

ISSN 0041-3135

RNI No. 25269/57

# TRIVENI

(Estd: 1927)

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY



Vol: 91

APR.-JUN. 2024

No.2

Rs. 50/-



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# TRIVENI

## INDIA'S LITERARY & CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME: 91

APR.-JUN. 2024

NUMBER: 2

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**Printer:****DRUSHYAPUBLICATIONS**

30-1596/2, CHANDRAGIRI

COLONY, NEREDMET,

SECUNDERABAD 500056

**Publishers:**

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

Email: trivenijournal@yahoo.com

Website: trivenijournal.org

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*padma* (the Lotus) represents the purity of love, *jyoti* (the Flame) the light of Wisdom and *Vajra* (Thunderbolt of Indra) the splendour of power.

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## TRIPLE STREAM

**Muralikrishna Iyyanki**

Guest Editor

Temple architecture involves numerous themes that echo cultural, religious, and architectural ideologies. Temples habitually merge symbolic elements related to the specific beliefs they represent. In addition, temples follow specific physical dimensions and geometry say for garbhalaya, antaraalaya etc. These geometric designs are understood to enrich the spiritual significance of the space. Added to these, the artistic expressions, use of materials, temple courtyards etc. are bound to convey about the culture and history of the geographical region. One specific example I wish to quote here are about the water landscapes as water is considered purifying and is often integrated into religious rituals. Many of these convey mythological stories.

Considering these various temple architecture ideologies, perceptions, insights and or discernments that have evolved over centuries, it is felt that a study on some of the premises is needed to review and understand the great temple architecture. The premises cum themes needed to be brought into focus are identified as follows and these all are only illustrative and by no means exhaustive.

- Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and other Temple Architectural Styles, Temple Geometry, Orientation and Alignment, Hierarchy of Spaces with degrees of sanctity like Garbha Griha, outer courtyards etc.

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- Temple architecture as promoted by different dynasties like Satavahana, Nayak, Maurya, Pallava, Pandian, Andhra, Chalukyas, Rashtrakuta-Ellora temple, Hoysala Art etc..

The specific concern here is about the present and future of temple architecture and issues in the current age. The temple architecture has many varieties of styles, and the basic nature of the temples vary in terms of several requirements.

It is in this background a special issue of Triveni with temple architecture as theme is proposed. It is not practical to assume that a single call for articles can bring the articles on all the themes or premises as mentioned above can be obtained. It is a beginning and writings on these covering the different themes are needed for a comprehensive understanding of the vast subject of temple architecture. I am grateful to the esteemed authors who responded to the call and presented articles for possible consideration for publication in Triveni, the India's Literary and quarterly magazine.

Let there be continuous effort amongst people to get bring forth the rich temple architecture into the minds of the people for whatever may be the measurable outcome. It is the inherent objective cum goal in bringing this issue.

## A STROLL ALONG THE BANKS OF THE TRIPLE STREAM

V Lalitha Kumari\*

What is in a name? says a Shakespearean character. But in India names are given after much thought and consideration. There are cases where the appellatives are like 'Neti Beera' and Perugu Thota Kooru' which belie their meaning. We come across Harischandras who abhor truth and Arjuna who flee for fear.

On the contrary, some names are so well-suited as to draw admiration and appreciation. The Triveni Cultural Quarterly is one such, Its objective is to make fertile three areas, namely - Art, Literature and History and thus bring out the crop of culture.

Even the editorial of this periodical has a significant title. The Triple Stream has been there for long (since 1927) Like Alfred Tennyson's brook it might have been caught, among the 'shingly bars' of circumstances and 'lingered' there for a while but has worked its way out under the engineering of the present editor. The stream, thus revived, has been enriching the fields of Art, Literature and Culture. And in tune with the changing social needs, it is being guided into new directions too.

The editorials make such an impact that their nature is described in a wide

variety of words. Academic, brilliant, captivating, comprehensive, delightful, educative, erudite, fantastic, instructive, innovative, inspirational, illuminating, superb, thought-provoking, valuable and well-timed etc., are some of the epithets (all culled from Readers' mail) used by those that drink the nourishing water of the stream. It is called a special gift. It is likened to a jewel.

A limited survey of the editorials of the last three years (the new millennium) reveals how varied and extensive their themes are. They range from down-to-earth, practically useful and contemporary subjects such as I.T., Super technology, Bureaucracy and Time management to spiritual and elevated ones like Meditation, and Pursuit of Happiness. There are literary treatises on Poems, Creative Writing and topics of general interest such as Creativity and Intuition, Memory, Gandhi's humour and anecdotes about writers and artists.

The Magazine quenches the intellectual thirst of all ages and contributes to the fulfilment of life at all stages. It is not just a triple stream. Like the Ganges with its many tributaries it is multi-dimensional. And like that perennial river may it flow on and on!

---

\* Writer, Guntur



## TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA: SIGNIFICANCE AND TYPES

Juhi Goyal \*

India is a land of diverse cultures and religions, and one of its most significant cultural aspects is its temple architecture. These structures have played a crucial role in shaping the country's history and culture. From the towering Gopurams of the Southern part of India to the intricate carvings of North India, the beauty of temple architecture in India is truly awe-inspiring. In this blog, we will explain various styles of temple architecture in India, highlighting the unique features of each type of temples and presenting one example from each region.

Temple architecture in India plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Indian cultural heritage. These temple designs represent a fusion of different architectural styles, from complex sculptures of temples in southern India to imposing arches of temples in northern India. Local materials used in the temple structure, such as stone and wood, add authenticity and relation to the region's natural environment.

### **Significance of Temple Architecture:**

Historically, temples in India served

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<https://www.novatr.com/blog/temple-architecture-india> - July 20, 2023

as centres of worship, spiritual practice, and community gatherings. Initially, they were built as simple structures and later evolved into more elaborate and intricate architectural marvels. Temples were patronised by kings, rulers, and wealthy individuals who sponsored their construction and supported the temple communities. Regional and dynastic styles influence the design of temples of ancient India.

Today, Indian temple architecture styles persist to attract devotees and tourists worldwide, offering glimpses into India's rich historical, architectural, and religious traditions. They provide a place for worship, spiritual contemplation, and participation in religious rituals and festivities.

The Hindu temple architecture in India is renowned for its profound symbolism, intricate detailing, and spiritual significance. Common components found in Indian temples include the sanctum sanctorum (Garbhagriha), representing the sacred space where the deity resides, and the towering vimana or shikhara, symbolising the celestial abode of the god. The mandapa serves as an assembly hall for rituals and ceremonies, while gopurams mark the entrance with elaborate



sculptures. Murtis and images of deities are beautifully crafted and worshipped, while the mandala layout and prakarams provide a structured framework for the temple complex. Some temples also feature a separate kalyana mandapa for wedding ceremonies. Together, these elements create a spiritually significant and awe-inspiring ambience, reflecting the cultural and religious importance of Indian temple architecture.

- **Representation of Deities:** Temples in India are built to honour and worship various deities and are represented through sculptures, idols, and other art forms.
- **Sacred Space:** Temples are sacred spaces where devotees can connect with the divine through prayer, meditation, and other forms of worship. They are designed as places where the spiritual and material worlds intersect, and where one can experience peace and transcendence. The placement of temples within the landscape reflects a harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the divine.
- **Architecture and Design:** Temples in India are designed and built according to ancient Vedic ideals that emphasise harmony, symmetry, and balance. Temples are frequently created by precise standards, such as the Vaastu Shastra, which describes the principles of temple construction, such as temple orientation, deity placement, and the use of holy geometry.
- **Symbolism and Ritual:** The design of temples often represents symbolism,

cosmic order, divine hierarchy, and the journey of the soul. Various architectural elements, such as the sanctum sanctorum (garbhagriha), mandapa (hall), gopuram (gateway tower), and vimana (tower over the sanctum), carry symbolic meanings and are essential to religious rituals and ceremonies.

- **Community Gathering Place:** Temples also serve as community gathering places, where people come together to celebrate festivals, perform charitable acts, and engage in other social and cultural activities. It also plays a key role in social welfare activities like feeding the needy, providing education, and supporting people with disabilities and sickness.

## **Types of Temple Architecture**

From the majestic northern Himalayas to the serene coastal areas to the south, travel from vibrant western states to culturally rich eastern states the architecture of the temple in India has notable variations and distinct features. Here are the typologies of temple architecture in India, emphasising features of different regions.

### **1. North Indian Temple Architecture Style**

North Indian temple architecture in India is known for its grandeur and magnificence. The temples in this region were constructed using red sandstone and white marble, which lend them a distinct look. The influence of Mughal architecture is seen in the design of North Indian temples, such as arched entrances and domes.



*birla mandir Temple, jaipur*

### **Design Features:**

- Intricate carvings depict mythological figures and scenes.
- The three-dome structure represents different aspects of spirituality.
- Towering shikhara creates a striking silhouette.
- Spacious prayer hall adorned with ornate columns and sculptures.
- Stunning stained glass work adds vibrancy and religious motifs.

One of the most famous North Indian temples is the Birla Mandir Temple in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Built-in 1988, the temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his companion Lakshmi. It blends traditional Rajasthani and Mughal architectural traditions, with beautiful carvings, marble façade, and magnificent domes showcasing the region's rich heritage and skill.

## **2. South Indian Temple Architecture Style**

South Indian temple architecture in India is home to some of the most magnificent temples in India. The temples in this region are characterised by their towering gopurams or gateways that lead to the inner sanctum. Usually, these gopurams are decorated with elaborate carvings and sculptures representing numerous Hindu myths. They are fine examples of Dravidian architecture, characterised by pyramid-shaped towers, ornate carvings, and intricate sculptures.



