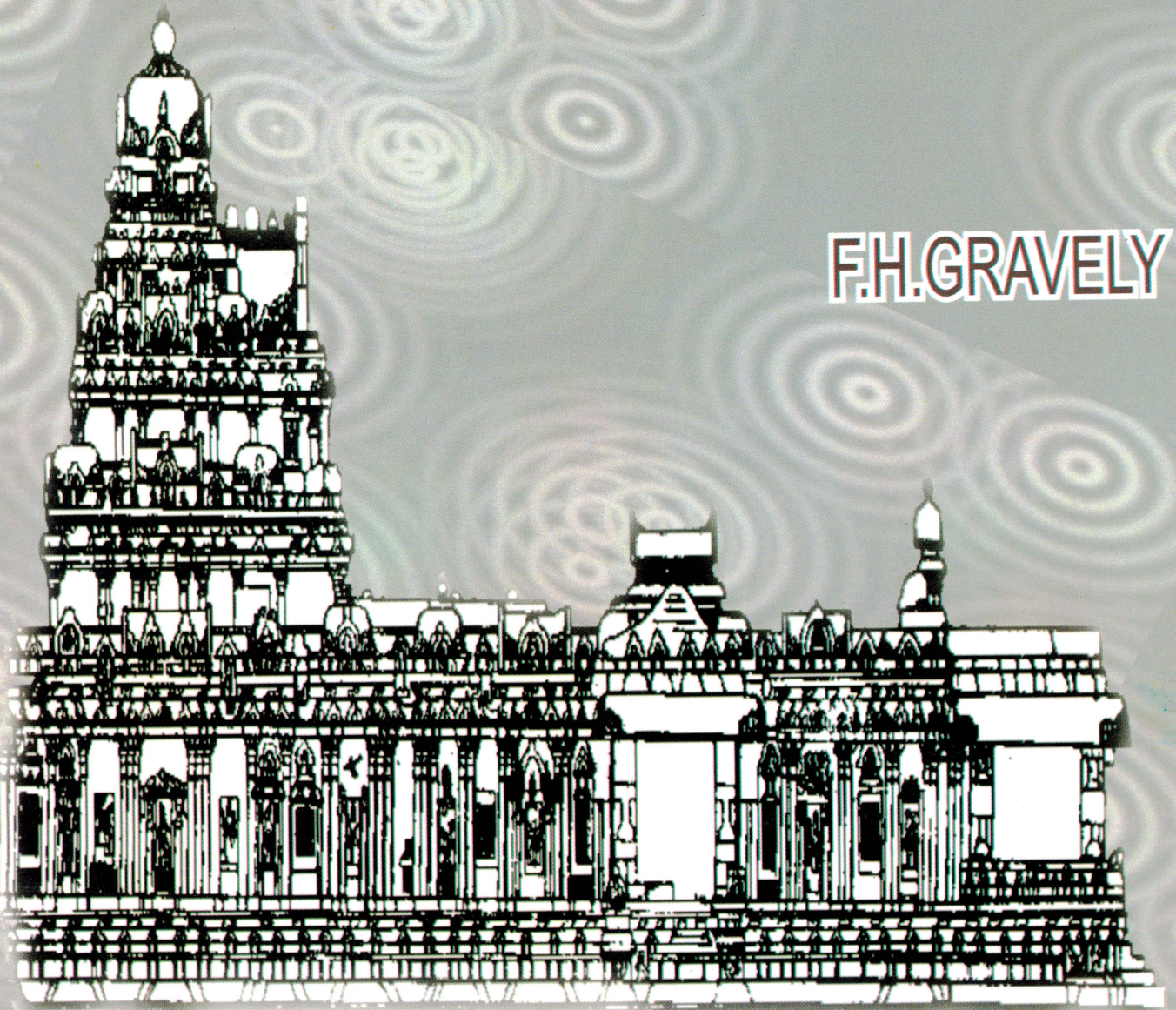


# AN OUTLINE OF INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

F.H. GRAVELY



*Published by*  
Director of Museums  
Government of Tamil Nadu







# **BULLETIN**

## **OF THE**

# **MADRAS GOVERNMENT MUSEUM**

**AN OUTLINE OF INDIAN TEMPLE  
ARCHITECTURE**

By  
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Government Museum, Madras

Published by  
The Director of Museums  
Government Museum  
Chennai-600 008.  
2006

First Edition: 1936

Reprinted: 1950, 1960, 1976, 1992, 1999, 2006

© Director of Museums  
Government Museum, Chennai – 8.

Price: Rs. 45/





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Director of Museums

Government Museum,  
Chennai-600 008.

## **PREFACE**

India is revered for her religious tolerance. Her temples present a panoramic variety of aesthetic excellences with religious favour. Thiru F.H. Gravely, the famous indologist and the former Superintendent of this Museum, in a brief outsketch has explained the different styles of Indian Temple Architecture developed at different zones of the sub-continent. This work, an authoritative presentation on temple architecture was out of print for a long time. For the benefit of the serious readers of Indian Architecture, now we reprint this work.

Chennai-8  
24.02.2006

**M.A.SIDDIQUE, I.A.S.,**  
Director of Museums.

## AN OULINE OF INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

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By F.H Gravelly, D.SC., F.R.A.S.B., Superintendent, Government Museum,  
Madras

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Since the foundation of the modern study of Indian architecture were laid over half a century ago by the publication of Ferguson's "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture" a vast amount of fresh information has become available; and the time now seems ripe for a revision and simplification of his treatment of the styles adopted in the construction of temples. I have already had occasion to make suggestions in this direction in a paper by Mr. T.N. Ramachandran and myself on "The Three Main Styles of Temples Architecture recognized by the *Silpa-Sastra*" published as part I of Volume III of the Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum (1934). The objects of the present paper are to develop this theme in such a way was to provide, if possible, a unified framework as a basis for further study, that will satisfactorily interpret the facts so far as they are known; and to suggest a terminology reasonably free from controversial implications.

It has been recognized that Ferguson's separation from one another of Buddhist, Jain and Hindu architecture is unsound. Buddhism and Jainism as we know them to-day sprang out of Hinduism, and there is every reason to believe that their temples have had a similar history. In any case it is clear that they are closely related and cannot be fully understood independently of one another. Among surviving monuments those relating to Buddhism naturally belong mainly to the early times when Buddhism was most widely prevalent in India; and as Hindu buildings were evidently then still being made exclusively (or almost so) of materials of comparatively low durability, surviving Hindu monuments mostly belong to subsequent times. It has therefore been found convenient to refer to the former as the Buddhist architectural period, even though when taken literally this name may be considered misleading, since Hinduism preceded Buddhism in India and continued contemporaneously with it, as well as surviving it to the present day. The difference between surviving Buddhist and Hindu monuments it thus mainly chronological, and no essential architectural different seems to exist between them and Jain monuments.

Buildings in different architectural styles may differ from one another either in external form, or in decorative detail, or in both. Careful study of the forms and evolution of decorative detail



in the temples of the Tamil country has already let Jouveau-Dubreuil to regard these temples as belonging to a style distinct from that of the superficially similar temples of Kanarese country<sup>1</sup> with which they are usually identified, a conclusion since confirmed by Ramachandran and myself from a study of external form<sup>2</sup>. But as practically nothing seems to have been worked out regarding the characteristics and evolution of the forms of decorative details found in temples outside the Tamil country, decorative detail cannot yet be utilized in formulating any general system of classification; for which therefore, for the present, external form alone remains. The production of workable hypotheses that would render intelligible the various forms of pillars, corbels, niches, etc., in temples outside the Tamil country is indeed, long overdue and would probably do more than could anything else, both to facilitate the correct dating of building without inscriptional record of their history, and to make possible an intelligent popular interest in the archaeology of Indian temples.

