THE TEMPLE COMPLEX AT KHAJURAHO

BY KIMANI DAVID.

B02/35848/2013
INTRODUCTION

Location: Madhya Pradesh
Founded By: Rulers Of Chandela Empire
Founded In: Between 950 And 1050 AD
Status: World Heritage Site
HISTORY

The whole area was enclosed by a wall with eight origins, each flanked by two golden palm trees. There were originally over 80 Hindu temples, of which only 25 now stand in a reasonable state of preservation, scattered over an area of about 20 square kilometers (8 sq mi). The erotic sculptures were crafted by Chandella artisans. The temples, maintained by the locals, were pointed out to the English in the late 19th century when the jungles had taken a toll on the monuments.
The temples are grouped into three geographical divisions: western, eastern and southern.

Made of sandstone and limestone.

The Khajuraho temples, constructed with spiral superstructures, adhere to a northern Indian Shikhara temple style and often to a Panchayatana plan or layout.

The builders didn't use mortar: the stones were put together with mortise and tenon joints and they were held in place by gravity.

This form of construction requires very precise joints. The columns and architraves were built with megaliths that weighed up to 20 tons.†
A few of the temples had been dedicated to the Jain pantheon and the rest to Hindu deities—to god's trio, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and various devi forms, such as the Devi Jagadambi temple.

The Panchayatana temple had four subordinate shrines on four corners and the main shrine in the center of the podium, which comprises their base. The temples group into three geographical divisions: Western, Eastern and Southern.

Those shikharas (subordinate and main) attribute to the Khajuraho temples their unique splendor and special character. With a graded rise of those shikharas from the ardhamandapa, porch, to mandapa, assembly hall, mahamandapa, principal assembly hall, antarala, vestibule, and garbhagriha, sanctum sanctorum, the Khajuraho temples attain the form and glory of gradually rising Himalayan peaks.

Those temples of Khajuraho have sculptures that look remarkably realistic that even contemporary art scholars study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Modern name</th>
<th>Original Deity</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chausath Yogini</td>
<td>64 Yoginis</td>
<td>Est. 9th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brahma</td>
<td>Brahma</td>
<td>Eastern group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lalgun Mahadev</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>Contemp to 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Matangeshwar</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>In active worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Varaha</td>
<td>Varaha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lakshmanya</td>
<td>Vaikuntha Vishnu</td>
<td>Lakshavarma Inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Parshvanath</td>
<td>Adinath</td>
<td>Pahl inscription 954 AD, Jain Compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vishvanath</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>Dhanga inscription Sam 1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Devi Jagadambi</td>
<td>Initially Vishnu but today Parvati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chitragupta</td>
<td>Surya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kandariya Mahadeva</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>Largest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vamana</td>
<td>Vamana</td>
<td>Eastern Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Adinath</td>
<td>Jina</td>
<td>Jain compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jawari</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Eastern group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Chaturbhuja</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dulhadeo</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>South end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ghantai</td>
<td>Jina</td>
<td>Only some columns remaining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The best as well as the largest group of temples in Khajuraho comprises of the western group.

**Kandariya mahadeo**
Kandariya mahadeo is the largest temple in the western group. It comprises of about 900 statues, of which the grandest idol is that of lord shiva, which rises to a height of 31 M. The sanctum houses the Shiva lingam, while the main shrine has carved images of various gods, goddesses and apsaras (heavenly maidens). The entrance arch, pillars and ceilings are also beautifully carved. The outer walls of the transept have three horizontal panels, which depict deities of the Hindu pantheon and groups of lovers.

**Chaunsat yogini**
Chaunsat yogini is the oldest surviving temple of the western group. It was constructed in the year 900 and is dedicated to goddess kali. Initially there were 65 cells in the temple, out of which only 35 are left. However, the image of goddess kali that was enshrined in the temple could not survive the travails of time.

**Chitragupta temple**
Chitragupta temple is dedicated to surya, the sun god. The inner sanctum of the temple has a 5 feet high image of the sun god, who is shown riding a chariot. One can also see images depicting royal processions, group dances and other scenes of sheer luxury.

**Vishwanath temple**
Vishwanath temple is dedicated to lord brahma, one of the Hindu trinity of gods. Lions guard the northern entrance of the temple, while the southern steps are flanked by elephants. Opposite this temple is the shrine of Nandi bull.

