but for depicting life in its natural surroundings". The grand panel of Āṉāḷipuraṃ appears to be inspired in many ways by the murals wrought on the walls of Ajanṭā caves. It is not altogether unlikely that the master-artist who planned the panel aspired to translate an epic theme in a scale usually envisaged in a mural and at the same time grant it a permanency, and, thus, a masterpiece, "a regular fresco in stone", came into being.

Some of the reliefs executed in rectangular panels of the manda-pas, and grouped under second category by us, retain to a great extent the verve of the open-air Ḋirartunāyī panel. For example, we may refer to the scenes of Durgā fighting with the buffalo demon and Viṣṇu in his eternal sleep on the coils of Ananta, both in the Mahisamardini cave, Viṣṇu as Varāha raising the goddess Earth from the ocean in the Varāha Cave II, and Kṛṣṇa lifting mount Govardhana in the Kṛṣṇa-manda-pa. Each of these indoor panels is individually planned and, in spite of their common rectangular framing, none of them is compositionally a repetition of another. The panel representing Durgā as fighting with the buffalo demon is full of action and here the compositional emphasis is chiefly on the diagonals. In the scene showing Viṣṇu in yoganidrā on his serpent-couch, the panel has been visualized mainly in horizontal terms. But two standing figures, one brandishing his club, near the feet of the god, not only infuse an element of drama to otherwise a quiet scene, but also create a compositional diversion with their vertical presence. The panel depicting Viṣṇu as Varāha, who raises the goddess Earth from the ocean where she had been submerged, the emphasis is, as it should be, on the vertical thrust. In all the scenes the artist appears to have arranged the figures following the spirit of the theme and his success in presenting them in pictorial terms is almost proverbial. The intensely lively pastoral scene of the milking of the cow, as found in the panel illustrating the mythic story of Kṛṣṇa's lifting of mount Govardhana, may be specially noted as an early flash of genre art in India, a thing that had been destined to flourish later in the hands of the Rajasthani and Pahari painters.

There are also other reliefs at Mahābalipuram that belong to the temples, termed rathas, cut out of live rock and form the third category of our classification. Among these reliefs, placed in the low sunk, vertically set, rectangular panels flanked by pilasters, are found some of the finest examples of Pallava sculpture. Lineally connected with the tall and slender Andhra type, these sculptures are much more simplified and generalized in modelling and show discipline and restraint that were not usually met with in the early examples found at Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍā. The figures generally set in vertical stances, appear to have been guided by the flanking shafts of pilasters and, despite the pliability marked in their plastic treatment, they are unmistakably architectural in character. Standing on long legs, and with slim arms, they are usually with high pointed crowns; their overall emphasis is always on the verticals and in conformity with the architectural discipline of the rathas. They represent both gods and mortals, and, as we know from the inscriptions, some of them are portraits of the Pallava monarchs, viz. Śiṁhaviśṇu, Mahendravarman I and Narasiṁhavarman, first two being accompanied with their queens. Male figures are shown as epitome of masculine strength with their broad shoulders and erect trunks and this is not only true for the forms of kings and divinities but also of ordinary men, although the latter are shown in comparative ease of posture and attitude. In contrast the female shapes are much slighter and thinner with their narrow chests, close shoulders and small breasts. By temperament also they appear to be docile and apparently dependent on their more vigorous male partners. Their strength is not in robustness but in feminine grace, and this has been especially accentuated by their elegant flexions. “But whether it is a male or a female, a god or a king (there is nothing to distinguish them except by the inscription), a divinity or an ordinary mortal, a disciplined impersonal attitude characterizes all facial and bodily appearances”.4 This attitude is, however, not born of any deep spiritual experience; it represents only a “formal acceptance of life with a cultured aristocratic detachment.”5

The sculptors at Mahābalipuram were not confined only to the carvings of reliefs. They unleashed an unprecedented energy on the live rocks at the place and transformed many of them into ratha temples. These ratha temples, when considered from the technical viewpoint, are nothing but examples of enormous sculptures in the round. But for their significance in the development of South Indian

4 R. C. Majumdar (ed), Classical Age, Bombay, 1962, p. 538,
5 Ibid,
temple style we have, however, already discussed them in the section dealing with architecture. Apart from these *rathas*, there are a number of isolated pieces of sculpture in the round scattered at Mahābalipuram. For instance, the bull near the Kṛṣṇa-maṇḍapa, the elephant near the Sahadeva *ratha*, the lion standing in front of the Draupādi *ratha*, the bull beside the Arjuna *ratha*, etc. may be noted. In the depiction of bull and elephant the Pallava sculptor shows his usual familiarity with the object and both the animals thus bear the stamp of Pallava realism. The lion figure near the Draupādi *ratha*, as also the Durgā’s lion found within the enclosure of the shore temple, is, however, much more conventionalized in its representation. But among the sculptures treated in round at Mahabalipuram, by far the most significant is the monkey family carved out of a live rock near the hill bearing the extensive *Kīrātārjuniyam* panel. The members of the monkey family, showing the male picking vermin off the female while the latter suckles her two little babies, appear to have been thoroughly humanized by the empathy of the artist.