The *Vimana* or shrine is the part of a temple the external form of which has, from as long ago as the time of compilation of the early *Silpa-Sastras*, been found to be of most help in distinguishing between different styles. As a rule, moreover, it is the most conspicuous part, though in the finest temples of the Tamil country built subsequent to about 1100 A.D. it is usually small, often quite insignificant, and dominated by immense gopura towers over the gateways. A *gopura* is always much broader than it is deep, but a *vimana* is usually square or more or less rounded in plan. In the two chief forms of Indian temple, characteristic respectively of the north and south of the Peninsula, the towers consist of a vertical-side body containing the cell of the *vimana* or the gateway of the gopura, surmounted by the tapering portion which may conveniently be designated the spire. The spire terminates, above a somewhat narrow neck, in the bulbous structure bearing the finial. Fergusson<sup>3</sup> calls the bulbous structure the "crowning member", and as its correct technical designation is not yet finally settled, I purpose to refer to it here as the crown.<sup>4</sup>

Temples having different types of external form seem to have originated independently in different parts of India, either direct from earlier structures built of more or less perishable materials or from small flat-roofed temples of which a few survive from the Gupta period.<sup>5</sup> Over a vast area extending from the base of the Himalayas southwards to the Krishna River and its tributary the *Malrabha*, *vimanas* are characterized by the predominance of their vertical over their horizontal lines.

<sup>1</sup> Jouveau-Dubreuil. "Archeologie du Sud de l'Inde. I Architecture" Ann Mus Guimet XXVI (Paris, 1914) appendix, pages 172-182, especially page 179.

<sup>2</sup> Gravely and Ramachandran. "The Three Main Styles of Temples Architecture Recognized by the Silpa-Sastras." Bull. Madras Govt. Mus (N.S. Geni Sec.) III part I (Madras, 1934), page 23.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, the quotation of page 15 below.

<sup>4</sup> In my joint paper with Mr. Ramachandran (loc. cit.) we considered this to be the *sikhara*. As, however, Prof. Pisharoti and Mr. Balakrishan Nayar have since pointed out to me that this involves difficulties in the interpretation of certain texts relating to *vimanas* it seems best to avoid it at present. In any case the term *sikhara* relates to a structure forming part of the tower (*Vimana*) in all the three styles of temple-nagara, vesara and dravida recognized by the *silpa-Sastras*, and cannot rightly be used as a distinctive designation for the tower characteristic of the northern form, as it has been by some authors.

<sup>5</sup> for reference see Gravely and Ramachandran, loc. cit., page 10, footnote 3.

and by the resemblance of their crown to an amalaka<sup>1</sup> fruit, the star-gooseberry or myrobalan (genus *Phyllanthus*), a motif that is often repeated at regular intervals all the way up, especially on the corner elements (fig.1). South of the Krishna several distinct forms of temple are found, but one of them which overlaps the area of the Northern form of temple in the basin of the Malprabha-is so much more widely distributed than any other that it has come to be regarded as the form typical of the

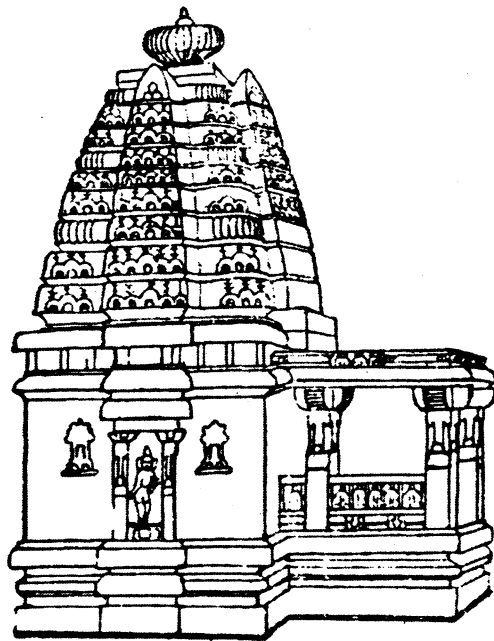


Fig.1.

Temple of Northern form (from Gravelly and Ramachandran, after Cousens; final restored.)

Southern part of the Peninsula<sup>2</sup>. In the form of the temple the *vimana* consists of a series of successively smaller and smaller tiers of miniature pavilions, horizontal lines thus predominating over,

<sup>1</sup> Concerning Amalaka see Pisharoti, *Calcutta Oriental Journal*, I, pages 189-196

<sup>2</sup> On page 13 of our paper already mentioned, Mr. Ramachandran and I call attention to a temple, the ruins of which are recorded by Fuhrer as found at Ramnagar in the Bareilly district of the United Provinces, which suggested to us that temples of stores diminishing in size from below upwards, each surrounded by cells, were at onetime in use in northern India-and that much earlier than those known in the south. Having subsequently learned of the unreliability of many of Fuhrer's records, we wrote to M. K. N. Dikshit of the Archaeological Survey for further particulars. He tells us that "None of the photographs and drawings relating to this temple have been published, not has any other archaeologist visited the place during the last 43 years....The diminishing stories which you infer from the description seem to me quite impossible, inasmuch as the total height of the mound was not much and it is very likely that the so-called stories are but buildings connected with successive periods of occupation." "There is therefore no evidence that temples of Southern form ever occurred in the north, and in the absence of such evidence there is no reason to suppose it.



Vertical, capped by a cupola-like crown (figs 2 and 3). Such appear to be most easily defined characteristic of the two principle forms of Indian temple, which, from their geographical distribution, may conveniently be termed the Northern, and Southern forms respectively.

Northern form of temple has undergone considerable modification in different districts, and no doubt also at different times, and may not improbably prove to be characteristic of a number of distinct styles, all presumably (though not necessarily) with a common origin. Unfortunately my knowledge of such temples is not sufficiently intimate to permit of the expression of any opinion either on the vexed question of the origin of this form or on the apparently almost untouched question of its subsequent evaluation<sup>1</sup>. It was called Northern or Indo-Aryan by Ferguson and of these terms the former is geographically correct and, unlike the latter, is free from further implications. Because this form of temple is northern some authors with the Nagara style of the Silpa-Sastras have also identified it, but the correctness of this identification is very doubtful (see Gravely and Ramachandran, loc. cit.).

The southern form of temple has been regarded by Fergusson and most subsequent authors as associated with a single style, to which the name Dravidian has generally been applied. Actually, however, two different styles have in this way been confused, styles which were already differentiated diverged still more widely, following different lines of evolution as regards both external form and decorative detail (see Gravely and Ramachandran, loc. cit., pages 23-25, etc). One of these style (fig.3, of the Virupaksha Temple at Patadakal) was developed side by side with temples of Northern form the Kanarese country, to which it seems to be confined; the other (fig.2 of the shore Temple at Mahabalipuram) belongs with equal definiteness of the Tamil country, though from about the time of the Vijayanagar Empire onwards it spread over a much wider area. The latter has been studied in detail by Jouvenau-Dubreuil in this "Archeologie du Sud de l'inde" (Paris, 1914) and in his much shorter "Dravidian Architecture" (Madras, 1917), where he so restricts the meaning.

<sup>1</sup> Nirmal Kumar Bose in his "Canons of Orissan Architecture" Calcutta, 1932) has studied the temples of Orissa in the light of local manuscripts, written comparatively recently, of which he considers that "It is certain that the tradition recorded in them has been handed down from very ancient times" (Page 5). Four main types are recognized in these manuscripts, the *Rekha*, *Bhadra*, *Khakhara* and *Goudiya* (pages 78-80 and pl. opposite pages 20 and 40) and each type is subdivided into four classes (page 81). The *Goudiya* type, which as its name implies is identical with the Bengal leaf-hut form of temple (see below, page 11, is a recent introduction of which only two examples are known (page 78). the *Rekha* type is *vimana* tower of Northern form. The *Bhadra* type and the *Rekha* are joined to each other in a very intimate manner, "the format tower of Northern from the *Bhadra* type and the *Rekha*" are joined to each other in a very intimate manner." the forms forming the *Mukhsala* (page 154) or vestibule to the latte which is the typical form of *vimana* in Orissa. In the famous temple at Konarak, however, the *vimana* appears to be of the *Bhadra* type, which bearers an obvious resemblance to the *vimana Kadamba* temples (see below, page 9). The main characteristic of the *Khakhara* type seems to be its rectangular instead of square plan. In form, though not in use, it thus bears much the same sort of relation to the typical Orissan *vimana* as the Tamilian *gopura* does to the Tamilian *vimana*. Its end walls are sometimes straight (pl. opposite page 33) as in the Tamilian *gopura*, sometimes curved (pl. opposite page 37). When the northern form of temple has been similarly studied in other areas it is not unlikely that it may reveal a similar diversity amount its buildings elsewhere.