*meenakshi Temple, madurai*

### **Design Features:**

- The main temple is made from pink sandstone and white marble
- Several mandapas are used for religious ceremonies and events
- Mandapas decorated with exquisite carvings and sculptures depicting Hindu mythology scenes
- Gajendra Pith, a massive stone platform with life-size elephant statues

- Represents the mythological story of Gajendra Moksha
- Musical fountain with water, light, and sound shows
- Natya Mandap, a large hall for dancing and musical performances
- Supported by 56 intricately carved pillars depicting scenes from Hindu mythology

The Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, is a revered and iconic temple of South India dedicated to Lord Shiva and goddess Meenakshi. With its architectural grandeur and spiritual meaning, it attracts millions of enthusiasts and tourists throughout the world.

### 3. East Indian Temple Architecture Style

East India is renowned for its elegant and enchanting temples, which highlight the region's rich cultural and architectural heritage. The temples feature intricate sculptures, elaborate sculptures and unique styles, reflecting dynasties and eras. Their elegance resides in their attention to detail, graceful proportions, and spiritual atmosphere, weaving together art, history, and religious devotion.



*konark sun Temple, konark*

#### Design Features:

- The main temple is like a chariot, made from black granite
- Jagamohana, a porch-like structure attached to the main temple
- Adorned with elaborate carvings and sculptures
- Nata Griha, a small hall for religious ceremonies
- Twelve giant wheels supporting the temple]

The Konark Sun Temple in Odisha, India, is a 13th-century architectural masterpiece devoted to the Sun God Surya. Built by King Narasimhadeva I, it is adorned with stone sculptures, complex architecture and a unique representation of the float of the temple complex, in the shape of a colossal wagon, and has sculptures and floral motifs. Despite centuries of devastation, the temple remains a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### 4. West Indian Temple Architecture Style

The West Indian Temple Architecture in India is famous for its captivating beauty and unique Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra architectural styles. These temples present a rich cultural and spiritual heritage, with complex sculptures, bright colours and ornate details. Each structure is a reflection of the artistic brilliance and dedication of the artisans who built it.



*shri mahalakshmi Temple, kolhapur*

#### **Design Features:**

- The main temple is made from black stone, adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures
- Several mandapas used for religious ceremonies, decorated with exquisite carvings and sculptures depicting Hindu mythology scenes
- Impressive gopurams (gateway towers) adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures
- Garuda Mandap, a large hall in front of the main temple, adorned with beautiful carvings and sculptures of Garuda
- Shikhar, towers over the sanctum sanctorum, decorated with beautiful carvings and sculptures

The Shri Mahalakshmi Temple in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, is a revered symbol of devotion and architectural splendour. Dedicated to the goddess Mahalakshmi,

it is one of India's most important Shakti Peethas. The temple's intricate carvings, beautiful sculptures, and Dravidian style showcase Maharashtra's rich cultural heritage. It attracts thousands of devotees seeking blessings and solace.

#### **5. Central Indian Temple Architecture Style**

The centre of India houses many beautiful temples, highlighting the wealth of Indian architecture. These temples, including Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, highlight intricate sculptures, spiritual symbolism and artistic mastery. The cultural and spiritual heritage of the area is explored through historical significance, architectural characteristics and spiritual experiences for visitors and devotees.



*khajuraho Temples, madhya pradesh*

#### **Design Features:**

- Khajuraho temples showcase Nagara-style architecture with tall spires representing Himalayan peaks
- Built using locally quarried sandstone of pale yellow-brown colour

- Arranged into three groups (Western, Eastern, and Southern) with temples dedicated to Hindu deities and Jain temples.
- Famous for erotic sculptures depicting various sexual positions, symbolising the acceptance of physical love in human life.
- Complex and explicit sculptures exhibit the prowess of the artisans

The Khajuraho temples, located in India's Madhya Pradesh, are famous for their exquisite blend of art and architecture. Built between the 10th and 12th centuries by the Chandela Dynasty, these temples are an outstanding example of ancient Indian handicrafts. The temples of Khajuraho are distinguished by their complex sculptures, in particular the depictions of human figures.

## 6. North-East Indian Temple Architecture Style

North-East Indian Temple Architecture Style reflects the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the northeastern region of India, which includes Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, etc. This architectural style is characterized by a unique blend of indigenous traditions with influences from neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and Myanmar.

### Design Features:

- It is dedicated to the goddess Kamakhya, an incarnation of Shakti



*kamakhya Temple, guwahati*

- Has a distinctive hemispherical dome (shikhara) and an octagonal base
- Represents stone carvings depicting various Hindu deities and mythological scenes
- The annual Ambubachi Mela attracts devotees from across India
- The temple has a complex comprised of multiple smaller shrines dedicated to different deities

The Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam, is one of the renowned and followed ancient temples in India, particularly for followers of the Shakta sect of Hinduism. Dedicated to the goddess Kamakhya, also known as Kamrupa Kamakhya, the temple holds immense spiritual and cultural importance. Kamakhya is believed to embody both creative and destructive aspects of Shakti (divine feminine energy) and is worshipped in various forms by devotees seeking blessings for prosperity, fertility, and spiritual growth.



## 7. Western Himalayan Temple Architecture Style

The Western Himalayan region includes states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and is renowned for its mountainous range and vibrant temple architecture. These temples, often constructed using local stone and wood, feature intricate wooden carvings, pagoda-style roofs, and elaborate facades adorned with colourful paintings and sculptures.



hadimba Temple, manali

### Design Features:

- Built in traditional Himachali style with wooden logs and intricate carvings.

\*\*\*\*\*

*“.... The land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendour and rags, of palaces and hovels, of famine and pestilence, of genii and giants and Aladdin lamps, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birthplace of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great-grandmother of traditions, whose yesterday's bear date with the modering antiquities for the rest of nations-the one sole country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, the one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the world combined.”*

**- Mark Twain**

- Situated amidst cedar forests, integrates nature into its design.
- The surrounding forest is considered sacred, enhancing the temple's spiritual ambience.
- Rests on a large rock, symbolizing the deity's connection to nature.

The Hadimba Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Hadimba Devi, a crucial lady from the Indian epic Mahabharata and the wife of Bhima. The temple is renowned for its unique architecture, which is distinctively Himachali in style. It is constructed using wooden logs and features intricate carvings, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the region. The temple is built on a large rock, which is believed to be a manifestation of the goddess herself.

### In Conclusion

The significance of Indian temple architecture in India cannot be overvalued. The architectural wonders of Indian temples, both old and modern, captivate with their grandeur, meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail. The precise details, symmetrical arrangements and harmonious proportions of Indian temple architecture continue to inspire architects and artists worldwide.

## TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE AS PROMOTED BY DIFFERENT DYNASTIES

**Shashi Musunuri \***

Hindu temple architecture reflects a synthesis of arts, the ideals of dharma, values and the way of life cherished under the Sanatana Dharma.

The tradition of constructing temples as "Houses of Gods" commenced approximately 4500 years ago in India, emerging as people's fundamental needs for food, shelter, and clothing were met, and human intellect evolved to pursue higher ideals in life. Initially a two-unit plan was devised, one enclosure was dedicated to the murti and the other for bhakta. Which later evolved to be called as garbha griha and mandapa (to accommodate a greater number of worshippers or bhaktas).

Rulers from various dynasties possessed the knowledge, wealth, and authority to conceive and support temple construction projects, reflecting their dominance over other dynasties.

The fundamental architectural styles identified in temple construction were

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Nagara, Dravida, and Vesara. The Nagara style was predominant in North Indian temples, while the Dravida style was prevalent in South Indian temples, with Vesara representing a fusion of the two.



TEMPLE NUMBER 17 - SANCHI, MP

### **GUPTA DYNASTY: 4th - 6th CE**

The Gupta era introduced early structural temples featuring a garbha griha for the murti and a flat mandapa for bhaktas. These temples were constructed using locally quarried stones dressed and joined using the tendon and groove method. A famous structural temple of this period exemplifying the early Nagara



style is the temple number 17 (Buddhist) at Sanchi, MP. Subsequently, shikhara was added to enhance the verticality of the garbagriha, with a purna kalasha serving as a finial atop the shikhara.

### **GURUJARA-PRATIHARA: 7th - 11th CE**

Following the decline of the Gupta dynasty, the Gurjara-Pratihara emerged, tracing their lineage to Lakshman from the epic Ramayana. Out of the many temples they constructed there is a remarkable collection of over 200 temples known as the Bateswar temples in Morena, M.P showcasing the Nagara style. with amalaka and kalasha on top of the shikhara, built predominantly with sandstone.



BATESWAR TEMPLES, MORENA M.P

### **CHANDELAS: 8th - 10th CE**

The magnificent Khajuraho temples in the Chhatarpur district of MP were erected during the reign of Yashovarman and Dhang. These temples, featuring towering spires reminiscent of Himalayan peaks, are a UNESCO World Heritage site.

TRIVENI

Crafted from locally quarried sandstone a magnificent temple named Kandariya Mahadev is a great example where mukha mandapa, ardha mandapa, mandapa and maha mandapa were added to accommodate more people and activities. A higher jagati was added to separate the sacred world from the profane world. They are renowned for their intricate carvings depicting divine deities, apsaras, and mythical creatures.

### **KHAJURAHO TEMPLES, CHHATARPUR M.P**

### **PALLAVA: 3rd - 10th CE**

The earliest form of Dravidian style architecture emerged during this period, featuring an octagonal shikhara called Vimana with a kalasha atop serving as a finial. Narasimham II constructed the Shore temple of Mahabalipuram, crafted from hard indigenous rocks called leptite, exemplifying the architectural prowess of this era.