Along with the rock-cut and structural architecture the art of carving also flourished at various other centres in the Pallava kingdom. Reliefs representing decorative designs, deities and mythological stories were freely used to embellish religious establishments. But as found in the highly ornate Kailāśasanātha and Vaikunṭha Perumal temples at Kaāñchipuram, both attributed to the time of Narasimhavarman II (c. a.d. 695-722), they are usually of iconic interest and seldom add anything creative to the achievements already recorded at Mahābalipuram. Instead, a stiffening conventionalization of forms, marked by a firmer outline, and an emphasis on ornamentation steadily appeared to work in the Pallava sculpture produced after the glorious days of Mahendravarman I and Narasimhavarman Māmalla.


Along with the temple architecture the art of sculpting also flourished during the early phase of the Chola rule (a.d. 850-985) in South India. A difference may, however, be noted in the development of sculptures of the period from that of the temples. The early Chola temples, such as, Vijayālaya Choliśvara (main temple) at Narttamalai and Kuraṅganātha at Srinivasanallur, succeeded with their golden proportions and meticulous finish in breathing a fresh air after the choking experiences of cumbersome over ornamentation of the late Pallava temples. But an examination of stone sculptures on the walls of early Chola temples reveals that they are in-
separably linked up with the Pallava tradition of representational art, and there is nothing discernable in them to be termed as Chola from stylistic consideration. No doubt, here and there a number of notable sculptures are found, but they hardly contribute anything new to visual aesthetics. Sculptures found in the niches on the walls of the Muvar Kovil temple at Kadambalur, viz. Viñâdhara, Naṭārāja, Gajasamhâra, etc., are lively pieces with feeling for movement and plasticity. The Dakṣiṇāmûrti (Siva), situated under the arch of the dome of Choliśvara temple, is also a good piece of work. The relaxed posture of the god and the sensitive treatment of his face testify to the class of its draughtsmanship. But the qualities that attract the spectator towards these sculptures are found much more generally and clearly present in Pallava reliefs of Mahâbalipuram. The gigantic form of the dvârapâla, i.e. gate-keeper, of the same temple is also remarkable for the vigour it expresses, still as a work of art it fails to evolve a new style. The situation, however, favourably changes about the middle of the tenth century A.D., the period representing the second phase of the early Chola art. The Valiśvara Naṭārāja, a figure on the upper tier of the Valiśvara temple at Tiruvaliśvaram, datable just before the accession of Râjarâja I (A.D. 985), seems to be a forerunner of the Chola sculpture that contributed in the next one hundred years so greatly to the annals of Indian art. The Naṭārâja shows almost all the requisite characteristics of a bronze dancing Siva. The full swing of the left leg appears to have been accentuated by the opposite direction of the loin-cloth, apparently whipped up by the wind. The elaborate headgear and the divine serenity of the face are equally significant. The sculptor's ability of infusing movement to this dancing god is further manifested in the freedom it enjoys from the lithic background. Though envisaged as a high relief, the noble Valiśvara Naṭārâja expresses the spirit of a sculpture in the round, and this visual sense seems to have provided the aesthetic setting for creating the fully rounded iconic type of the deity in bronze. The niches of the temples of Kuraṅgânâtha at Srinivasanallur, Nâgeśvarasvâmî at Kumbakonam and Brahmapuriśvara at Pullamaṅgâi contain figures chiefly of iconographic interest. This system of representing icons, usually one at a time in niches flanked by pilasters, is known from the days of the Pallavas, but seems to have been formalized by the Cholas, especially in their days of extreme flourish that began with the accession of Râjarâja I. In some of the figures of above mentioned temples a clear feeling for realism may be noted. For example, the full-length portraiture of a Saivite saint, found in a niche on the wall of the Nâgeśvarasvâmî may be pointed out. Plastically sound form of the
saint is visualized in a perfect frontal pose, and his hands are found to be judiciously arranged, right-hand raised to explain something and the left placed on the hip. Upper part of the body from the loin is bare, while the lower garment is symmetrically disposed of with parallel ridges. The ear-lobe of the saint is elongated, hence placing him spiritually in the rank of Buddhas and Tirthaṅkaras, the western Indian representation of the latter possibly providing the archetypal example for it. But the plastic quality of the images carved in the niches are not always equal to this example; rather they are generally stiff and lifeless in appearance, with certain feelings for details, particularly in the delineation of ornaments.