Several early temples of Northern form are considered in Ch. VIII "Temples and Architecture" of R.D. Benerji's "Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture" (Arch. Surv. Ind., New Imp. Ser. XLVIII. Delhi, 1933).

of the term Dravidian-as applied to architecture-as to confine it to this latter style alone. As the *vimanas* of this style seems to fit the *Silpa-Sastra* definition of the *Dravida* style some form of this word may perhaps be retained for it-in which case, in view of the linguistic and cultural significance of the word Dravidian, misunderstanding will probably be minimized if *Dravida* is used in connection with architecture. As, however, there is still much difference of opinion as to the correct interpretation of the *Silpa - Sastra* definitions of architectural styles, and as it may further perhaps be argued that the term *Dravida*, if it does apply should continue to be taken to include both styles of the Southern form of temple, I propose in this paper to use the term *Tamilian* instead.

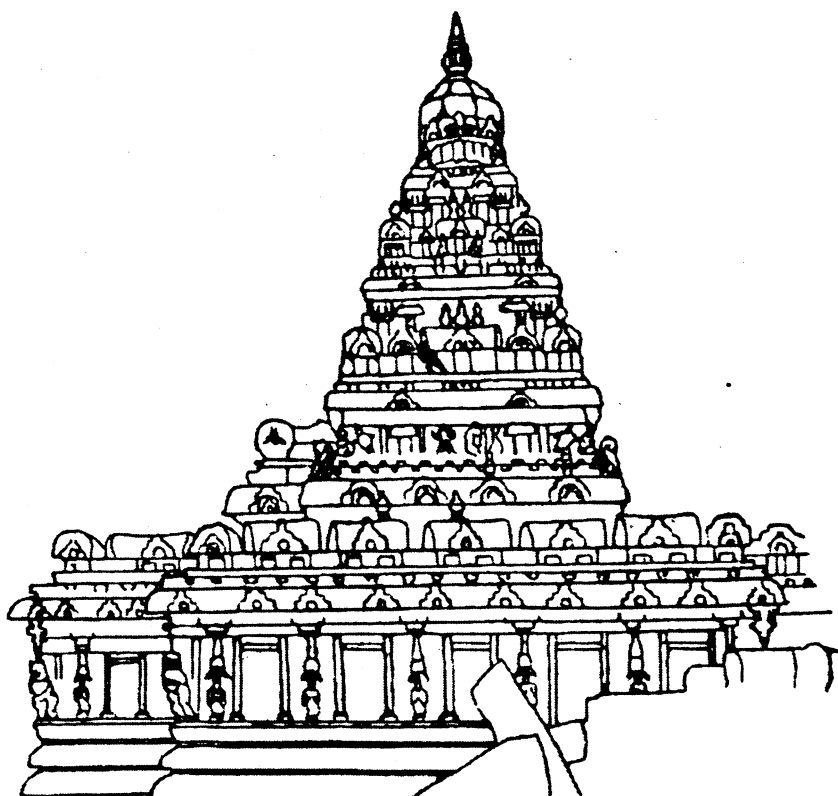


Fig.2

Temple of Southern form, Tamilian type (from Gravelly and Ramachandran).

The *Tamilian* style differs from that of the Kanarese type of Southern temple chiefly in its decorative details (see Jouveau -Dubreuil, "Archologie de Shoud de l'inde" I, pages 171-182); but there are distinctive differences between the two in external forms as well. For instance, though the crown of the *vimana* is octagonal in the earliest surviving temples of both, it has a window ornament on each face in the Tamilian style but one on alternate faces in the *Kanarse* (Gravelly and Ramachandran, loc cit., pl. II, fig.1); and whereas it mostly retains this original octagonal shape in later Tamilian



temples it is square in all later Kanarese one (loc. cit., pl.II, figs2-4) except the Mallikarjuna at Pattadakal in which it is round. In the latter style, moreover, a decorative gable is added to the front of the spire at the comparatively early date (loc.cit.,pl.II,figs.3-4), a feature not found in Tamilan temples.<sup>1</sup> And there are other differences also, concerning which see Gravely and Ramachandran, loc. it., page 16. As these Kanarese temples were erected by the Chalukyas,<sup>2</sup> of which dynasty they are the earliest surviving monuments, they may conveniently be designated Early Chalukyan. This term is not only historically correct for the earliest Chalukya buildings that survive, but will further help to avoid their confusion with later temples derived from the (see below, pages 15-18) to which the general term chalukyan was applied-in a geographical and not a dynastic sense<sup>3</sup>—by Fergusson, though the most celebrated of them are now known to have been the work of a different dynasty, the Hoysalas. Whether Early Chalukyan architecture should be so defined as to include temples of

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat similar structure is found in the Early Chola temples at Tanjore and Gangaikondacolapuram, but quite low in proportion of the immense height of the vimanas. The Principal vimana of the temple at Sri Rangam seems at first sight to be another exception. But the resemblance is clearly superficial. I know of no means by which its date can be fixed, and the site is of course a very ancient one. Its window ornaments prove, however, that in its present condition the building must be much less ancient. Its unusual form has apparently been arrived at by the widening, to permit of it containing a sufficiently large image of the reclining Ranganatha, of the inner end of the apsidal form of shrine mentioned on page 12 below.

<sup>2</sup> On page 62-63 of his "Chalukyan Architecture of the Kanarese districts" (Arch. Surv. Ind. New Imp. Ser. XIII. Calcutta 1926) Cousens points to the remarkable similarity existing between the Virupaksha temple of one of the queens of the Chalukyan King Vikramaditya II at Pattadakal and the Kailasa temple of the conqueror of the Chalukyas (or his son), Krishna I of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, at Elura (see Fleet's "Dynasties of the Kanarese districts...." in "Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency", 1896, page 39). Though the decorative details of the Elura temple, like that of the Pattadakal ones, has been shown by Jouveau-Dubreuil ("Archlogie du Sud de l'Inde" I, pages 171-182, pl.IVil-Ixiv) to be in very different style from that of the temples of the Tamil country, the Elura temples differ from typical Chalukyan ones and resemble those of the Tamil Country in their use of the octagonal form of crown long after it had been abandoned by the Chalukyas in favour of the square form, and in the presence of small gopuras—very like those of the Kailasantha temple at Conjeeveram—as well as in "the number of repetitions of the lion" commented on by Cousins. In my joint paper with Mr. Ramachandran already from the Tamil country we were surprised to be unable to find anything distinctively Tamilan about it. I now see that in this temple and in the Mallikarjuna from the same reign, alone so far as I know among Chalukyan temples, there are small gopuras. These are, however, situated, as they are also in the Kailasa temple at Elura, over the temple doorways behind the porches (see Burgees "The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India. II. Mediaeval Monuments", pl. 277 and Hurlimann "Picturesque India", pl. 100) instead of over the gateways of the one or more outer courts as in Tamilan temples.

Mr. Ramachandran has called my attention to the fact that direct Tamilian influence in the Elura temples is quite possible in view of the recorded alliance, at about the time when they were made, between the Rashtrakutas and certain members of the Pallava royal family against their common foe the Chalukyas. (See Anant Sadashiv Altekar, "The Rashtrakutas and Their Times", Poona Oriental Series, No.36-38; also Ramachandran, Journ. & niv. Bombay, History, Economics and Sociology, I page 240-41). I have to thank Mr. Ramachandran for his ready help in all matters about which I had occasion to consult him in connection with this paper.

