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## HERITAGE IN STONE: THE JOURNEY OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

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### ABSTRACT MISSING

The present study of *Dicoma tomentosa* has been discussed with their habit, habitat, flowering & fruiting, taxonomic enumeration, nativity and physiographic position. The floristic account reveals that occasional threatened distribution of this species found few districts of Uttar Pradesh and dealing as becomes vulnerable species. The specimen deposition of this species which assist its future purpose.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indian architectural heritage is one of the many aspects of Indian culture that underscore the rich cultural repository bequeathed to us by our ancestors. Indian architecture reached its zenith in the form of ancient temples. From prehistoric times, man is known to have worshipped nature and its influential elements. He looked for the representation of divinity in the varied forms of nature. Thus, mountain peaks, deep forest, rivers, oceans became the first worshipped figures. In the Indian context, the roots of architectural history can be traced back to the Harappan times. Since the Sindhu-Sarasvati culture the patterns of architectural heritage have been interwoven with religious norms, social necessities and administrative institutions. In the course of history, Indic religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism have shaped Indian temple architecture in their respective ways. The Hindu scriptures combined the ideas of divine forces with imagery perceptions which led to the crafting of Vighras, or the divine represented through a manifest form, an image to be consecrated by mantras and other rituals. The creation of this image drove its worshippers to house that divine form under some shelter. Gradually it led to the germination of the temple concept, initially in the form of small shrines or Sthana, later evolving to structures of utmost grandeur. by the existence of temples in the ancient civilization of the Indus valley extant throughout northwest India (3300 BCE 1300 BCE) is still

debated among scholars. What cannot be denied is the development of fire worship in the Vedic age in the later part of the civilization. The fundamental sacrificial rituals performed priests around an altar paved the way for the multiplicity of complex beliefs and practices which continue to be practiced with few alterations till date. Most probably the circle and the square used for the Yajna Vedi/Kunda are of Vedic origin and which form an integral part of Indian temples across India even in contemporary times. Hindu temples are not just places of worship; they are symbols of deep spiritual and philosophical meanings. Each element, from the towering spires to the smallest carvings, carries a story, a teaching, or a divine connection. This art of representation, known as Temple Iconography, is a fascinating blend of spirituality, mythology, and artistry. Let's take a closer look at the sacred symbols commonly found in Hindu temples and what they signify.

**The Towering Gopuram:** Gateway to the Divine One of the first things you notice in a Hindu temple is the tall, intricately designed gateway, known as the Gopuram. These towering structures symbolize the entrance to the divine world. Covered with vibrant sculptures of gods, goddesses, and mythical creatures, the Gopuram reminds devotees of the diversity of life and the journey towards spiritual enlightenment. Sacred Carvings and Sculptures, Every Hindu temple is adorned with sculptures that depict stories from ancient scriptures like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Puranas. These carvings

serve as visual teachings for devotees, imparting lessons on morality, devotion, and the triumph of good over evil. Temple Iconography ensures that these stories are not just decorative but deeply educational.

**The Temple Flag:** Victory Of the Divine, many temples have a flag flying high on their peak, symbolizing the victory of divine forces over evil. This flag acts as a beacon, guiding devotees to the sacred space where they can connect with God and seek blessings.

**1. Dravidian Style (South India):** Characterized by towering gopurams (gateways), large temple complexes, and pyramid-shaped vimanas, this style flourished under the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, and Vijayanagar rulers. Some of the best-known temples are Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur as well as the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai

**2. Nagara Style (North India):** Known for its curvilinear shikharas, absence of elaborate boundary walls, and ornate sculptures, this style is prominent in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. The Sun Temple in Konark and the Kandariya Mahadeva Temple in Khajuraho are two notable examples.

**3. Vesara Style (Deccan Region):** A fusion of Dravidian and Nagara elements, Vesara temples exhibit star-shaped layouts, intricate carvings, and ornate vimanas. The Hoysaleswara Temple in Halebidu and the Chennakesava Temple in Belur are excellent examples.

**Evolution of Temple Architecture:** The origins of Indian temple architecture can be traced back to the early rock-cut cave temples of the Mauryan and Gupta periods, such as those found in Ajanta and Ellora. Over time, these simple cave shrines evolved into elaborate structural temples. The Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, and Vijayanagar rulers played a crucial role in shaping South Indian temple architecture, creating monumental structures that stand as testaments their legacy. Temple architecture is a major part of the Architectural Heritage of India with various styles gracing different corners of the country.

