

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Notes [GS-I]

#### Topic: Temple Architecture in India- Part II [Art and Culture Notes for UPSC]

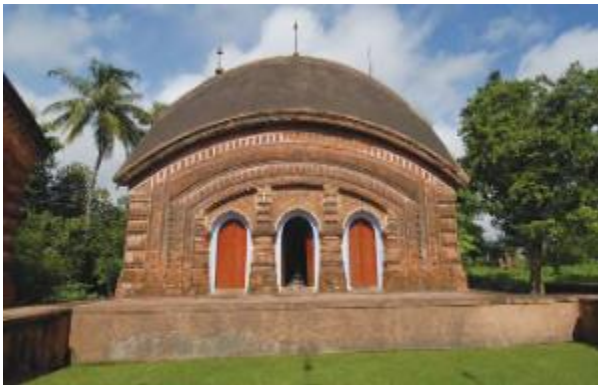
##### Nagara Style in Various Regions: – (Contd.)

##### East India

- North-East, Odisha and Bengal.
- Each region produced a distinct type of architecture.
- Terracotta was the main medium in Bengal and north-east until the 7th century.
- Assam
  - There is evidence of Gupta influence from a sculpted door frame dating to the 6th century CE from DaParvatia near Tezpur; and sculptures from Rangagora Tea Estate near Tinsukia.
  - The Gupta influence is seen till the 10th century.
  - By 12th to 14th centuries, a distinct Ahom style developed in the region around Guwahati. This style evolved from the mixing of the style brought to the area by the Tais of Upper Burma with the Pala style of Bengal. Example: Kamakhya Temple – a Shakti Peeth dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya built in 17th century.
- Bengal
  - Regions: West Bengal, Bangladesh, Bihar
  - Style between 9th and 11th centuries – Pala Style. The Palas were patrons of Buddhist monastic styles. The temples in this region showcased the local Vanga style.
  - Style of temple architecture from the middle of the 11th century to middle of the 13th centuries – Sena style.
  - Siddheswara Mahadeva temple in Barakar in Burdwan District – 9th century; tall curving Shikhara crowned by a large amalaka – early Pala style.



- Many temples were located at Telkupi in Purulia District – 9th to 12th century but were submerged due to dam construction. These temples showed all the Nagara sub-styles prevalent in the north.
  - Some temples survive.
  - Made of black to grey basalt.
  - Had chlorite stone pillars and arched niches.
  - They influenced early Bengal Sultanate buildings at Gaur and Pandua.
- Local vernacular building traditions also influenced the temples. Most noticeable of these influences was the curving or sloping side of the bamboo roof of a Bengali hut.
  - This feature was adopted in Mughal buildings and is known as the **Bangla Roof**.
- From the Mughal period onwards, several terracotta brick temples were built which had elements from the earlier Pala style, from the local bamboo hut styles, and arches and domes from Islamic architecture.
- Eg. Terracotta Temple, Vishnupur (17th century)



- Odisha
- Three orders of architectural features:
  - Rekhapida (Rekha Deula): Tall straight building (looking like a shikhara) covering the garbhagriha.

- Pidhadeul: It is the mandapa, a square building where worshippers are present and also where dancing takes place.
- Khakra (Khakra Deula): Rectangular building with a truncated pyramid-shaped roof. Temples of Shakti are usually in this type.
- Location: Ancient Kalinga – that includes modern Puri District including Bhubaneswar (ancient Tribhuvaneshvara, Puri and Konark).
- Odisha temples are a distinct sub-style of the Nagara style called **Kalinga Style**.
- Shikhara is called Deul and is almost vertical and suddenly curves sharply inwards at the top.
- In front of the deul, there is the mandapa, called jagamohana in Odisha.
- Exterior of the temples are richly carved while the interiors are plain.
- Temples generally have boundary walls.
- Konark Sun Temple



- Sun temple built around 1240.
- Its shikhara which was said to be 70m high fell in the 19th century.
- The jagamohana (mandapa) has survived. This is the largest enclosed space in Hindu architecture although it is not accessible any more.
- The temple is set on a high base. There are detailed carvings. There are 12 pairs of gigantic wheels sculpted with spokes and hubs representing the chariot wheels of the sun god. The whole temple resembles a processional chariot.
- On the southern wall there is huge sculpture of Surya or sun god made of green stone. It is believed that there were 3 more such images in different directions made out of different stones. The fourth wall had the doorway from which the sun rays would enter the garbhagriha.

## The Hills

- Region: hills of Kumaon, Garhwal, Himachal and Kashmir
- Style: Ancient Gandhara style (because of the proximity of Kashmir to that region) with Gupta and post-Gupta traditions from Sarnath, Mathura, Gujarat and Bengal.

- We can see both Buddhist and Hindu traditions in the hills.
- Its own local tradition: wooden buildings with pitched roofs.
- Many temples showcase the garbhagriha and shikhara of the latina type, and the mandapa in wooden architecture.
- Sometimes a pagoda shape is seen to the temples.
- Karkota Period, Kashmir – Most significant in terms of architecture.
- Temple at Pandrethan –
  - 8th and 9th centuries; temple built on a plinth in the middle of a water tank.
  - Possibly Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
  - Wooden building. Peaked roof that slants slowly outwards (due to the snowy conditions)
  - Moderately ornamented – a row of elephants at the base and a decorated doorway.
- Sculptures at Chamba (Himachal Pradesh) –
  - Local traditions mixed with the post-Gupta style. g.: Images of Mahishasuramardini and Narasimha at Laksna-Devi Mandir.
  - Styles: Post-Gupta and the Kashmiri metal sculpture traditions. Images' yellow colour is possibly an alloy of zinc and copper which were popular in Kashmir.
  - Inscription in the Laksna-Devi Mandir states that it was built during the reign of Meruvarman in the 7th century.
- **Temples of Kumaon:** classic examples of Nagara of this region – temples at Jageshwar (near Almora) and Champavat (near Pithoragarh), both in Uttarakhand.