<sup>3</sup> See page 41 of his "Architectural Memoir" in "Architecture in Dharwar and Mysore" photographed by Dr Pigou, A.C.B. Neill and Col Meadows Taylor, with an Historical and Descriptive Memoir by Col. Meadows Taylor and Architectural Notes by James Ferguson (London, 1866).

Northern form built by the same king, or whether these latter temples resembled other Northern temples in their decorative detail as well as in their outward form, and thus are not to be regarded as belonging to any distinctively Chalukyan style, are unfortunately questions that cannot be answered until the characteristics and development of decorative detail have been more fully worked out for both forms of temple in the Chalukyan country, and for the Northern form generally. Nor is it possible to say whether Chalukyan and Hoysala can most conveniently be regarded as distinct styles or as two periods of a single style.

The Northern form of temple apparently dominates the whole of the extensive area of which it is characteristic; but the Southern form seems to have been confined, till the rise of the Vijayanagar Empire, to the Chalukyan and Tamil Kingdom. Except for a few cave temples and the early apsidal temple at Chezarla, partially nothing seems yet to be known of the archaeology of the Telugu country subsequent to the decline of the Buddhist centers in the lower part of the Kistna basin<sup>1</sup>: and

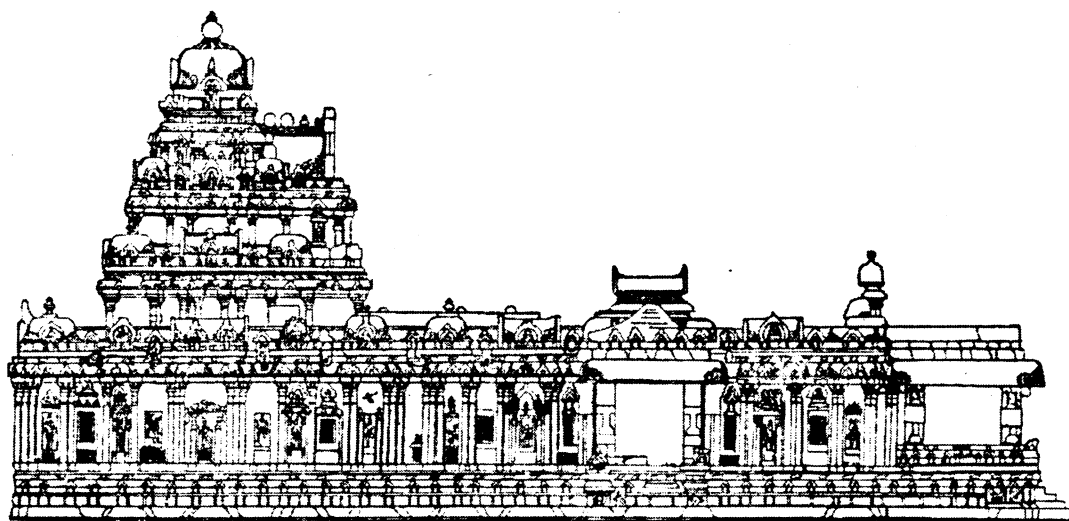


Fig.3.

Temple of southern form, Early Chalukyan style (after Cousens). The gable in front of the spire is absent in the earliest examples.

such scanty evidence as I have seen points to a distinctive style existing there. History suggests the likelihood of its being derived from Early Chalukyan temples and this seems to be supported by sculpture, but I know of no published evidence one way or the other. In the west, however, two styles are found which appear to be independent in origin from any of those described above, one characteristic of the ancient Kadamba kingdom of the Kanarese country, the other of the Malabar Coast.

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the small square shrines of the northern part of this country see below, page 12.



In a Kadamba temple (fig.4) the vimana is square in plan, with its tower pyramidal and composed of a series of horizontal step-like stages, each of which is usually decorated marginally with a uniform series of quadrangular vertical projections—a kind of roof. It must be noted, which is also found covering vestibules attached to vimanas of Northern form in Orissa, at Bhunaveswar and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The stages are more numerous and less elevated than in temples of Southern form, and are devoid of pavilion ornamentation. The crown, when present, is square.

In a West Coast or Malabar temple (fig.5) the walls resemble a wooden railing in structure and are as a rule still made of wood to-day, though stone copies from about the time of the Vijayanagar Empire also exist (see Cousens "Chalukyan Architecture," pages 134-137, Pl. cxliii, cxliv and cxlviii).

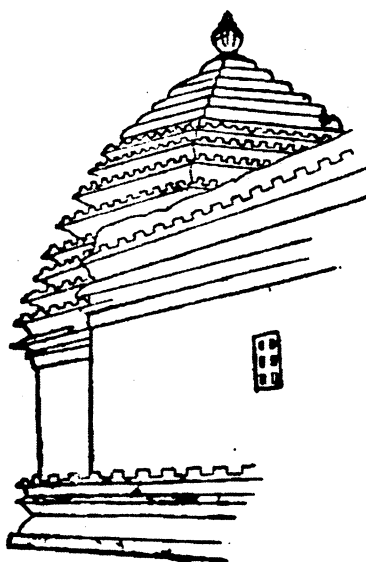


Fig.4

- I Kadamba type of temple (from Gravely and Ramachandran). An early example before the addition of the gable in front of the spire. Crown also absent.

Such temples may have either a simple pitched roof of overlapping slabs, or they may have a series of pitched roofs one above another (fig 5), which bear an obvious resemblance to the multiple, pitched roofs of Chinese and Napalese temples (fig.6). In the first edition of his "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture" (1899, page 308—omitted in the 1910 edition revised by Burgess) Fergusson refers to the well known anthropological similarity between the Nayars of Malabar and the Newars of Nepal, especially as regards their custom of polyandry. If the similarity between these

<sup>1</sup> Concerning small square vimanas with similar spires in Ganjam see below, page 12 see also above, page 4 footnote concerning the large vimana of this type at Konark.

two now widely separated peoples should prove to be due to their both representing an ancient stock, formerly of more general distribution, which has been split into two and driven to shelter in the mountains of the north and behind those of the south-west, these multiple roofed temples would presumably represent an older style of architecture than the Northern and Southern and now occupying the wide area between them. But it must not be forgotten, on the other hand, that the West Coast has from very early times been in direct contact with China by sea, a fact to which the Chinese fishing nets of the Cochin and Travancore backwaters still bear testimony. Temples that seem to show a more or less definite affinity to those of Malabar do, however, exist here and there in other part of the Peninsula also. The Nataraja shrine of the Chindambaram temple, for instance, has wooden wall of peculiar construction somewhat reminiscent of those of a Malabar temple, though the shape of the building as a whole, with its golden roof, is clearly connected, through the Durga temple (the so-called Draupadi Ratha) at Mahabalipuram, with that of square thatched huts illustrated in Buddhist sculptures from Amaravati. The temple in true Malabar style at

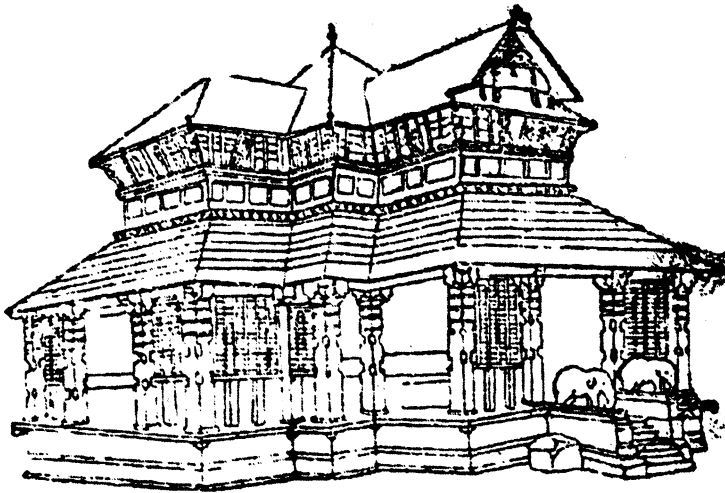


Fig. 5.  
Malabar type of temple (after Fergusson).