Temples are an integral part of Indian culture and immensely valued by devotees. One such exemplary temple enriching the architectural heritage of Southern India is Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjai Periya Kovil). Exuding grandeur and richness, this ostentatious architectural marvel is an energy core captivating attention from any corner of the Thanjavur district, that is how grand the structure is. Dravidian Temple Architecture: The Pride of South India. South Indian temple architecture, also known as Dravidian temple architecture, flourished under the rule of the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, and Vijayanagar kings. These temples are renowned for their grandeur, intricate carvings, and well-planned structures. It is a Dravidian-style temple located in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu on the southern bank of the Kaveri River. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is also known as Thanjai Periya Kovil, Rajarajeswaram, and Dakshina Meru addressing various storylines by the locals. The temple was conceived between 1003 and 1010AD by Rajaraja I the emperor of the Chola dynasty reflecting their culture and style. It is one of the largest Hindu temples and amongst the UNESCO World Heritage Sites referred to as Great living Chola temples.

### **History of Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjai Periya Kovil):**

A series of Hindu temples were developed over centuries by various ruling dynasties from the 5th to 9th century. When the Chola dynasty emerged as the dominant power they were focused on securing areas and not architectural growth. In the later years, the capitals and gopurams were developed by Cholas and the temple's design was given attention between 1003 and 1010 AD. It was designed by Kunjara Mallan Raja Rama Perunthachan.

**The Architecture of Brihadeeswarar Temple:** The architecture of the temple exudes brilliance redefining scale and grandeur through the lavish structure that it is. It was completed in 12 years and is famous not only for its architectural beauty but also as the place that commissioned brass Lord Nataraj- the dancing form of Lord Shiva. It is a big temple built on a raised mound aligning to the principles of geometry and symmetry. The temple complex is a rectangular form of 790ft by 400ft. The Brihadeshwara Temple was initially designed around a moat in the 11th century with a massive tower, main temple, sculptures, gopura, and fresco detailing. The sculptures and frescoes were mostly related to Shaivism - a Hindu tradition that worships Lord Shiva, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism. The currently existing fortified walls around the temple premise were built later in the 16th century. The Brihadeshwara temple (Thanjai Periya Kovil) complex has five main sections - the sanctum or Garbhagriha which is the main block housing the idol of the deity with a Srivimana on top, nandi hall referred to as Nandi Mandapam in the front, in between the sanctum and Nandi mandapam lies the Mukha Mandapam which is the main community hall and then the Maha Mandapam which is the great gathering hall and lastly, the pavilion called Antrala connecting the sanctum and great hall. For a long-followed ritual of circumambulation or parikrama, the courtyard has a covered pillared verandah with a parameter of 450m. The vimana tower is one of the tallest in South India with a height of 208 feet and was erected using Granite stone. The Brihadeshwara temple (Thanjai Periya Kovil) complex has five main sections - the sanctum or Garbhagriha which is the main block housing the idol of the deity with a Srivimana on top, nandi hall referred to as Nandi Mandapam in the front, in between the sanctum and Nandi mandapam lies the Mukha Mandapam which is the main community hall and then the Maha Mandapam which is the great gathering hall and lastly, the pavilion called Antrala connecting the sanctum and great hall. For a long-followed ritual of circumambulation or parikrama, the courtyard has a covered pillared verandah with a parameter of 450m. The vimana tower is one of the tallest in South India with a height of 208 feet and was erected using Granite stone. The maha mandapam and mukh mandapam. Brihadeshwara Temple are flanked with Dwarpalas and have colonnade structures. The mandapas have shrines of eight deities symbolic of guardian angels for eight cardinal directions. The corridor walls are painted with murals and carved with different figurines of dancing lord Shiva. It also has many inscriptions in Tamil and Grantha scripts elucidating about the rulers who were involved in the construction and also renovation of the temple in the subsequent years following the construction. The war and invasions by different intruders destroyed the temple architecture several times but it was always renovated or re-established by the then ruling kingdoms.

**Kapaleeswarar Temple:** The Kapaleeswarar Temple is usually considered to have been built in the 7th century CE by the ruling dynasty of the Pallavas. This is according to a set of hymns passed on by the Nayanar saints. Both Nayanar ThirugyanaSambandhar and the saint Arunagirinathar have mentioned that the Kapaleeswarar Temple is located by the sea shore, which indicates the same temple because Mylapore is very close to the beach. The temple houses inscriptions that date back to the 12th century. In 1906, a 120 ft temple gopuram or gateway tower was built with stucco figures and sculptures adorning it. In addition, it is being maintained, run and administered by the Hindu Religious and Endowment Board of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