SHORE TEMPLE, MAHABALIPURAM

### **EARLY AND LATE CHALUKYA: 6th - 12th CE**

This era showcased a hybrid style of temple architecture called Vesara, which

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originated in the Deccan region of India. A great example of such architecture is found in Alampur temples in Telangana, situated on the banks of the river Tungabhadra, are adorned with relief panels depicting temporal and spiritual lives on the walls. Figures on the exterior walls, pillars, door frames, and ceilings exhibit a high level of artistic endeavor, carved using fine-grained, dark, smooth marble. Additionally, Kirithimukhas (fierce monster faces) were introduced to the temple's iconography.



PART OF ALAMPUR TEMPLES

### **CHOLA DYNASTY: 9th - 14th CE**

The Cholas' long and vast rule, coupled with prosperity from agriculture in the Kaveri delta, likely contributed to the patronage of grand temples like Brihadeswara, built in the Dravidian style during this period. This UNESCO World Heritage Site, constructed by Raj Raja I in Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu, utilized blocks

of granite stones joined with the tendon and groove method. The imposing Vimana of this temple stands 216 feet tall with 16 storeys, and the kumbham on top weighs 80 tons. A huge nandi in a separate enclosure faces this magnificent temple. Dhawaja and balipeetham are situated before the temple. Entrance is through a tall gateway called the gopuram.



BRIHADESWARA TEMPLE, TANJAVUR

### **KAKATIYA DYNASTY: 11th - 14th CE**

The most emblematic architectural form of the Kakatiya dynasty is the Toranas (gateways), found in Warangal and other places in Telangana. The Ramappa temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Mulugu, near Warangal, was built with pink sandstone and named after the Stapathi or builder. Columns inside the temple and brackets on its exterior, featuring female figures, are made with black dolerite. The

temple's most distinguishing feature is its construction with very light, floating, porous sandstone bricks.



KAKATIYA TORANA, TELANGANA



RAMAPPA TEMPLE, TELANGANA

### **NAYAKA DYNASTY: 16th - 18th CE**

The Dravidian style of this era, also known as the Madurai style, featured larger mandapas, pradakshina paths and tall slender gopurams located in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The majestic gopurams of Jambukeswara, Sarangapani temple and the southern gopuram of Meenakshi temple, with their imposing heights, stunning conclave profile, and Gavakshas (cows' eyes) for the deity to gaze out into the world, were the unique features of the Madurai style during this era.



JAMBUKESWARA TEMPLE GOPURAM,  
TAMIL NADU

### **GANGA DYNASTY: 4th - 14th CE**

The greatest achievement of temple architecture from this era is magnificently displayed in the Sun Temple of Konark, Puri, Odisha. The entire temple is conceived in the form of a chariot of the Sun god, with 12 pairs of wheels representing the 24 hours of the day and seven horses pulling the chariot representing the seven rays of the sun. The shikhara is linear, and the sabha mandapa in front of the sanctum is called Jagmohan. Thousands of intricately carved images adorn the temple's exterior, depicting scenes ranging from courtly life to deities and celestial musicians and dancers.



KONARK SUN TEMPLE, ODISHA

### **VIJAYANAGARA DYNASTY: 14th - 17th CE**

This era signifies a combination of Chalukya, Hoysala, Rashtrakoota, Pandya and Chola dynasties. The main features of this style of architecture include very large mandapas, intricately carved pillars and stucco work using soapstones and plaster to smoothen rough surfaces. The tall gopurams which are chiefly called Raya Gopurams are named after the ruling Rayas during this era. The main rulers during this period were Krishna Deva Raya I and Harihara Bukka. The Virupaksha temple

and the Vithal temple in Hampi, Karnataka are well-known examples of Vijayanagar architecture.



VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE, HAMPI

### **IN CONCLUSION**

The Gupta temples established a solid foundation for temple architecture in India. Throughout history and across various geographical regions, sthapatis emerged, experimenting with new and hybrid forms of temple architecture tailored to climatic conditions and the availability of basic materials. This led to innovation, incorporating additional elements and finer detailing into the structures, resulting in the creation of increasingly magnificent temples across India.

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*"The ancient Southern Indian temples were built on intricate subjective sciences. These are not only places for prayer, but spaces to simply sit and charge with powerful energy that enhances life in a phenomenal way."*

*- Sadhguru*

## A JOURNEY OF ROCKS: FROM THE HILLS TO TEMPLES OF KARNATAKA

Rekha Rao \*

One may wonder how such a long tradition of art and architecture was fostered in Karnataka. The reason is not far to seek. This land of present Karnataka is blessed with different types of stone belts that were formed millions of years ago. The region of Karnataka enjoyed a long tradition of royal patronage for promotion of art and architecture and shared the common heritage of monumental culture of the Indian subcontinent. Rulers were well versed in the literature related to art, science of geology and sponsored generously for the promotion of temple architecture. The monuments thus created by ancient dynasties are now heritage monuments reflecting the glory and knowledge of the past.

It is heartening to note that the state of Karnataka in South India, is now renowned internationally, has to her glory three sites of UNESCO world heritage site namely the Pattadakal group of monuments, the Heritage of Hampi and the Western ghats and one under nomination. The state of Karnataka is bestowed with mainly three types of temple architecture that is distributed in the North, central and south zones. Further, the diversity of art form including the local material used and architecture followed makes an interesting flow of art forms over a period of ten

centuries.

The theme of this paper is about the journey of rocks from hills to temples, exploring the "Evolution of temple Architecture and sculptural art forms in the state of Karnataka". The aim is to explore how the type of naturally occurring stone belts, its qualities like hardness, texture and colours were understood by the ancient dynasties and accordingly experimented with stone blocks to create innovative art. The evolution in art forms can be seen from two dimensional figures to three dimensional ones, further progressing to huge monolithic structures through the ages. The outcome can also be seen in the making the different styles of temple architecture that has heralded the glory of Karnataka. The geo morphs of Karnataka can be divided into three distinct zones of North, central and South zones. Each of these zones has different type of stone belts that are datable to millions of years when they got formed are described in the article. The three examples of popular temples built in different stone type with illustration and a brief note on it are listed below:

1. Northern Karnataka, with red sandstone beds, Bagalkot District: Badami, Aihole Pattadakal.
2. Central Karnataka, with Eastern Dharwar craton of granite rocks, Bellary district:

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\* [www.arfjournals.com](http://www.arfjournals.com)



Hampi - Virupaksha Temple, Vittala Temple, Hazara Rama Temple.

3. Southern Karnataka, with green/ grey schist of Western Dharwar Craton, Hassan district: Somanathpur Temple, Halebid Temple, Belur Temple.

It is essential to know how the architecture differed from place to place depending on the availability of type of rocks. The article gives a brief account of the stone type that influenced the architecture in Karnataka.

Each division has indigenous and special rock belts. This variation in varieties of stone belt was understood by the ancient dynasties which enabled them to construct the best suited architectural monuments. The outcome was different types of monuments adorned with exquisite sculptural embellishments. This article explores on the topic how 'Apara jnana', the various types of scientific knowledge inclusive of geology and availability of natural resources was combined with the knowledge of spirituality, the 'Para jnana' and presented in the construction of many types of temples. The heritage monuments of all three divisions that are discussed here are provided with a brief account of location, period, geological information of the distinct stone bed and some noteworthy monuments constructed in the North, southern and central zones of the state of Karnataka. The grandeur of architectural style is supported with good illustrations of temple sikhara-the super structure, the variations in the supporting pillar structure and the intricacies involved in sculptural representation, all due to the quality of stone used.

## **Temples of Northern Karnataka:**

### **Location and Period of Monuments:**

Regarding north Karnataka, the eponymous district of Bagalkot surrounded by farmlands and sandstone hills is the valley of red soil and sandstone beds. The hills are with highly visible cliffs and other topographical features. This part of Karnataka is a major archaeological site celebrated for the magnificent rock cut shrines which the early Chalukyas constructed during 6-8th centuries. They are the best-preserved vestiges of temple art in Karnataka. The district of Bagalkot is rich in temple architecture at three places namely:

- Pattadakal
- Aihole
- Badami

All the three are major centers of historically important Early Chalukyan monuments. The archaeological heritage site Pattadakal in Bagalkot district situated on the banks of the river Malaprabha is the UNESCO world heritage monument. Another site Aihole is 9.7 KM away from Pattadakal and 35 KM from Badami. All are noteworthy and famous for Temple architecture as well as rock cut caves. The documented history of Aihole is traceable to the rise of the Early Chalukyan dynasty in 6th -8th century who were very prosperous with political stability and hence the cultural activities were at its best. The religious tolerance of early Chalukyas facilitated in adopting innovative methods of architecture and assimilating diverse cultural and religious aspects in art and architecture. They sponsored artisans and built many types of temples in this region

by drawing the patronage of all quarters of society. Badami saw refinement in 6th and 7th centuries. The experimentations culminated in Pattadakal in the 7th and 8th centuries becoming a cradle of fusion of ideas from South India and North India. The temples at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal are the largest and earliest group of monuments which comprehensively demonstrate the different experiments that were tried in temple architecture. It is hence recognized as an era of evolution in the Hindu rock-cut and temple architecture in India. The variation in temple architecture can be attributed to the different variety of sandstone beds the state of Bagalkot is blessed with. The prototypes of 24 types of free-standing temples and 4 types of rock-cut shrines were developed in Badami and Aihole, which reached its most matured form in Pattadakal group making the area a cradle of Temple architecture.