Harpanahalle, Bellary district, shown in Pl. lxxxiv and lxxxv of Meadows Taylor and Fergusson's "Architecture in Dharwar and Mysore" is probably due to some direct connection between those who built it and the Kanarese West Coast; but I know of no confirmatory evidence of this, nor whether any other such temples occur in the Deccan.

In the Kashmir valley of the Western Architecture in Dharwar and Mysore" is probably due to some direct connection between those who built it and the Kanarese West Coast; but I know of no confirmatory evidence of this, nor whether any other such temples occur in the Deccan.

Himalayas multiple roofs are found in yet another style of temple (fig.7). According to Fergusson these temples bear two or three roofs "which are obviously copied from the usual wooden roofs common to most buildings in Kashmir, where the upper pyramid covers the central part of the building, and the lower a veranda, separated from the

centre either by walls or merely by a range of pillars. In the wooden example the interval between the two roofs seems of have been left open for light and air; in the stone buildings it is closed with ornaments. Besides this, however, all these roofs are relieved by dormer windows, of a pattern very similar to those found in mediaeval buildings in Europe; and the same steep, sloping lines are used also to cover doorways and porches, these being virtually a section of the main roof itself, and evidently a copy of the same wooden construction: the pillars which support the porticoes...are by far the most striking peculiarity of this style, their shafts being so distinctly like those of the Grecian Doric, and unlike anything of the class found in other part of India.<sup>1</sup>

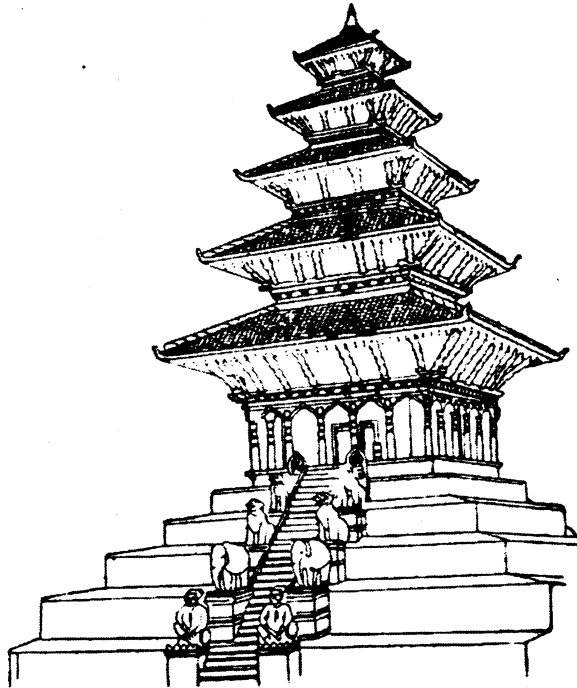


Fig. 6.  
Nepal type of temple (after Fergusson).

Lastly, mention must be made of the form of temple illustrated in fig.8 this, as has been pointed out by Gangoly on pages 23-24 of his "Indian Architecture" (Little Books on Asiatic Art, Vol.III), is "evidently borrowed from leaf-huts very common in Bengal," the region to which it belongs. In this forms of temple with curved eaves we also find the same tendency of a multiplication of roofs one above another.

<sup>1</sup> See also chapter iii "Architectural Styles" in Ram Chandra Kak's "Ancient Monuments of Kashmir" (India Society, London, 1933).



Multiplication of roofs is thus a feature of the different forms of temple typical respectively of Malabar, Bengal, and the Eastern and Western Himalayas. Should any or all of these four styles be grouped together as belonging to single form? The answer to this must depend on whether or not they can be shown to have a common origin, independent of the Northern and Southern form of temple characteristic of the rest of the country. At present this cannot be done, and to attempt any such grouping would be to prejudge the issue. But the different kinds of Indian temple known to me—there may of course be other that have escaped my notice—all either belong or seem to have been derived from the above mentioned fundamental types, which are as follows; temples of Northern.

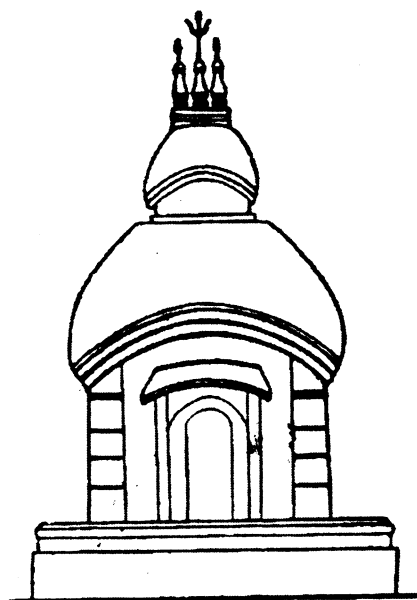
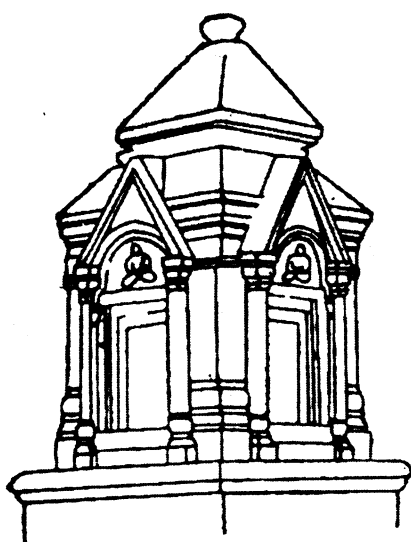


Fig.7. Kashmir type of temple (after Fergusson)      Fig.8  
Fig. 8. Bengal leaf-hut type of temple (after Gangoly).

from, whether comprising one or several styles it is not yet possible to say: temples of Southern form in two distinct styles, the Early Chalukyan and the Tamilian; and temples in five apparently independent styles of more restricted range, namely those of the ancient Kadamba kingdom, Malabar, Bengal, Nepal and Kashmir. To this list of prototypes must be added apsidal temples, based on the Buddhist chaitya hall, and square temples, based on a square thatched hut with simple roof, and straight caves, which occur sporadically in the style of their locality as regard detail, in various place such as Mahabalipuram (the so-called Sahadeva and Draupadi Rathas respectively), Chezarla, Aihole (the so-called Durga) and Chidambaram (the Nataraja shrine).

Small square plain shrines base on a square but with simple roof and straight caves occur in many places and should perhaps be regarded as an independent type, though when decoration is

added it naturally follows the local style. These temples are, however, so insignificant that little or attention seems yet to have been paid to them. When traveling recently by train from Calcutta to Madras, I noticed that such temples seemed to be the principal, if not the only, form of temple in Ganjam and the northern part of the Telugu country. In Ganjam the pyramidal roof is marked by a series of horizontal courses which, in at least one example a little to the south of the Chilka Lake, have the form of low step-like stages decorated with quadrangular vertical projection as in the vestibules of some of the temples of the adjoining province or Orissa and in the shrines of Kadamba temples. The crown, however, is unlike that of either being, so far as I could observe, round but neither clearly separated from the pyramidal spire by a distinct neck nor ribbed like an amalaka. In some, crown and finial seem to be merged into one another to form an octagonal column. Further south all trace of the crown disappears and the horizontal courses becomes less marked and less numerous till near Vizagapatnam they are often entirely absent. Almost immediately to the south of Vizagapatnam, however, horizontal courses reappear in many such shrines in the form of deep steps, suggestive of terraced spire of the Southern form of temple, though without its decoration. In the Madura district also, round about Kodaikanal Road station, there are many small square shrines, built the differ from those just described in the their spire is curvilinear and is much smaller at its base than is the body of the shrine from which it rises. It may be either square or circular in plan, in the latter case being more or less hemispherical instead of pyramidal: and sometimes ornamentation of Tamilian type is added. Evidently these little shrines differ considerably in form one part of the country to another and deserve more attention than their simplicity would seem to indicate

It is unlikely that any of the above mentioned styles, except perhaps the last if it is to be regarded as distinct, have remained unchanged throughout the ages during which they have been in existence; and the more complex of the temples of Bengal, such as the Dakshinesvara temple, near Calcutta, figured on pl. 126 of Hurlimann's "Picturesque India", have evidently arisen from a combination of the Northern form of tower with the Bengal leaf-hut form of temple,<sup>1</sup> two prototype which belong to contiguous areas. More investigation seems, however, to be needed before the evolution of any of the styles found north of the Krishna can be made clear; and this seems to be the position with regard to the Malabar style also.