**Legend of Kapaleeswarar Temple:** According to the Puranas, Lord Brahma visited Lord Shiva at the top of Mount Kailash and failed to show respect for him. Because of this, Lord Shiva incapacitated one of Lord Brahma's five heads (kapalas) and kept the skull for himself. As an act of repentance, Lord Brahma visited the spot at Mylapore where the temple now exists and installed a Shiva Linga to please Shiva. According to another legend, Lord Shiva's consort Parvati was cursed to take the form of a pea-hen and therefore did penance to retrieve her original form by pleasing Shiva. Moreover, Goddess Parvati gave Lord Murugan, her second son, his famous spear or "Vel" for the destruction of a terrible demon. Shukra is also said to have worshipped here to regain his lost eye, which Vamana, in the form of Lord Vishnu, damaged using a dharba grass. At this spot, ThirugyanaSambandhar also rescued and revived the daughter of Sivanesa Chettiar Angam Poompavai, who died due to a snake bite. Lastly, a Nayanar saint called Vayilar attained moksha or salvation at this place.

### Architectural Style of Kapaleeswarar Temple

- The temple follows the typical architectural style of the Dravidians, with the gopuram overpowering all other buildings on the street on which it sits.
- The temple has two entrances marked by either side of the gopuram.
- There are two gopurams in the temple. While the eastern gopuram is taller, at about 40 m, the western gopuram faces the temple tank.
- The paraphernalia of the temple includes vehicles or vahanas, such as the adhikaranandi, the bull, peacock, elephant, bandicoot, parrot and goat, with a new golden chariot as being the latest addition to the collection of vehicles for the deities.
- The deities in the form of the 'utsavamurthys' or celebratory idols are seated on the chariots, and then a procession is made around the temple.
- The chariot and the deities are all grandly decorated with flowers and jewellery.
- The temple also has a peacock and a peahen caged inside, symbolising that Goddess Parvati car the form of a peahen to do Lord Shiva's penain.

### Festival Kapaleeswarar Temple

The period of mid-March to mid-April corresponds to the Tamil month of Panguni- Brahmotsavam (annual festival). The Kapaleeswarar Temple celebrates this nine-day festival as a Panguni Peruvila (festival of Spring). During the Brahmotsavan, the idols of the Goddess Karpagambal and Sri

Kapaleeswarar are decorated with jewellery and clothes. The utsavamoorthies are mounted on the various vehicles and then taken around the temple complex and the water tank in a clockwise circumambulation. This is repeated over the remaining nine days with the same murthies, but with different vehicles. The Arupathimooavar Festival is usually heralded as their most crucial procession. This has been named after the 63 Nayanar saints. All 63 Nayanar saints follow the Kapaleswarar idol in the form of idols. During the Car Festival, Brahma is shown driving the chariot for Shiva. The chariot is grandly decorated with flowers, statues, and jewellery. Lord Kapaleeswarar is shown holding his bow and se on a throne. Goddess Karpagambal is seated alongside Lord Kapaleeswarar. Many people throng to the temple just to participate in pulling this chariot by originally, this temple was built by the Pallava kings between the 6th and the 8th century CE. It was later made larger and expanded by the Cholas, and again by the Vijayanagara Kings in the 15th century.

Moreover, the temple houses many Tamil inscriptions dating back to the 8th century. These inscriptions are typically from the period of Dantivarman, who was renowned as a Vishnu devotee. Some of the internal inscriptions and references within the temple state that the temple was restored in 1564 CE. Furthermore, villages and gardens were donated to the temple, making the temple very rich and extravagant. This temple is one of the few in India with idols of three different avatars of Vishnu in one complex: Rama, Krishna, and Narasimha, It features gopurams, or temple towers, and pillars, or mandapas, with exquisite carvings, which is a standard feature in most Dravidian temple architecture. All in all, Parthasarathy Temple is among the best places to visit for zealots, history buffs, and architectural enthusiasts alike.

**Parthasarathy Temple:** According to Hindu legends, the seven sages that form the constellation Ursa Majoris, or the Sapta Rishis, worshipped five specific deities called the Panchaveeras, meaning the "Five Brave Ones." These Panchaveeras were Rukmini, Satyaki, Pradyumna, Anirudhdha, Balarama, and Venkata Krishnaswamy. According to the Mahabharata, Narayana took his avatar as Krishna but did not take any weapons, as he was just the charioteer for the Pandava Prince Arjuna in the war against the Kauravas. During this battle, Krishna was injured by an arrow that was shown by Bhisma Pitamaha, the grandsire of the Pandavas and Kauravas. Per the legend, this injury mark can be witnessed on the idol of the Parthasarathy figure in this temple. Historically, this entire location was full of ponds of lilies, and therefore this place is called Allikeni, which means pond of lilies. This is the only place where Lord Krishna can be seen with a moustache as the presiding deity! Hindu temple architecture is a living testament to the profound spiritual and cultural heritage of India. These magnificent structures are not just places of worship but also bearers of ancient wisdom, sacred symbolism, and artistic expression. The intricacies of temple architecture go beyond aesthetics; they serve as a conduit between the physical and the divine, creating a spiritual journey for the worshipper.

