

Examrace

World's Monolithic Standing Structure

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- Karnataka has a rich heritage of Jain shrines and at Sravana Belagola the famous statue of Gomateshwara, the granite statue of Lord Bahubali which stands eighteen metres or fifty-seven feet high, is the world's tallest monolithic free-standing structure.
- It was commissioned by Camundaraya, the General-in-Chief and Prime Minister of the Ganga Kings of Mysore.
- Gujarat and Rajasthan have been strongholds of Jainism since early times.
- A famous hoard of Jain bronzes was found at Akota, on the outskirts of Baroda, dated between the end of the fifth and the end of the seventh century CE.
- Finely cast through the lost-wax process, these bronzes were often subsequently inlaid with silver and copper to bring out the eyes, crowns and details of the textiles on which the figures were seated.
- Many famous Jain bronzes from Chausa in Bihar are now kept in the Patna Museum.
- Many Jain bronzes from Hansi in Haryana and from various sites in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are kept in various museums in India.
- The Jain temples at Mount Abu were constructed by Vimal Shah.
- Notable for a simplistic exterior in contrast with the exuberant marble interiors, their rich sculptural decoration with deep undercutting creates a lace-like appearance.
- The temple is famous for its unique patterns on every ceiling, and the graceful bracket figures along the domed ceilings.
- The great Jain pilgrimage site in the Shatrunjaya hills near Palitana in Kathiawar, Gujarat, is imposing with scores of temples clustered together.
- Undoubtedly there would have been sculptures made of other media like silver and gold, but these would have been melted down and reused.
- Many sculptures would also have been made of wood and ivory, but these have perished because of their fragility.
- Often sculptures would have been painted, but again, pigments cannot always survive hundreds of years, especially if the sculptures were exposed to the elements.
- There was also a rich tradition of painting at this time, but the only examples that survive from this period are murals in a few religious buildings.

- Mahabalipuram is an important coastal town from the period of the Pallavas.
- It is dotted with several important rock-cut and free-standing structural temples mostly made in the seventh and eighth centuries.
- This large sculptural panel, one of the largest and oldest known in the world, is nearly thirty metres long and fifteen metres high.
- There is a natural cleft in the rock which has been cleverly used by its sculptors as a channel for water to flow down.
- While some believe that it is the story of the descent of the Ganga from heaven to earth, others believe that the main story is of Kiratarjuniya or Arjuna's penance, a poetic work by Bharvi which is known to have been popular in the Pallava court.
- Other scholars have interpreted the symbolism behind the sculptures to show that the whole tableau was created to be a prashasti, or something to praise the Pallava king, who, they say, would have sat enthroned in the tank in front of this extraordinary backdrop.
- He has been identified by some as Bhagirath and by others as Arjuna. Arjuna's penance was to obtain the pashupata weapon from Shiva, whereas Bhagirath prayed to have Ganga brought to earth.
- Next to this figure stands Shiva who has one hand in the boon bestowing gesture or varada mudra.
- The small gana or dwarf who stands below this hand may be a personification of the powerful pashupata weapon.
- All the figures are shown with a slender and linear quality in an animated state of movement.
- Apart from humans and flying celestials there are several naturalistically carved birds and animals as well.
- Particularly noteworthy are the extraordinarily well-modelled, and lifelike elephants, and the pair of deer who are under the shrine.
- The most humorous, however, is a cat who has been shown standing on his hind legs, with his hands raised, imitating Bhagirath or Arjuna.
- Close examination, however, reveals that this cat is, in fact, a symbolic device.
- He is surrounded by rats, which are unable to disturb him from his penance.
- Perhaps this is a metaphor used by the artist to show how strong Arjuna's or Bhagirath's penance was, who is also standing still, undisturbed by his surroundings.
- The temples at Khajuraho are all made of sandstone.



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- They were patronized by the Chandella dynasty
- The Lakshamana temple represents the full-fledged, developed style of temple architecture during the time of the Chandellas
- Its construction was completed by 954, the year as per the inscription found at the base of the temple, by Yashovarman, the seventh ruler of the Chandella dynasty.
- The temple plan is of a panchayana type.
- The temple is constructed on a heavy plinth.
- It consists of an ardhmandapa (porch) , mandapa (porch) , the maha mandapa (greater hall) and the garbhagrihawith vimana.
- Each part has a separate roof rising backward.
- All the halls have projected porches on their walls but are not accessible to visitors.
- Their use is functional, mainly for light and ventilation.
- The outer walls of the garbhagriha and the outer and inner walls around the circumambulatory path are decorated with sculptures.

- The shikhara on the garbhagriha is tall
- The Khajuraho temples are also known for their erotic sculptures.
- Many erotic sculptures are carved on the plinth wall. Some erotic sculptures are carved on the actual wall of the temple.
- Tier arrangements on the walls provide a very specific space for the placement of the images.
- The interior halls are also decorated profusely.
- The entrance to the garbhagriha is sculpted with heavy voluminous pillars and lintels carved with small images as part of the door decoration. An image of Chaturmukha Vishnu is in the garbhagriha.
- There are four shrines in each corner of the temple.
- There are images of Vishnu in three shrines and Surya in one, which can be identified by the central image on the lintel of the shrine-doors.
- Drapery and ornaments are given a lot of attention. large number of bronze sculptures have been found in the country which shall be discussed in the next chapter.
- Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism each have a plethora of gods and goddesses, and this was the period when bhakti and tantra — two major developments, affected them.
- Temples also became a space for many other art forms: such as music and dance and, from the tenth century onward, temples became large landowners and performed an administrative role as well.

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