The evolution of the Tamilian style has been worked out by Jouveau-Duuuil, whose results are embodied in the two books mentioned on pages 5-6 above. He divided the time from the making of its earliest surviving examples by the Pallava king Mahendravarman I. early in the seventh century A.D., to the commencement of its Modern period about 1600 A.D., into four periods of approximately 250 years each. The first is the period of Palava temples (fig. 2, P.5) ending with the

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning other forms taken by temples in Bengal see N.R. Bhattasali "Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures in the Dacca Museum" (Dacca 1929), pp.xii-xvii, pl. lxxxii-lxxxvii, "8 An idea of the temples that were erected over these images" and S.K. Saravati "The Begunia Group of temples of Bengal" Journ., Inc. Doc. Oriental Art. II (Calcutta, 1934), pages 130-140) pl.xlv.3 text-figs. See also "Bengali Temples and their General Characteristics" by Manmohan Chakarvarti Journ. Asiatic Soc. Bengal, N.S.V. 1909, pp.141-162, 13 figs.

Final subjection of the Pallava dynasty of Conjeevaram by the Cholas from further south in about 850 A.D. It seems likely that in their original kingdom the Chola already practiced an allied—but in certain respects distinct—style of the own, presumably in perishable material; for the with their supremacy marked changes in certain details make their appearance somewhat abruptly in surviving buildings. The supremacy of the Cholas lasted for about 500 years; and throughout that time a gradual evolution took place, resulting in such great differences between the buildings of its beginning and end that it is convenient to divide in into to Early and a later Chola period of 250 years each. This gradual evolution continued though the 250-year period of the Vijayanagar Empire by which the Later Chola period was followed, and so on into the Modern period.

The Pallavas made cave, freestanding monolithic and structural temples, never of very large size, and either with gopuras or with these smaller than the vimana. Their largest surviving temple is the Kailasanatha at Conjeevaram, but most of their finest sculpture is at Mahabalipuram. The Early Cholas built largest temples in which the Vimana still dominated the gopuras, being in some instances indeed, as at Tanjore, of immense size.<sup>1</sup> The Later Cholas seem probably to have

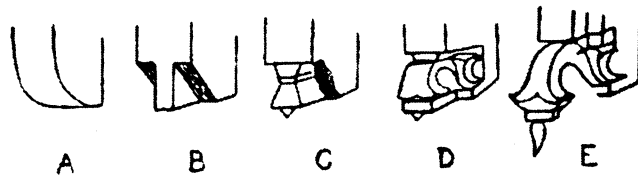


Fig. 9.

Evolution of carbel. Tamilian style (slightly modified from Jouveau-Dubreuil).

A. Pallava B. Early Chola. C. Later Chola. D. Vijayanagar. E. Modern. Transitional forms develop in the later parts of all these periods except the first.

enlarged existing temples, the shrines of which were considered too sacred to touch, in preference to constructing new ones; for their vimanas are as a rule insignificant and their gopuras immense as, for instance of Tiruvannamalai and Chidambaram. And the tradition thus established has remained in fashion ever since. The Vijayanagar Kings, though they continued the building of immense gopuras, concentrated attention on the mandapas or pillared halls, marvelously developing the carving of their many rows of monolithic pillars, as may be well seen at Conjeevaram and Vellore. Only with the coming of the Modern period in about 1600 A.D. does the custom seem to have been commenced of faking mandapas in the more convenient from the spacious halls or corridors, such as are found at Madura and Rameswaram, as well as in many earlier temples where they form addition for reconstructions, to enable large numbers of people to obtain an unobstructed view of any ceremonies performed. The successive periods thus differentiated are equally well characterized by successive developments in decorative motifs, the pillars, corbels (see

<sup>11</sup> For an account of the Early Chola temples of Koranganathan at Srinivasanur, Tiruchirappalli district and at Gangaikondacolapuram, see Percy Brown "Two Cola Temples" Journ. Ind. Soc. Oriental Art. II (Calcutta, 1934) pages 2-6, pl.ii-vi 1 text-fig.

fig.9), niches, etc. all showing a gradually increasing degree of elaboration, though many of the earlier and simple forms, being comparatively cheap and easy of execution, have persisted and are still in use today. Details will be found in Jouveau-Dubreuil's two books already mentioned.

The course of evolution, especially of decorative motif, in the Kadamba and Early Chalukyan styles is as yet much less clearly understood: but in the former style it has been studied in ch. viii "Architecture" of pt. viii "Internal History" of Moraes' "The Kadamba Kula, a History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka" (Bombay, 1931) and the broad outlines of the obviously parallel development in external form the these two geographically contiguous style have been indicated in the paper by Mr. Ramachandran and myself already referred to. The Kadamba type of vimana, (fig 4,p.8) seems to have developed from a flat-roofed temples by the addition of a series of successively smaller and smaller horizontal, roof like stages, a square cupola-like crown being often, but in early times at least not invariably, inserted between the pyramid thus formed and the finial. The builders of the Early Chalukyan temples, as already mentioned above, used both the Northern and the Southern (fig3p.6) form of tower. For over a century both forms of temple seem to have been built in one and same locality, each without apparent effect upon the other. But whether they differed from one another in decorative details as well as in form, and if so whether and to what extent they influenced one another in respect of it, never seems to have been investigated and can only be decided by further field study of the buildings, none of which unfortunately I have ever seen.

There can be little doubt that the Southern form of vimana has been derived from pyramidal Buddhist monastery of vihara of successively smaller and smaller stories, each consisting of a central mandapa surrounded by monks' cells: for a Fergusson has pointed out (loc.cit., 1899 edition, pages 135-136, fig. 66-67; 1910 edition, I, pages 171-173, figs. 89-90) it appears to be practically a reproduction in miniature of such a vihara. This use of tiers of pilaster and miniature cells as a mode of decoration had, moreover, probably begun to applied to buildings of various shapes-elongate, whether rectangular or apsidal, as well as square-at some period antecedent to that of the earliest surviving examples, among which all these shapes are already included at Mahabalipuram.

The origin of the Northern of vimana is much more obscure. Ferugsson (loc.cit., 1899 edition, pages 438-439; 1910 edition, II, page 119) with reference to the tower of the Huchchimalligudi temple, at Aihole says "It will also be observed in this tower that every third course has on the angle a form which has been described as an *amalaka* in speaking of the crowing members of northern temples. Here it looks as if the two intermediate courses simulated roofs, or a roof in two stories, and then this crowing member was introduced, and the same thing repeated over and over again till the requisite heights was obtained." This does not, however, account for another characteristic of the Northern form of tower, namely, the setting forward of the middle portion of each face, which seems to be an equally marked feature particularly of simple and presumably early examples. Other investigators have, therefore, suggested its evolution from a *stupa* raised, as was often the case, on a series of terraces, each of them set forward in the middle of each side to accommodate flights of steps from the one below, the whole being surmounted by a series of umbrella one above another, of which the lowest has become enlarged and developed into the *amalaka*-a-mode of evolution that receives.

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strong from the series of votive stupas of various forms that have been set up round the Mahabodhi temple at Buddh Gaya and elsewhere.

Whatever is origin, the Northern form of tower, found side by side with Early Chalukyan examples of the Southern form, is taller than the latter in proportion to its breadth and, though its spire is composed of a series of horizontal courses, the lines of these are subordinate to the stronger vertical lines resulting from the setting forward of the middle portion of each face; while the Southern and Kadamba form of tower both have a pyramidal spire consisting of a series of strongly marked horizontal courses, which in the former are deeper and less numerous than in the latter and decorated with miniature pavilion.