**Sacred Geometry And Layout:** At the heart of Hindu temple architecture lies sacred geometry and precise measurements. The layout of a Hindu temple is a manifestation of cosmic order and harmony. The temple is usually aligned with the cardinal directions and is constructed based on a grid that represents the universe. This meticulous design reflects the

belief that the temple is a microcosm of the universe, and worshipping there allows devotees to connect with the cosmos.

**Carvings and Iconography:** Hindu temples are adorned with intricate carvings that depict various aspects of Hindu mythology and spirituality. These carvings serve as a visual scripture, teaching stories of gods, goddesses, and epic narratives. Every figure, pose, and expression is laden with symbolism. For example, the image of a deity with multiple arms signifies the divine's omnipotence and ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously.

**Sanctum Sanctorum (Garbhagriha):** The heart of a Hindu temple is the sanctum sanctorum, or garbhagriha, where the principal deity is enshrined. It is usually a small, dark chamber with limited access, symbolizing the womb of the universe. This inner sanctum is where devotees connect with the divine on a personal and profound level. The energy and spirituality in this space are palpable, and it is here that the true essence of the temple is experienced.

**Outer and Inner Prakara:** Hindu temples often have an outer and inner prakara, which are enclosures that surround the sanctum sanctorum. The outer prakara represents the material world, while the inner prakara symbolizes the spiritual realm. As devotees move from the outer to the inner prakara, they transition from the mundane to the sacred, mirroring the spiritual journey of the soul.

**Towers and Gateways (Gopurams):** The towering gateways, known as gopurams, are another striking feature of Hindu temple architecture. These ornate structures are adorned with sculptures and paintings, welcoming devotees into the temple complex. The gopurams serve as a transition from the worldly to the divine and are meant to inspire awe and reverence in worshippers.

**Ritual and Worship:** Hindu temple architecture isn't just about aesthetics but also facilitates ritual worship. The layout and design of the temple ensure that worship is a multi-sensory experience. The ringing of bells, the scent of incense, the sight of lit lamps, and the rhythmic chants all create an atmosphere of devotion and spirituality.

**Energy and Vibration:** One of the most intriguing aspects of Hindu temple architecture is the belief in energy and vibrations. Temples are constructed using specific materials and dimensions to resonate with cosmic energies. The vibrations created during rituals are said to purify the temple and its surroundings, making it a conducive environment for spiritual communion.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of "Heritage in Stone: The Journey of Indian Architecture" emphasizes the profound significance of stone as a foundational material that shaped the evolution of Indian art, architecture, and cultural identity.

Indian architecture, especially temple architecture, embodies timeless knowledge, artistic brilliance, and advanced construction techniques. This architectural journey reflects a synthesis of indigenous styles and external influences, creating a unique legacy that goes beyond historical periods to resonate with contemporary socio-economic and cultural contexts. The structures, often characterized by thoughtful geometric design and exceptional craftsmanship, have demonstrated structural resilience, including earthquake resistance, and continue to offer inspiration for modern architectural practices by preserving fundamental aesthetic and constructional values from India's rich heritage.

Stone shaped religious architecture in India across different periods by serving as a durable, versatile, and symbolic material fundamental to various religious expressions and temple styles. Early Indian religious architecture, especially Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain, prominently used stone in forms like rock-cut caves, chaityas (prayer halls), stupas, and structural temples. Rock-cut architecture such as the Barabar caves (Mauryan period) demonstrated advanced technical skill by carving granite into geometrically precise, polished interiors that mimicked wooden architecture styles. Stone enabled the development of iconic temple elements like the shikara (temple tower), mandapas (assembly halls), and richly sculpted facades which narrated mythological stories and religious symbolism. For example, the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora is a monumental dravidian architectural marvel fully carved out of living rock, showcasing religious narratives and devotion through stone craftsmanship. Over time, stone architecture evolved from simple apsidal plan temples with wooden superstructures to complex multi-tiered stone temples with intricate carvings, as seen in medieval South Indian and Deccan temple complexes. Jain temples also employed large stone statues and open-air figures carved from stone, emphasizing meditation and spiritual strength. Overall, stone's ability to be shaped and polished allowed religion to be materially expressed enduringly, from relic enclosures in stupas to elaborate temple exteriors, blending artistry, spirituality, and permanence across historical periods in Indian religious architecture.

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