Much more significant is, however, the fact that the Chola sculptors started bronze-casting sometime in the middle of the tenth century A.D. The chronological sequence of the early Chola bronzes is yet to be settled. Nevertheless, the researches already made by the scholars make it possible to place at least a group of highly interesting bronzes in our period. The group consists of four images, viz., Vṛṣavāhana, Tripurāntaka, Pārvatī (the consort of Tripurāntaka-Śiva) and Gaṇeśa. They all belong to the Umā-Maheśvara temple of Konchirajaipuram built sometime between A.D. 969 and 976. A mere superficial glimpse of the images would be sufficient to know them as examples of a highly developed art form. It is not unlikely that in bronze-casting, too, as in many other things, the Cholas continued the tradition established by the Pallavas. The importance of the Kanchirajaipuram bronzes is not only for the technical assurance they show, but also for setting certain norms that in later days came to be known as characteristics of the Chola bronzes. The Vṛṣavāhana, for instance, stands in a slightly bend (ābhanga) poise which can only be effected by a master artist. The image is perfectly measured and seems to have been executed following the prevalent canonical injunctions. The fully developed form, strong though it is, has a soft sensuous surface, the scarce ornaments hardly disturbing its smooth pliability. The judicious distribution of fleshy part of the body and the ornamental diversions speak very highly of the artist's maturity. The Vṛṣa standing beside the god is apparently a very late addition, for it shows highly conventionalized form and nothing of the realism that characterize the Chola art. While the Vṛṣavāhana is an apostle of dignified majesty, the image of Tripurāntaka is that of a refined elegance. The former unmistakably shows some affinity with the stone carvings in its feeling for plastic volume, but the latter is a typical example of the Chola bronze with a clear emphasis on linearism. The squarish shape of the Vṛṣavāhana face is found to have
been replaced by an oval in the Tripurāntaka. The weight of the body is remarkably shed off by the latter, and its standing posture is obviously visualized in terms of a rhythmic stance. Physiognomically as well as stylistically the image of Pārvatī standing along with Tripurāntaka as his consort, is a perfect match. Her front and back being treated with equal care, the Pārvatī represents one of the finest examples of the early Chola bronzes. The Gaṇeśa image of the place is, however, of a different idiom. Though a masterly executed work, its chiselling is so over-meticulous in the delineation of ornaments, locks of hair, designs on the loin-cloth, etc., that it breathes an entirely different air and tends to be essentially medieval. Thus, among the Kunerirājapuram images the Tripurāntaka-Pārvatī couple appears to be the most representative. On the basis of aesthetic qualities of these two figures it is possible to postulate that the vital norms of Chola bronzes, such as slim but firm figures, enliven yet restrained expression, a harmonious disposition of plain and ornamented surfaces, etc., may be found to be well formulated in the third quarter of the tenth century A.D.

The Kunerirājapuram bronzes help us in dating a few other early Chola examples coming from a number of centres. It is generally believed that the workshop responsible for the Kunerirājapuram images was prolific in output and at least some of its products could have been identified by the scholars. The unblemished Kalyāṇasundara group of images from Mānavalesvara temple at Tiruvelvikudi is surely of the same style, though the facial expression of Śiva-Pārvatī of the group is somewhat extrovert. Another fine example of the style is the Tripurāntaka preserved in the Tanjavur Art Gallery and believed to be from Mayūranāthasvāmi temple at Mayavaram. When compared with the Kunerirājapuram Tripurāntaka, this image of Mayavaram shows a naive expression and lacks the divine dignity of the former. Other bronzes attributed to the Kunerirājapuram workshop include two groups of images from Pallavaśvara, viz. Vṛṣavāhana with consort and Pārvatī with Skanda. The last example is remarkable for linear qualities marked in the slim shape of the figure of Pārvatī as also in her limbs, ornaments and ridges of the garment.

To sum up, the sculptural movement of the early Chola period, extending from A.D. 850 to 985, is significant for laying the foundation of future developments of the school. The early Chola sculptors working in stone, no doubt, followed in general the trend set up by the Pallavas, and, in spite of their attempts to create a new visual aesthetics, their success in the medium was few and far between. But when they began to concentrate in metal casting, sometime
about the middle of the tenth century, they immediately smashed new grounds. In fact, the basic characteristics of Chola bronzes, that raised Indian sculpture to such an unbelievable height, are found to be mostly formulated in the third quarter of this century, particularly in the reign of Uttamachola. Most of the vital characteristics of Chola masterpieces in bronze—slim forms with an accent on linearism realized by shedding off extra masses, judicious distribution of plain surfaces and decorative elements, disposition of figures in elegant stances and an overall sense of self-assured dignity—may be found introduced in the bronzes produced towards the end of the tenth century. The *Naṭarāja* image of the Gaṅgājaṭādharar temple at Govindaputtur, belonging to the closing years of the early Chola period, shows all these characteristics and, besides, is remarkable for its thriving vitality. A clear direction on certain stylistic traits and tendencies was, thus, set out in the early Chola period following which the Chola art reached its finality in the subsequent centuries.