In the two or three earliest surviving Early Chalukyan temples of Southern form (Gravelly and Ramachandran, loc. cit., pl.ii, fig.1) the crown is octagonal as in the Tamilian style from which, however, as I have already explained elsewhere (loc.cit., page 16) these temples differ in other features which place them at the base of the Early Chalukyan series the crown is square (loc.cit., pl.ii fig.2), except in the Millikarjuna at Pattadakal, which seems to be unique among temples, with cupola-like crown in hanging it round. In Kadamba temples the crown is not always present, at any rate among those of simple and presumably early construction; but when there is one it is always square. In both the Early Chalukyan and Kadamba series the next development is the addition of a projecting gable of the front of the spire (loc.cit.pl.ii,fig.3) a form of ornament never found in the Tamilian style.<sup>1</sup> In Chalukyan temples it is first seen in those of Millikarjuna and Virupaksha (see fig 3, page 6 above), created by the queens of Vikramaditya II (733-746 A.D.) and it presumably appeared in Kadamba temples at about the same time.

The first attempt to combine into a single Chalukya building elements from both the Northern and Southern form of temple probably occurs in the Papanatha temple at Pattadakal, which is believed to be if anything a little earlier than the Virupaksha, But this is essentially a temple of Northern form to the body which miniature pavilions from the southern form have been added, and on these lines no further developments seem to have followed.

At Kukanur we find, however, in the Navalinga and Kallesvara temples, (PL.I.A) a type of combination that proved to have much greater possibilities. In these temples the tower is essentially of Southern form, but it has the middle portion of each face set forward as in the Northern form, the strong vertical lines of which thus come to be superimposed upon the strong horizontal lines of the Southern form. The Navalinga temple departs comparatively little from the typical Southern form, but the Kallesvara shows a more extensive incorporation of Northern elements, and its miniature pavilions are already subordinated to the lines of the courses from which they spring.

Neither of these temples seems to bear any inscription giving a clue to its date, nor do dates seem as yet to be determinable for the stages by which the composite style *that they initiated* developed into the style of the Hoysala dynasty. What those stage probably were may, however, be briefly indicated by reference to two or three

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning the curious shrine of the Srirangam temple see above, page 7, and footnote 1.



temples selected for the purpose. Whether such transitional temples should be called Later Chalukyan or Chalukya-Hoysala Transitional, or whether—as I am inclined to suspect—they belong to two successive periods, of which the first characterized by comparative restraint and the second by a profusion of external decoration, is not yet clear. The large Jain temple at Lakkundi figured by Cousens in pl.lxi of his “Chalukyan Architecture” affords a good example a little more advanced than the kallesvara temple at Kukkanur but with the decoration under restraint, while the temples of Tarakesvara at Hangal (Cousens, loc.cit.,pl.lxxxvi) and of Santesvara at Tilivalli (Cousens, loc.cit.,pl.c.) may be taken as representatives of the more unrestrained transitional type of building.

In the two temples last mentioned the shrines have begun to lose the square plan of an Early Chalukyan shrine and to assume the star-shaped plan of a typical Hoysala one. The crown is reported by Cousens to be modern in the Tarakesvara temple, but that of the Santesvara shown unmistakable evidence of its derivation from a square crown of southern cupola-like shape; while up the middle of each side of the spire of both there is a series of plaques suggestive of the Northern form of tower. Cousens (loc.cit.page92) says, moreover, of the former temple “The little sikkharas on the shrine walls are of the Chalukyan type while those round the low wall of the open hall are of the northern.”

The tower of the Mahadeva temple at Ittagi (cousens,loc.cit.,pl.ci) and a sculprual miniature of a very similar tower (pl.II) form over a niche in a temple of the Bellary district and now preserved in the Madras Museum, show a slightly different combination of elements from the Northern and Southern forms of temple, a combination in which the ends of pavilions from the latter are clearly recognizable projecting on either side from behind the central series of decorative plaques from the former.

As in the Virupaksha (fig.3, p.6) and Mallikarjuna at Pattadakal, among Early chalukyan temples, the hall in front of the shrine of the Tarakesvara temple at Hangal (pl.I B) has an entrance on either side, each with a large porch, in addition to the median entrance at the eastern end. This median entrance is one corresponding to the single entrance which alone is found in Early Chalukyan temples other than the two just mentioned; but in the Tarakesvara temple instead of opening direct to the exterior, it is connected by a covered way with a large star-shaped Mandapa, and this covered way has each side a small flight of steps forming additional entrances. The plan of the Mahadeva temple at Ittagi is on similar lines. Cousen gives no plan of the Santesvara temple at Tilivalli, but mentions that it has three porches.

In the Kesava temple built in 1268 A.D. at Somnathpur (Narasimhachar “The Kesava Temple at Somnathpur” Mysore Arch. Ser., Architecture and Sculpture in Mysore. I, ;l.i) which may be taken as an example of the fully developed style of the Hoysala period, development already seen in the temples just described have been carried further, the porches to Northern and South of the hall are replaced by vimanas of the same size and form as the median one, all of them being definitely star-shaped(pl.I.D) and the whole temple is raised on a platform.

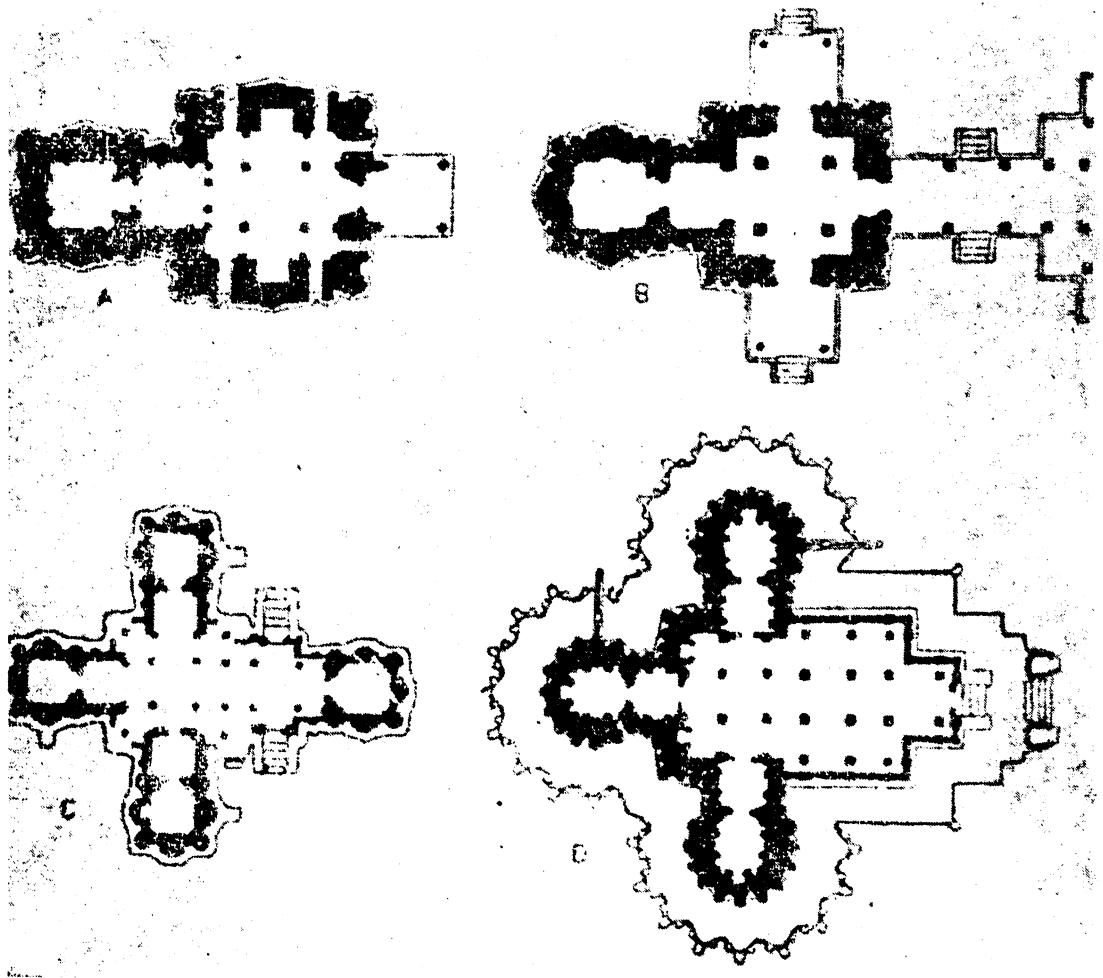
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<sup>1</sup>Vimanas grouped round a common halis (or series of halis) are found in the Navalinga temple at Kukkanur, which forms the commencement of the transitional series (see above, page 15). Cousens says, however (loc. cit.page 74), “It needs but a glance at the plan to see that this collection of shrines and halls is not the result of a premeditated design or it would have been more symmetrical”.