### **Geology of Sandstones in Bagalkot:**

Bagalkot district is beautiful place with the natural topographic features of red soil, visible sedimentary beds of red sandstone and breath-taking views red sandstone hills, the cliffs of which in the place Badami appear in the horizon. These sedimentary sequences occupy an area of 8300 sq.km with total aggregate thickness measure around 4500 m as confirmed by Geological Survey of India that got formed in Proterozoic period. (Proterozoic means the early eon during which different events related to formation of earth occurred 2500 million years ago and the earth cooled from molten lava giving rise to single celled organisms).

Characteristics of Sandstone are

they are best known sedimentary rock consisting of sheets of sand, mineral particles, and binding matrix deposited one atop, both in water environments and desert formations. They are mostly porous allowing easy water penetration. Brown, red, purple, and pink shades of sandstones are commonly seen but generally they are called brownstone. The brown / red colour of rocks is due to the presence of Iron oxides or hematite, manganese oxides and other impurities can cause bright and contrasting colours in the sand sandstones. Exposure to the elements of nature causes iron minerals to oxidize or "rust," resulting in red, orange, and brown-coloured rocks. These colours are what gives sandstone its unique character and ornamental desirability. Sandstones are made of sand grains that have been cemented together like sandpaper and usually have a rough, granular texture.

Based on their morphological characters, Bagalkot Group of sediments have undergone two sets of folding deformation which are classified as subgroups.

1. Accompanied by low grade metamorphic effects leading to recrystallisation of limestone and carbonates.
2. Development of argillites, a compact fine-grained argillaceous rock cemented by silica and having no slaty cleavage and lesser quantity of arenaceous units.

Badami Group of sediments are found as a vast expanse of horizontally bedded ferruginous arenites. They are formed from cemented grains that may either be fragments of a pre-existing rock or be hard quartz like mono-minerallic crystals



in red colours. Clay and gypsum cements, which are soft minerals, tend to produce much softer sandstone and in some stones the sand can sometimes be rubbed off with hands. The cements binding these grains together are typically calcite, clays and silica. Silica cemented sandstone is very durable and hard which are used to make sculptures.

The Badami sandstones were chosen by the early Chalukyas for their architectural work because of the fine-grained, compact yet soft nature of stone which facilitated excavation of these sandstone hills. This natural stone formation enabled them to build 4 cave-temples, as well as carve out rock-cut sculptures in them. Sandstone can't match a slate or granite for durability, but it is strong enough to last for decades if properly cared for. The uniqueness of sandstone is formed from nature itself, the colors, patterns, and hues found in any individual piece are completely unique and different that has enhanced the beauty of sculptures.

### **Badami Rock-Cut Caves:**



*badami rock cut caves. Top: badami rock cut cave general view of sandstone cliff. Bottom: Sculptured panel in the cave revealing the layers of sandstone in pillars and the majestic figure of Vishnu.*

**Period:** The figures illustrated above are from Badami, a panchayat town in Bagalkot district. The place Badami was formerly called as Vatapi was the legal capital of the early Chalukyas under the rule of Pulikeshi- I, in 535 - 566 A.D. His sons Kirtiverman (567 - 598 A.D) and Mangalesha (598 - 610 A.D) constructed the complex of 4 cave temples, where 3 of them were man made caves and the one natural, all in close proximity to each other and situated right next to the town of Badami. The credit of scooping and completing the cave temples goes to the Chalukyan king Mangalesha. The exact dating of 6th century is known through an inscription carved in old Kannada language in Cave 3, which is dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

The rock cut caves in Badami are carved out of the red soft sandstone on a cliff in the late 6th century. Each cave consists of a simple veranda with stone columns and brackets, leading to a columned

mandapam and then to a shrine cut deep into the cave. All the caves bear exquisite carvings, sculptures and beautiful murals. Out of the four caves, Cave 1 is dedicated to lord Shiva, Cave 2 to lord Vishnu, Cave 3 which is the largest and the best, has carvings depicting both Shaivite and Vaishnavite themes and Cave 4 is dedicated to the Jain Tirthankaras. In each cave the pillar structure is solid in rectangular or octagonal base and exhibits the grandeur of the layers of the red sedimentary rock. The sculptures of deities are bold and big exhibiting the strength of masculine force in a graceful manner.

Over one hundred Aihole temples are Hindu, Jain and Buddhist temples. These innumerable temples were built and coexisted in close proximity. The Hindu temples are dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Surya and other Hindu deities. The Jain Basadi temples are dedicated to Mahavira, and other Jain Tirthankaras. The Buddhist monument is a temple and small monastery. Both Hindu and Jain monuments include monasteries, as well as social utilities such as stepwell water tanks with artistic carvings near major temples.



*Durgi gudi temple at aihole*



*Durgi gudi of aihole in apsidal form made of sandstone and the figure of Goddess Durga.*

Aihole prospered from the mid-6th century CE under the regional rule of the Early Western Chalukyas as one of the most important Deccan dynasties. Aihole provides a valuable record of Indian temple architecture before it fully evolved into a canonical style. Though there are some early Buddhist rock cut caves and Jain monuments, most of the temples at Aiholi are Hindu, which are embellished with architectural and sculptural grandeur made of sandstone slabs. The temples have stone slab roofing, many have stone lattice windows, an entrance hall and porch accessed via a short flight of steps. These were the typical features of Early Western Chalukya architecture. A good example incorporating all of these features is the 8th-century CE temple of Durga called Durgi gudi (Ref. picture 5) was commissioned by a private citizen Komarasengama. This structure is also unusual as the plan of the temple is oblong

and apsidal. It has columns with sculptures running around the building to form a peristyle. The sculpted panels such as those depicting Durga in her battle with the buffalo demon, and Shiva alongside the bull Nandi are amongst the finest examples of all ancient Indian sculpture.

### **Pattadakal:**

Pattadakal is located along the Malaprabha river where it turns north. Its red colour soil and stone mountains nearby attracted the dynastic rulers to build temples according to the stone texture. There are ten major temples at Pattadakal built by the early Chalukya dynasty in 7th and 8th centuries. Nine of them are Hindu and one Jain temple that are clustered together along with numerous small shrines. The Pattadakal monuments reflect a fusion of two major Indian architectural styles, one from north India (Rekha-Nagara-Prasada) and the other from south India (Dravida-Vimana) which are with different types of shikhara. Four temples were built in the Chalukya Dravida style, four in the North Indian style called Nagara style, while one temple the Papanatha temple is a fusion of the two styles. It is considered by UNESCO as the masterpiece of architectural forms from northern and southern India, that made the town and nearby region as the cradle of temple architecture and arts.

Pattadakal is a testament to the architectural prowess of the Early Chalukya dynasty. It emerged from the 6th century as

the cradle of experimentation with temple architecture, stone artwork, and construction techniques. The city was earlier called Pattada Kisuvola, which translates to "City of Crown Rubies". As its name implies, it was used during the Chalukya dynasty for coronation ceremonies, such as that of Vinayaditya in the 7th century CE. Other names of this place were Kisuvola meaning "valley of red soil", Raktapura meaning "city of red", and Pattada-Kisuvola meaning "red soil valley for coronation".



*general views of pattadakal group of temples with both the north indian and south indian types of temple architecture.*





*figure of shiva in red sandstone at the pattadakal mallikarjuna temple.*

#### Location and Historical Background:

Hampi, in the Karnataka district of south-west India was situated on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra in Bellary district. Located near the modern-era city of Hosapete. Once it was the central city and the seat of the mighty Vijayanagara empire, was the last capital (The city of victory as the name suggests) of the great Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. Many royal buildings and temples were raised by the king Krishnadeva Raya (AD 1509-30), the greatest ruler of the dynasty. Native art, craft, and culture flourished

during the fourteenth century during the reign of the dynasty. The temples of Hampi, its monolithic sculptures and monuments, attract the travellers from far and wide because of their excellent workmanship as well as the for the social life of Vijayanagara dynasty that are depicted through monuments.

Hampi, also referred to as the Group of Monuments is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in east-central Karnataka. The site is significant historically and archaeologically, for the Vijayanagara period. Hampi was a prosperous, wealthy and grand city near the Tungabhadra river, with numerous temples, farms and trading markets. Hampi was the world's second-largest medieval-era city in the world and one of India's richest city in 1500 A.D. The site was multi-religious and multi-ethnic; it included Hindu and Jain monuments next to each other. The buildings predominantly followed South Indian Hindu arts and architecture dating to the Aihole-Pattadakal styles, but the Hampi builders also used elements of Indo-Islamic architecture in the Lotus Mahal, the public bath and the elephant stables. The fabulous Dravidian temples like the Virupaksha temple, Vittala temple, palaces, and galleries of the markets that attract travelers to the region. The Vijayanagara empire was defeated by a coalition of Muslim sultanates; its capital was conquered, pillaged and destroyed by sultanate armies in 1565, after which Hampi remained in ruins.

## Geological Rock Boulder Beds of Hampi



*rock formations around hampi*

The Middle part of Karnataka with huge boulders have the composition of granite, relatively stable geologic terrain was formed between 3.6 and 2.5 billion years ago. The monolithic block split due to varied natural forces making cracks in it and eventually metamorphosed into its present balancing form of rocks. The rock belt is now called the Eastern Dharwar Craton (EDC) owing to their characters in lithologies and ages is dominantly granitic. EDC rocks, predominant around Hampi are called younger granites, a supracrustal belts of sedimentary rocks in origin. They turned to smaller boulders in size spreading over a 500 KM long and 20 KM belt running north to south from the edge of Deccan trap. They got metamorphosed developing horizontal and vertical cracks, resulting in the bizarre formations and rounding of the stones placed in gigantic row that look mesmerizing by balancing rocks as well as gigantic out crops. The rocks of this age show extremely complex nature

with clastic and chemically precipitated sediments of Volcanic plutonic rocks - all of which show varying degrees of metamorphism.