**Lakshamana temple**
Lakshamana temple is dedicated to lord vishnu and houses three-headed idols of vishnu's incarnations, narasimha and varaha. The rafter on the entrance shows the holy trinity of brahma, vishnu and shiva with goddess lakshmi.

**Matangeshwara temple**
Matangeshwara temple is situated outside the grounds of the western group. It is dedicated to lord Shiva and enshrines an eight feet high Lingam. To the south of the temple is the open air archaeological museum, which exhibits an amazing collection of statues and frescoes collected from the area.
2. Eastern Group of Temples

Parsvanath Temple
Parsvanath Temple is the largest Jain temple of the eastern group, dedicated to Lord Parsavanath. The northern wall of the temple is adorned with sculptors that depict everyday activities, like a young girl removing a thorn from her foot. There is also the bull emblem of first Tirthankara, Adinath.

Ghantai Temple
Ghantai Temple is another Jain temple. It is known for an amazing frieze, which exhibits the 16 dreams of Mahavira's mother, along with a multi-armed Jain goddess perched on a winged Garuda.

Adinath Temple
Adinath Temple is the last one of the three Jain temples in the eastern group. It is dedicated to Adinath, the first Jain Tirthankara.

Hindu Temples
There are three Hindu temples in this group, namely the Brahma temple, the Vamana temple and the Javari temple.

Southern Group
The Southern Group of temples lies at a distance of approximately 5 km from the Khajuraho village.

Duladeo Temple
Duladeo Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and stands adorned with sensual images of the apsaras (heavenly maidens).

Chaturbhuj Temple
Chaturbhuj Temple enshrines an intricately carved image of Lord Vishnu.
Statues and carvings

The Khajuraho temples contain some sexual or erotic art outside the temple or near the deities.

Meanwhile, the external curvature and carvings of the temples depict humans, human bodies, and the changes that occur in bodies, as well as facts of life.

The rest depict the everyday life of the common Indian when the carvings were made and activities of other beings. For example, those depictions show women putting on makeup, musicians, potters, farmers, and other folk.

The Khajuraho temples do not contain sexual or erotic art inside the temple or near the deities; however, some external carvings bear erotic art. They portray that, for seeing the deity, one must leave his or her sexual desires outside the temple.
The Khajuraho temples do not contain sexual or erotic art inside the temple or near the deities; however, some external carvings bear erotic art. They portray that, for seeing the deity, one must leave his or her sexual desires outside the temple.

While the sexual nature of these carvings have caused the site to be referred to as the Kamasutra temple, they do not illustrate the meticulously described positions.

The strategically placed sculptures are "symbolical-magical diagrams, or yantras" designed to appease malevolent spirits. This alamkara (ornamentation) expresses sophisticated artistic transcendence over the natural; sexual images imply a virile, thus powerful, ruler.

Between 950 and 1150, the Chandela monarchs built these temples when the Tantric tradition may have been accepted. In the days before the Mughal conquests, when boys lived in hermitages, following brahmacharya until they became men, they could learn about the world and prepare themselves to become householders through examining these sculptures and the worldly desires they depicted.
Erotic Sculptures

Musicians
Khajuraho temples
- Architecture of the Khajuraho temples -
(exemple of Kandariya Mahadeva temple)

- Amalaka
- Kalasha
- Urushringa (Subsidiary sikhara)
- Antarala (Vestibule)
- Maha mandapa (Great hall)
- Mandapa (Hall)
- Ardha mandapa (Entrance porch)

- Garba griha (Shrine, inside the sikhara)
- Pradakshina (circumambulation)
- Jagati (platform)
- Adhisthana (base platform)
- Transepts

East
References


2. Falling Rain Genomics, Inc - Khajuraho

3. "Lost Worlds of the Kama Sutra" History channel

4. Khajuraho, Kanhaiyalal Agrawal, Macmillan India, 1980 (in Hindi)

5. "Khajuraho", liveindia.com


7. "Lost Worlds of the Kama Sutra," History Channel


THE CONCLUSION

The Khajuraho Group of Monuments has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is considered to be one of the "seven wonders" of India.

Today, the temples serve as fine examples of Indian architectural styles that have gained popularity due to their explicit depiction of sexual life during medieval times.

THE END...BY KIMANI D.