The Hoysala style must thus be regarded as the final outcome of the union of the two forms of temple adopted by the Chalukyan dynasty; but it seems to have absorbed the Kadamba style also. As has already been pointed out above, the evolution of the Kadamba and Early Chalukyan temples followed parallel courses. As the predominating lines of the Kadamba spire were horizontal, the superimposing of the vertical lines of the Northern form of tower upon it would have much the same effect as it had in the case of the spire of the Southern form of the vimana. And in the Lakshmidēvi temple at Dodda Gaddavalli, built in 1113 A.D. (Narasimhachar "The Lakshmidēvi Temple at Dodda Gaddavalli" Mysore Arch. Ser., Architecture and Sculpture in Mysore III) there are unmistakable signs of the use of the Kadamba as well as of Chalukyan models.

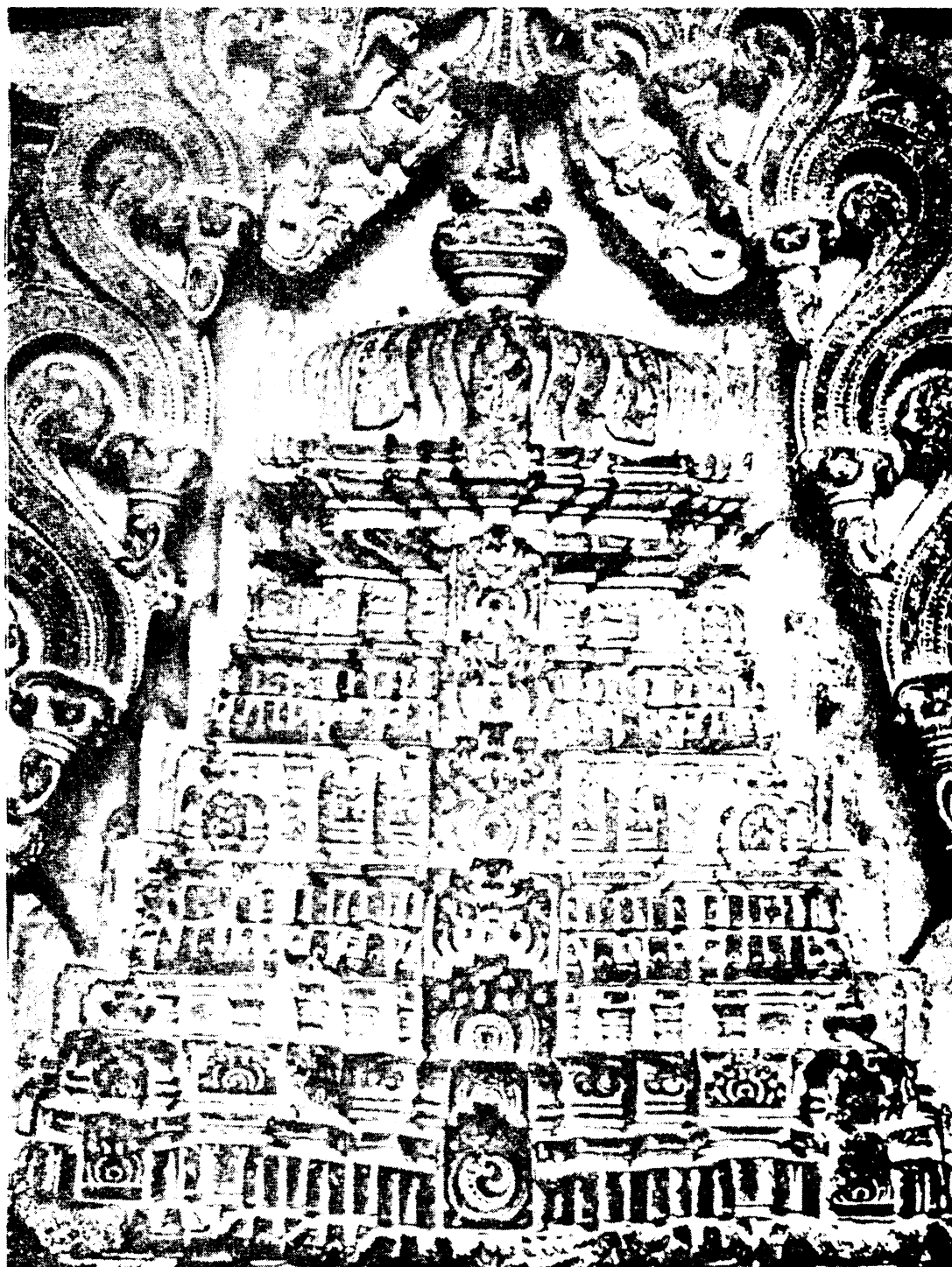
This temple was built about a century and a half before the Kesava temple at Somnathpur and the Shrines are still fundamentally square in plan (pl.I.C.), nor is the temple raised on a platform. It has, however, four vimanas, the fourth replacing the large mandapa found at the eastern end of the Tarakesvara temple at Hangal, the only entrances being, consequently, the pair immediately in front of this fourth shrine. Of these four shrines that of Lakshmidēvi (Narasimhachar, loc.cit., pl. front of this fourth shrine, faces east and has been selected for special ornamentation in a manner related to that of the composite transitional vimanas of the Tarakesvara and Santesvara temples described above, though its crown is of scarcely more advanced type than of the Kallesvara temple at Kukkanur at the base of the transitional series, and less so than that of the Varaha-Narasimha temple at Halsi in Kadamba style (Moraes, "The Kadamba Kula," fig.32, opposite page 289). The other Shrines of the main temple, and also apparently all the five additional shrines in the temple enclosure have towers of the Kadamba type (loc.cit.pl.i and ix). Though the Lakshmidēvi shrine faces east, it is situated not at the end but on one side of the end on one side of the central hall, the main axis of the temple extending north and south instead of east west.

This completes the summary of the various types of building from which temples of different parts of India have been derived, so far as these are known to me, and for the merging of these styles to produce the composite the Hoysala type of temple. Underlying all of them it will be seen that there is at least one common feature—the production of towers by a process of vertical repetition of roofs, in others a repetition of terraces. But vertical repetition of some kind is present in all forms, though in the Northern the resulting horizontal lines are dominated by stronger vertical ones. May not this deeply rooted tendency to vertical repetition indicate some sort of fundamental unity underlying all the various styles of Indian temple architecture?



Plans illustrating the development of the Hoysala type of temple from the Early Chalukyan type—

- A. Kallesvara Temple, Kukkanur (after Cousens).
- B. Tarakesvara Temple, Hangal (after Cousens).
- C. Lakshmidēvi Temple, Dōdda Goddavalli (after Narasimbacher)
- D. Kesava Temple, Somnathpur (after Narasimhachar)



DECORATIVE MINIATURE OF A VIMANA SHOWING COMBINATION OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN  
ELEMENTS, BELLARY DISTRICT

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