## Hampi's Archeological Grandeur

Temples of this city are noted for their large dimensions, florid ornamentation, bold and delicate carvings, stately pillars, magnificent pavilions and a great wealth of iconographic and traditional depictions which include subjects from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The luxurious availability of rocks in close proximity was a boon for the sculptors who could make the innumerable temples, many adorned with monolithic sculptured panels and huge pillars. Some of the beautiful and famous temples are illustrated below.

### Virupaksha Temple



*Virupaksha temple with majestic tower amidst the rock boulders at hampi*

Virupaksha Temple is dedicated to lord Shiva. This temple was constructed under Lakkana Dandesha's assistance who was a commander under King Deva Raya II (6). Virupaksha temple at Hampi started off as a little shrine and later developed into a huge complex during the Vijayanagara

rule. It believed that this temple has been functioning uninterruptedly ever since its inception that makes this one of the oldest functioning temples in India. This east facing giant tower (Gopura) of nine stories with a pair of cow horn like projections on top (Shringa) is the most prominent landmark in Hampi. It is the large tower, 50 meters in height, is well-proportioned and incorporates some earlier structures. The temple top has the patterns of the shikhara which repeat themselves with the usage of mathematical concepts and fractals as one of the most striking features. The gopura leads to the outer court of the temple complex which contains many sub-shrines. The most beautiful part of this temple complex is the central pillared hall known as the Ranga Mandapa which was added in 1510 AD by Krishnadeva Raya. The stone slab beside the hall has an inscription that explain his offerings for the temple. The sanctum contains the idol of lord Virupaksha in the form of a Linga (A phallus image). A corridor surrounds the sanctum.

Surrounding the Virupaksha temple are plenty of dilapidated mandapams. There was an ancient shopping center interlined with mandapams in front of this temple. The ruins of it stand today.

### **Hampi: Vitthala Temple**

The Vitthala temple and market complex is over 3 kilometres north-east of the Virupaksha temple near the banks of the Tungabhadra River. It is the most

artistically sophisticated Hindu temple in Hampi and is part of the sacred centre of Vijayanagara.



*monolithic stone chariot of Vittala temple and the adjoining the musical pillared hall of hampi*

The Vitthala temple has a Garuda shrine in the form of a monolithic stone chariot in the courtyard which is often pictured as the symbol of Hampi. The wheels of the chariot were designed with engineering skills that it could be rotated by hands. Above the chariot is a tower, which was removed during the late 19th-century restorations. In the front of the stone chariot is a large, square, open- pillared, axial sabha mandapa, or community hall. The mandapa has four sections, two of which are aligned with the temple sanctum. The mandapa has 56 carved stone beams of different diameters, shape, length and surface finish that produces musical sounds when struck; according to local traditional belief, this hall was used for public celebrations of music and dancing.

## Hampi: Hazara Rama Temple



*hazara rama temple depicting the procession scene of Dasara festival*

The Hazara Rama temple, of the early 15th century and is attributed to Devaraya as the ceremonial temple for the royal family with a private chapel of hundred elaborately sculptured columned hall. It is referred to as the Ramachandra temple in inscriptions, dedicated to Sri Rama of the epic Ramayana. The temple's outer walls in lower bands shows marching elephants, above it is horses led by horsemen, then soldiers celebrated by the public. The Hindu festivals of Dasara and Holi in the procession and celebrations with dancers and musicians are in top layers depicting a boisterous procession of the general public in parallel bands of artwork. The Pattabhirama temple complex is another noteworthy temple in the southern suburban center.

Vijayanagara's destroyers, the sultans of the Deccan, chose to live further north as the abandoned Hampi's destruction was ensured. Frozen in time as a ruined Medieval city of astounding sophistication,

set in its barren rosy-hued granite boulder-strewn landscape is still the most wanted destination for tourists.

## Temples of Southern Karnataka:

The southern zone of Karnataka is famous for a different style of architecture in which intricately carved sculptural art played as important role as architecture itself. Southern Karnataka has beds of schist rock in grey green colour in regions across Tungabhadra valley. The Chalukyas of Kalyani used coarse variety of schist around the districts of Davanagere and Shimoga while Hoysala rulers started using fine grained schist found around Hassan (called Bababudan group of rocks, occupying an area of 2,650 sq.km spread in parts of Hassan, Shimoga, Dharwar, Chikmagalur,). It evolved from Chalukya style adding new technologies in style and presentation of temple architecture. Hoysalas built innumerable temples in which sculptural art of higher intricacies played an important role because of the abundant availability and softer nature of stone called schist. Belur and Halebid temples in Hassan district are built in chloritic schist which is popularly called as soap stone. These temples known for its panels of intricate carvings are now being proposed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

## The Geology of Schist Stone Bed:

The most striking feature of the stone used in Hoysala architecture is predominantly a green schist quarried from greenstone-granite terrain. Schist (pronounced shist) is a medium- grade



metamorphic rock formed from fine grained mudstone or sedimentary rock quarried from greenstone-granite terrain belt that is located in southwest India. Schist has medium to large, flat, sheet-like grains in a preferred orientation (nearby grains are roughly parallel). This belt of green schist was named by the geological survey of India in 1978, as Western Dharwar craton (WDC) of Karnataka. It is one of the best-studied terrains of Peninsular India that covers an area of about 500 KM long and 200KM wide, estimated to be 6 to 7 km in total thickness. Western Dharwar Craton is occupied by vast areas of Peninsular Gneiss along with two prominent super belts of Bababudan - Western Ghats - Shimoga and Chitradurga - Gadag, all belonging to the Dharwar Super Group.

The available geochronological ages of accumulation spanning between 2900-2600 million years. The Paleozoic period was a time of dramatic geological, climatic, and evolutionary changes. Metamorphic rock forms are that which changed by intense heat or pressure conditions deep inside the Earth's crust. Both sedimentary and igneous rocks under heat and pressure got changed into huge scale metamorphic rock of schist and a higher form called gneiss. Dharwar craton in green or grey colour has types of rocks called Slate, shale, schist and gneiss. Slate, a hard, fine-grained rock that fragments easily because of a well-developed rock cleavage or slaty cleavage formed during the heat and pressure of metamorphism. Shale is characterized as a fine-grained, compact clastic sedimentary

rock that easily fragments from the older piece into thin slabs along thin laminae or parallel layering or bedding.



Figure 10: *bababudan hills of western ghats looks different from the red sandstone rocks of badami or the granite hills of hampi.*

Schist is a coarse-green grained rock (green colour due to mineral facies) consisting of alternating layers of different minerals, such as feldspar, quartz, mica, and hornblende. They have banded appearance and fragments from the older piece breaking into thin layers because of the parallel orientation of clay mineral flakes. Schist when exposed to an increase and continuation in metamorphism turns into coarse grained and irregularly banded layers of sheet in planar foliate structured rocks called Gneiss. Gneiss rock is identified by its bands and lenses of varying composition with an interlocking texture with colours. This can be seen as the colour variation in some of the Hoysala sculptures. The soft nature of schist stone/ soap stone when freshly cut was used by Hoysalas to make intricate carvings in sculptures.

The easily fragmentable slabs were used extensively to make the five or six layered stone platform called Jagati in star shape that added a new dimension to the Hoysala style of temple architecture. These sheets of sedimentary rocks adorn the lower platform of all Hoysala temples.

### Architecture

The Hoysala rulers evolved from the late Chalukya style introducing a new style of temple architecture by building extremely ornate temples in which sculptural art played as important a role as architecture itself. In plan and elevation, the Hoysala temples are in stellate ground plan called Jagati with a series of points to produce a star shape. The high plinth is ornamented with successive horizontal bands of 10-11 parallel bands of floral, animal designs and figures of sculptures running around the temple. The horizontal bands are made of stone slabs which naturally occurred in the western Dharwar craton, which was shrewdly made use of to create a different style of Hoysala art. The highly intricate work was possible because the schist stone was softer when newly cut and hardened with time. The pillars were lathe turned and were with high polish comparable to mirror reflection all because of the quality of stone and workmanship.

Belur (Commissioned by king Vishnuvardhana in 1117A D) Halebidu (completed in 1160AD) (and Somanathpur temples ( consecrated in 1258 A D by Somanatha Dandanayaka, a general of the

Hoysala King Narasimha III) are the best known classic examples of the temples of Hoysala architecture that gives a glimpse of Hindu temple art at its glorious best between 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.



*hoysala temple at somanathapura in schist stone.*



*The highly ornate lathe turned pillars of belur chennakeshava temple*



*belavadi temple*



*The layered nature of gneiss stone with color variations*



*hoysala style of wall decoration in parallel layers.*



*Dancing shiva sculpture with intricate carvings in the schist stone at the halebid temple*





*The very beautiful sculpture of shilabalika at belur chennakeshava temple in schist stone.*

The temples are the physical manifestation of the spiritual connect with cosmos and the endeavor of human intellectual & physical efforts. The very creative idea of selecting rocks

bestowed by nature, establishing harmony with it and constructing temples with sculptures have withstood the test time over centuries, expressing limitless and timeless capabilities of human mind.

The art and architecture of monuments in Karnataka shows varied experimentation through the ages because of the geo diversity with varieties of stone belts all formed several millions of years ago. The early chalukya phase in Bagalkot district between 6th -8th centuries are the critical formative phase. The techniques of architectural skills changed with the usage of schist stone during the later Chalukyas and Hoysalas of 10th to 13th centuries. It is important to note that around this time Karnataka was blessed with the best sculptors who gave timeless life to the rocks and stones. The use of soft green schist stone contributed profoundly in giving rise to a totally different style of temple architecture in embellishing the temples with very intricate carvings, sculptures and highly polished lathe turned pillars. This change of techniques in temple art got marked as an unparalleled era in the history of temple construction. The art of Hampi from 14th -16th centuries with all its, royal and sacred complexes, temples, shrines, pillared halls / mandapas, forts and memorial structures have truly heralded the glorious heritage of Karnataka.

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## To India My Native Land\_

- Henry Vivian Derozio

**My country! In thy days of glory past  
 A beauteous halo circled round thy brow  
 and worshipped as a deity thou wast—  
 Where is thy glory, where the reverence now?  
 Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,  
 And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou,  
 Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee  
 Save the sad story of thy misery!  
 Well—let me dive into the depths of time  
 And bring from out the ages, that have rolled  
 A few small fragments of these wrecks sublime  
 Which human eye may never more behold  
 And let the guerdon of my labour be,  
 My fallen country! One kind wish for thee!**



Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir, Sai Nagar, Ayodhya

## SEEKING DIVINE INTERVENTION: REALIZING THE ROLE OF TEMPLES IN THE AGE OF ANTHROPOCENE

**Pooja Boddupalli \***

*mata bhumih putroham prithivyah* ^,  
Earth is my Mother, I am her Son -

*artharva Veda*

In the age of Anthropocene, we wake up to new climate challenges each day. Floods, famines, heat waves have become a common occurrence. In the face of such adversities, our faith and religion must play a bigger role than we all know and accept. In this day and age of religious scepticism, Hinduism must rise to its fullest and embrace with its followers with entirety, as our religion holds answers and the key to the climate crisis.

Hinduism is deeply intertwined with nature and environment. Our belief stems from viewing Nature as manifestations of the Divine power. Today, our Temples are not only divine structures, they can play a greater role in our understanding of climate crisis and arm us with the knowledge and tools that we all need.

### **Vernacular Architecture:**

Given that Hinduism is the oldest religion

in the world, our temples branch from age-old practices that have stemmed from eco-friendly and nature based approaches. Historic temples were built on the foundations of perfected engineering principles designed to precision, using the foundations of Fractal geometry. Such was the engineering feat, that even after centuries, the temples still exhibit grandeur and eloquence. The secret to such stability and marvelousness lies in the perfect understanding of science and tradition. Traditional architectural designs were built and planned according to sustainability principles, using naturally available material and resource efficiency. The roles of the prevailing climatic conditions was taking into account, creating feats of architecture that we know and respect today.

### **Conservation through Tradition:**

Hindu rituals have emphasised on the importance of clean mind and clean soul, highlighting the interconnectedness humans share with the environment. The awareness each dhyana and mudra brings into us awakens the body and spirit, highlighting the connections we share

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with the natural world around us. Hindu Temples employ centuries-old traditions that remind us of our role in the nature and encourage and nudge us to play our own role with sincerity and devotion and help preserve Earth's ecosystem. Water conservation and management:

Water, a central element in Hindu traditions, holds a revered position. The religion has always recognised the importance of water conservation, with all temples, big and small, making the water tanks as an important feature in the design. These water tanks play an important role in water management and conservation today, through techniques such as rainwater harvesting and rain water recycling. Through education programmes, they have been very instrumental in educating devotees about preservation and mindful consumption of water.



Water Tank at Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple or Meenakshi Amman Temple.

**Waste management and Circular Economy:** So many of Hindu traditions depend on natural resources, and waste management has always played a key role in daily rituals. The significant amount of organic waste generated from the temples very pragmatically finds its way into composting and recycling programmes for effective waste management. By composting and recycling the relevant material, temples create their own loop of circular economy, thereby saving the environment and keeping waste away from landfills and at the same time, generate jobs. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Practices

Many temples, large and small, are often fortunate enough to have vegetable gardens and *goshalas*, so that they can grow their own fresh produce and milk. This kind of local agricultural approach not only ensures pesticide free production, it also helps generate jobs. Temples also promote vegetarianism, that has been proven better for the environment.

Sharing of food has always been central to Hinduism, and community kitchen practices help feed many people on daily basis. Growing more food locally, allows more people to be fed healthy and allows access to nutritious meals. Climate crisis disproportionately, affecting the underprivileged and back trodden the most and feeding them will ensure that humanity remains safe and resilient.



### **Renewable Energy Initiatives:**

A growing number of temples are today embracing renewable energy solutions to meet their own energy needs. Initiatives like solar panels on temple roofs help set the sustainability narrative. This kind of practice approach helps set a great precedent to the people in their vicinity about conservation and climate change mitigation.

### **Environmental Cognizance:**

Hinduism has always promoted living with the nature, and not living against the nature. Temples have had a long standing centres of education and information. Through concerted efforts, workshops and awareness campaigns, the community's role in a wider sense can always be conveyed to more people.

### **Afforestation and Biodiversity:**

Temples play an important roles in planting trees within the temples compounds around it. Such projects are excellent and contribute towards carbon sequestration and conservation of biodiversity.

### **Disaster Preparedness:**

Temples have long played a role in collaborating with authorities and helping

assistance reach the affected during cyclones and earthquakes. Temples being the safe haven always allows devotees and people to depend on the facilities and amenities during natural disasters.

### **Advocacy and Policy Formulation:**

Due to their influential position in the community, Hindu temples have always been very instrumental in causing a positive change in the society. They have been catalysts for advocating change in the domains of environmental conservation and sustainability and an amplified voice and greater presence will mean that the right messaging reaches more people.

Sustainability has always been deeply intertwined with Hinduism, with the foundational blocks emphasising on *Dhrama* or righteous living. Hinduism is a way of life that advocates respecting all life forms and living in harmony with nature. Throughout the existence of the religion, Hindu communities have depended on the temples as beacons for religious dispensation. Today, the voice of the temples needs to be amplified more, and in the face of the challenges, the voice needs to be more relevant so that it can resonate further with the current problems.

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*“If there is one place on the face of earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India!”*

***Romaine Rolland***

## AMAR NATH PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

T.N.Dhar 'Kundan' \*

Himalayas are the abode of Shiva and Shiva is known as Amar Nath, the Lord Immortal. Immortality is a concept propounded by our sages. It refers to life as something, which has no beginning and no ending. It is cyclic, it changes form, adopts new name but does not die. We call this world as 'Nama-rupa jagat', or the world of name and form but the essence is immortal. Shri Gita says that the soul moves from one body to another just as a person gives up old clothes and wears new ones in their place. The soul, as the essence of existence does not die. It is immortal. Elsewhere in Shri Gita Shri Krishna says, 'rasoham apsu Kaunteya prabha-asmi Shashi Suryayoh, Pranavah sarva vedeshu, Shabdha kham paurusham nrishu', He is sapidity in fluids, light in the Sun and Moon, Om in all the Vedas, sound in the ether and valiance in men. Now take all these representative items, sapidity, light, sound, valiance etc. All these are concepts and symbols of immortality. These are neither born nor do these die. Om is the seed syllable, which in itself represents the Divine Brahman, and therefore, is immortal. A seeker is required to realize the self and the Divine. In other words he is seeking immortality,

which is stated in different terminologies as 'Moksha', 'Nirvana', 'Yoga', liberation, emancipation or the union with the Supreme.

The holy cave of Amarnath in Kashmir is a place of pilgrimage, where the seeker perceives this immortality by having a glimpse of the Ice Lingam. The legend goes that it was here by the side of the river Amravati that Shiva revealed the secret of immortality to his consort Parvati. From time immemorial people have been trekking to this holy cave to have 'darshan' on Shravana Purnamasi. They used to start from Pahalgam. (Pahal means to start or to go ahead) Then they would cross Sheshnag and Chandanwari. The former is not only the seat of Vishnu, on which Vishnu sleeps but is the garland of Shiva too. So it is to be propitiated for the success of the pilgrimage. The latter is sandal, the paste of which adores the forehead of the devotees and protects them from the vagaries of the nature. Then the pilgrim passes through difficult terrain of Pisughati for without untiring effort and without surmounting the difficulties no one can attain heights in spiritual arena. Thereafter he has to cross Panchtarni. There are many things in groups of five. Elements are five, organs of action, organs of sense and their objects

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all are five. These are to be controlled, kept under check and utilized in right direction. Then and then alone, the immortality of the essence of our existence is realized.

These days the duration of the pilgrimage has been increased and an alternative route via Sonamarg also has been left open for pilgrims. Even helicopter service has been introduced to cut short the period involved in this arduous pilgrimage. Without going into these details let me point out that this pilgrimage is the high point of Kashmir's culture and spiritual life. This pilgrimage, like many similar holy places, is an article of faith for millions of Hindus. Some rationalists raise questions about many traditional practices but it has to be acknowledged that in addition to reason and logic there is something called faith and belief. In fact faith begins where logic ends. When we go on reasoning out some phenomenon, at some point of time we reach a dead end and then faith only comes to our rescue. Ever since the scientists accepted the role of consciousness, most of them began to believe that faith too plays an important role in human existence. This point is clear even from a cursory reading of Shri Gita. In the earlier stages Arjuna, an intellectual as he is, raises questions and expresses doubts on various points stated by Shri Krishna. He does not accept whatever he is told at the face of it. He even accuses the Lord by saying, 'You are confusing me by mixing up various things, Vyamishrena vakyena buddhim mohasiva me.' But eventually the

Lord advises him, 'manmana bhava mad bhaktah, put your mind in Me and be my devotee.' Slowly the power of faith and its efficacy begins to dawn on him and he is obliged to say, 'Karishye vachanam tava, I shall do as ordained by you.'

We Kashmiris are largely Shaivites. We believe in this Immortal Lord, we worship Him and we have absorbed Him in our culture, in our daily worship and in our social customs. Our sages right from Durvasas and Tryambaka at first and then from Vasugupta down to Abhinangupta have propounded a unique non-dualistic philosophy, which states that there are thirty six elements from Earth to Param Shiva and one has to rise from the mundane level of the Earth to the highest point of I-consciousness represented by Param Shiva. It believes that not only is Shiva a reality but also His creation is a reality, which in essence is His manifestation. Thus everything is immortal and it is our spiritual need to perceive this immortality. So this pilgrimage to Swami Amar Nath is in fact a spiritual journey, which starts from the mundane and reaches the pinnacle of spiritual experience. It leads a seeker from exoteric to esoteric, from outer to inner. It is a pilgrimage for which one has not to take even a single step. Physical movement is not involved but spiritual ascent is indicated. The journey is internal and the goal is within. It is in this background that the great sage poetess Lal Ded of Kashmir has said, 'Goran dopnam kunuy vatsun, nebra dopnam

he had come unwashed unshaven wearing a dhoti exposing four fifths of his legs scratching away and the vice Chancellor said that the word he had been to jail when he said that the girl said I almost shouted he should be there now. Then the vice Chancellor asked him to go to the lectern to talk to us so he picked up the lemonade or limca or whatever was there would belonged to his female offering and took a sip which started a howl when that subsided the word he came to the lectern and said friends and well wishes I have

not had time to prepare my speech but my secretary has written something for me and he produced a whole heap of paper he said without any premeditation without any thought we made this short stay very short". Sir I thank my lucky stars that 50 years in the Army had made me come on time that I had been brought up to shave in the morning and shave in the evenings if there's a function that I had a lounge suit on and although I have very nice legs I didn't expose them.

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*“There are some parts of the world that, once visited, get into your heart and won’t go. For me, India is such a place. When I first visited, I was stunned by the richness of the land, by its lush beauty and exotic architecture, by its ability to overload the senses with the pure, concentrated intensity of its colours, smells, tastes, and sounds. It was as if all my life I had been seeing the world in black and white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant technicolour.”*

**– Keith Bellows**

## RAMOJI RAO, A LEGEND

**Rajendra Singh Baisthakur \***

Ramoji Rao is a legend who proved that businesses can be managed with ethical values. He is a multi talented person who spread his wings to many fields. He is well known as a journalist with his daily news paper Eenadu in Telugu language. Instead of using the language of the elite he used the language of the common man which made his paper very popular. He always stood for truth and welfare of the public. He opposed Indira Gandhi through his writings during emergency period (1975-77). Later, disillusioned with Congress party's rule in the state of AP, he supported NT Rama Rao, who started a new party, Telugu Desam (TDP). He made his news paper read even by villagers who never had the habit of reading a news paper. The news was so authentic that people believed certain things if only they appeared in Eenadu. He extended his services to farmers by starting a magazine for them to educate and advise them in matters of agriculture. He started publishing many magazines related to cine field and Telugu literature. He started a Journalism School too to create value based

journalists. Ramoji Rao was Chairman for the Editors Guild of India for some time.

Ramoji Rao is interested in culture. He started making movies which are different from commercial ones. His movies reflected culture of Telugu people and Indian values. He wanted to build a huge studio and turned a land of rocks into one of the most beautiful places in India. The world class facilities in 'Film City' are comparable only with Disneyland.

With change in times Ramoji Rao entered the field of TV and started ETV. Along with his Eenadu newspaper, ETV channel became very popular and Ramoji Rao became a member of almost every house in AP as people almost got addicted to these two. Soon ETV extended its wings to so many states with regional language versions. Ramoji Rao's Dolphin Hotel and Priya Foods division are also successful business enterprises.

Ramoji Rao is a man of destiny. He changed the lives of so many people by starting a chit fund company, Margadarsi. Innumerable chit fund companies have come and gone but Margadarsi is serving people for several decades now without a

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single complaint from any of its lakhs of customers. That speaks of the moral stand and administrative abilities of Ramoji Rao's group of businesses. Many lower and middle class people found a way to save their small amounts with better interest rates than in bank accounts.

Ramoji Rao is a humane man. He believed that it is his duty to take part in

social service. He did a lot when there were natural calamities. He built more than a hundred houses for those affected in calamities. He employed so many people in his institutions and looked after them as a benevolent boss.

Considering all his activities and his undeterred journey with truth Ramoji Rao richly deserves 'Bharat Ratna'.

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### **" PROMISE YOURSELF "**

**To make all your friends feel  
that there is something in them  
To look at the sunny side of everything  
and make your optimism come true.**

**To think only the best, to work only for the best,  
and to expect only the best.  
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others  
as you are about your own.**

**To forget the mistakes of the past  
and press on to the greater achievements of the future.  
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times  
and give every living creature you meet a smile.**

**To give so much time to the improvement of yourself  
that you have no time to criticize others.  
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear,  
and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.**

**To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world,  
not in loud words but great deeds.  
To live in faith that the whole world is on your side  
so long as you are true to the best that is in you.**

*Christian D Larson*

## ON ADVERTISING

Padmanabhan Thothadri \*

Whatever be the tastes of the viewers of t.v., they cannot help taking note of the certainly rude and often crude Intrusions on their attention/notice/ temporal resource, through advertising agencies marshalling their wits on behalf of clients of a bewildering variety, in the political, commercial, industrial, medical, educational and like fields where successful and endless courting of public favour is a precondition for entry, existence, survival, expansion in existing areas, extension into new areas.

No doubt these days, merit even where it is a reality, unless it is 'duly' published (by the self may be, or by someone else) goes undiscovered or unnoticed. And even where merit is a fiction, and any claim of possession thereof is more likely to be founded in the power of the 'ego,' in the 'self' which is 'all in all,' in 'imagination' branching forth in self-praise or praise by others, it is sure to be taken for truth/ fact by those to whom it is addressed, only when the fiction and its likes are created by/through advertisement. Here are lines from a comic verse, very apt for the occasion and the theme: "The codfish lays 10000 eggs,/ The homely hen lays

one./The codfish never cackles/ To tell you what she has done,/ And so we scorn the codfish,/ . While the humble hen we prize/ Which only goes to show you/ *That it pays to advertise.*"

There are quite a few demerits/ disadvantages 'displayed' by the act of advertising, call it art, science, skill or whatever. Some such are mentioned here in brief: 1.The effort through which the advertiser seeks to effect a change in the target of his endeavour may be no better than an attempt at bare, decidedly less than moral effort and in this respect it compels agreement with the author of this remark: "Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil as those who steal from the public purse." Many thinkers will be hard put to it to avoid any firm conclusion about whether the effect intended and often produced through advertising will make it eligible for any description except 'corruption.'

Further, there is this view, of the nature of a firm conclusion not easily ignored, about 'opinion:' "Opinion is ultimately determined by the feelings and not by the intellect." And advertisement is a practice intended virtually entirely to sway feelings and not intellect. May we not put to use the following rhyme to lend strength

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to the point: *"by happy alchemy of mind/  
They Turn To money all They find "*

There is this to be acknowledged about advertisement, propaganda and the like: *"craft must have clothes. but Truth loves To go naked."* even when by any chance, advertisement is based on half Truth, let us not fail To Take note of The wisdom in *"half The Truth is often a great lie."* Those who favour guiding Their conduct with: *"speak no more Than The Truth: utter no lies."* would Take care enough To avoid The profession it self."

And should we not also acknowledge the point forced on attention thus: "The tongue (and let us add, the pen) lack bones, but they break prejudice and preference barriers and cut purses." And we should remember that the human tongue does an endless lot of advertisement, of ever so many things, in ever so many ways, to ever so many targets, on ever so many occasions.

And can we truthfully maintain that we have uniformly displayed *"responsible self- Direction"* whenever we fall for advertisements?!

And is it getting to be a painful reality that *"The world belongs To The enthusiast (advertiser) who keeps cool and The Victim enthusiasts who grow Too warm."*

Most advertising effort is purposefully aimed at those in whom self-love is a determinant of response/reaction to ever so many things experienced by them. What does the poet say? *"self-love in nature*

*rooted fast,/attends us first and leaves us last."*

Advertising is also in a definite sense a test of character, of self-discipline and like qualities both of head and heart. Reaction thereto will indicate the extent to which the target (any may be the target) is prepared voluntarily to muzzle himself, when may be self-pity may have mounted an assault on state of being; and the state of being might already have been constantly beset by 'aspirations, ambition, a spirit of emulation and the like' which might, however weakly, have generated some kind of competitive tendency leading to comparison of his lot with that of others better placed than he.

There is one principle of psychology, a deep-rooted tendency of normal human nature which is set forth thus: "it is only through the approval of others that self can tolerate the self." To reinforce this is the truth: "self-love is the greatest of flatterers." And thus all the more difficult to fight against and fight off. And what easier (may be costlier, what if?) way of securing such approval, than your besporting on your person the likes of something worn (may be for just the advertisement) by this cinestar, that cricket champion, this fist-fighter, that wrestler and so on!

And even the appetite, taste-buds and whatever starts racing in the digestive track of the viewers are expected to start over-working, on sight of advertised 'chaos' of 'dishes.'

The very awareness, constant and beyond that unremitting, persistent and often demanding, of *“The Difference between what we are and what we could be far more accurate To say ‘what we would like To be, what we could appear To be,” (?)* far stronger than on the intellectual and spiritual fronts, on the personal and appearance front, provides the motive force in the response/reaction to advertisements. Enough is said to establish it for a stern fact that advertising is neither a single nor a simple theme.

To reinforce the point, let us turn to advertisements (they seem to be no better), though they are for publicity in respect of a theme not of terra firma, though the addressing is done of those of terra firma. Places of worship/pilgrimage have now to take their due place (and what is and what could/should be their due place?) among the contenders for public attention and public and private resources. It is hard to conclude whether they are holding their own among the contenders, yielding or advancing. Tourism as a theme for advertising, let us hope, will make at least a gradual advance in the race for resources - private and public alike - still in the possession of or within the reach of the public, the race ‘mounted’ by demands for effective notice (effective of course to the extent of parting with the resources being aimed at) by commercial etc. agencies, spiritual agencies, semi-governmental (like L.I.C.?) agencies, hospital agencies and the like.

Let us now move on to another aspect of advertising these days which makes it plain that most of the advertising agents have no very flattering notion of current culture; through the mode of advertising they favour, they make it too plain that they don’t at all have a very favourable/flattering notion of the extent of its decline. Curves and curvaceousness seem to be most popular among the advertising agents’ weaponry. Their imagination rarely seems to extend farther. Those in the field of acting, be the stage therefor what it may, seem to command high regard in the presentation of an appeal of any kind for any product/service for virtually any occasion. The advertising agents will doubtless have made a very flattering assumption about a certain tendency in most viewers to “titillation,” a certain readiness in most viewers to ride their imagination with a slack rein, and rely, to a sickening (they may not be ready ever to acknowledge this) extent on feminine presence in advertisements, regardless of theme, be it advertisement for food, steel, or what it may. From this point, we shall take just a short by-path, to come back to this main theme.

Such appeals are attended with a certain measure of success perhaps or invariably because these days even in politics ‘narishakthi’ comes in for insistent reference, appeal and what not. So, narishakthi has naturally to demand its due place and space in and through advertisement. At this point there is a point of vast interest made by

a psychologist: ‘.....out of every five women-haters, only one is a man. The other four are women.’ If by any chance (or mischance!) this point is to be held to be fairly conclusive, not having to be challenged by further study, a necessary line of enquiry will be: will advertising agencies have to search/look for support for their persuasive efforts, among men rather than women! We shall leave this line of enquiry one with a big question mark hanging at the end thereof.

Now we come to the parlous need experienced by God-head, (or on his behalf, by the manager of his affairs), right there at thirumalai, where God is not supposed to have a bare minute even to spare for anything other than heeding the bhakthas. We see that there too God’s will (though not time, considering that he has none to spare) is ‘snatched’ by mortals and put to use for commercial/trading ventures, and the outcome is the need felt by the ‘venturers’ to ‘advertise.’ Daily don’t we see advertisements on behalf of the God, relegated doubtless to the background both in the matter of decision on setting up of the commercial ventures, on advertising therefor and such, to produce stuff supposed to meet human needs like those covering virtually every part of the human frame?

There is a great deal more to say about advertising. We shall content ourselves with just reproduction of three views about it, to drive home the rather bitter lesson that any line of human effort calling for any

kind/extent of investment of resources of any kind, right there at the point of planning the investment, should plan simultaneously for considerable investment of “wits” and *other resources* in advertisement. Of these three views one is a comparison with/to bombardment, of which the effectiveness depends on keeping it up. One is the interesting remark: “*The business which Does not advertise is paying for The space used by it’s competitor*” The third one is the equally interesting likening of ‘the man who stops advertising to save money to the man who stops the clock to save time.’

There would seem to be no better conclusion than the reproduction of a crisp truth: “*Intelligent, Effective Advertising Is not an expense – it is insurance against The loss of business That The other fellow is fighting for.*” But ever at the back of the mind of the advertising agent should be a caution suggesting necessary limits to the slackness of the rein with which it is prepared to ride the horse (often a wild colt, a male racehorse).

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*"it is the advertiser who provides the paper for the subscriber. it is not to be disputed, that the publisher of a newspaper in this country, without a very exhaustive advertising support, would receive less reward for his labour than the humblest mechanic."*

**- Alexander Hamilton**



## **GITA MEHTA'S SNAKES AND LADDERS: A STUDY OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY**

**N. Satishkumar <sup>1</sup>**

**Dr.Mukta Gupta <sup>2</sup>**

Gita Mehta, in her fiction and non-fiction, has dealt with the paradox of the old and the new as a significant component of Indian culture. Scholars tend to believe that the twin factors of tradition and modernity are not antithetical to each other, as some earlier thinkers used to consider. They always co-exist, drawing regularly from each other and work together for the progression of society. Taking into consideration the observations of the scholars on the aspects of tradition, modernity, modernization and westernization, the present article is an effort to study Gita Mehta's attempt to explore the dual strands of the Indian ritualistic past and its modern rationalistic present, their interaction and their impact on the Indian culture. For this study, Mehta's non-fiction *Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of Modern India* is being taken into consideration.

Gita Mehta, a prolific writer of the Indian Diaspora, has emerged as an Indo-English postcolonial writer of eminence. She has been able to secure a place for herself

in the galaxy of Indian women novelists by contributing in the form of fiction as well as non-fiction. *Karma Cola* (1979), *Raj* (1993), *A River Sutra* (1993), *Snakes and Ladders* (1997) and *Eternal Ganesha* (2006) are her major contributions. Gita Mehta is one of the greatest exponents of Indian culture. She deals with its complex ethos by exploring its various aspects like spiritualism, the east-west cultural cross-currents, renunciation, mythology, deep rootedness of Indian values in spite of the acceptance of modern means of living, folk traditions etc. The complex nexus between the traditional and the modern currents of Indian culture is one of her dominant themes and is also the present point of study in this paper which is being explored through the writer's non-fiction, *Snakes and Ladders*.

Romila Thapar defines tradition as "the handing down of knowledge or the passing on of a doctrine or a technique" (267). It is a belief or a way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people and has maintained its existence through the element of transmission. Etymologically the English word "tradition comes from the Latin noun "tradition whose verb form trade here means to transmit or to hand

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over for safekeeping. Any kind of variation in a tradition is conceivable, if there is an acceptance of the contemporary milieu to develop a fresh mind-set for the benefit of the concerned cultural group or society in general. A novel set of values emerge giving rise to a sense of newness or what may be termed as modernity.

Modernity is a form of time perception which is based on the concept of "now. To be modern, implies a manner of apprehending the world towards its fuller development.

Tradition and modernity are not antithetical elements as used to be the belief of the earlier scholars. Naresh K. Jain calls it "a colonial construct" (10). He quotes from Heesterman who states, "We are prone to overstress the stability of traditional societies and the upheaval caused by modernization"(10). The later thinkers believe that tradition and modernity should be considered only in relation to each other. Peter Wade, in his study on an anthropological approach to modernity, cites from Barry Smart: "term derives from the fifth century Latin term, *modrenus*, used to mark an official transition from the pagan to the Christian" (49). Smart observes that the term "modernity" and tradition are relational terms as "they do function dialogically ... in relation with each other ... Satisfyingly asymmetrical in their relation, they require us, in talking of one, to talk also of the other ... ("Mirror to Mirror" 31). But individually they have separate connotations. It can be inferred that modernization consists of industrialization, urbanization, education, wealth and

diverse occupational opportunities while tradition is a cultural force in a particular socio-cultural setting. However, positive growth of a society is the outcome of the hybridization of the two. Ashis Nandi, while expressing his views on social transformation, also maintains, "Unmixed modernism is no longer fashionable, not even the modern world" (252). Shedding the unproductive elements of modernity and incorporating the creative aspects of the present and the past gives rise to modernization. The modern trends of today, when exist for a long time, become the traditions of tomorrow and the progression goes on.

Some thinkers assume that westernization and modernization are synonymous to each other but both the processes are different and play different roles. Westernization is a practice wherein the influenced ethnic group adopts the western ideologies not only in the areas of industry, technology and economics, but also in the cultural tenets of law, lifestyle, diet, clothing, language, religion, philosophy and values. Westernization often uses repressive tendencies to influence a traditional culture which can be precarious as it may lead to a cultural collapse and lack of innovation. The western advocates undermine, as Conrad Philip Kottak asserts, "the fact that the models of culture that they have created are inappropriate for settings outside of Western civilization" ("Westernization"). Instead, during modernization there is an attempt to uplift the weaker groups economically and scientifically, within the frame-work of the native culture,

amalgamating the positive aspects of the West with indigenous knowledge, resources and opportunities. Aliceve agrees that this process makes "the society self-sufficient ... (that) looks towards the present and existing treasures in ones own culture ...."

Indian independence has been the beginning of a process of social and political progression for Indians. However, the greatest irony of this progression is its baffling amalgamation of the western rational approach and the traditional ritualistic attitude. India has sent satellites into space and has marked a global presence in the field of Information Technology. Indians are becoming more and more technology savvy but they are tradition loving people. The columnist Jug Suraiya, going along with this idea, but getting a bit critical, asserts: "Despite this our mindset remains anchored in social prejudices and superstitions more in keeping with the 12th century than the 21st... it seems to regress in terms of social values and norms". In fact, Indians seem to live simultaneously in the two widely separated time-frames with an unbelieving elasticity. In this social milieu of the old and the new, Indians cherish a pattern of life which is probably a gift of its ancient culture. Richard Lannoy, while attempting to trace the social and cultural ideas that inspired the reformist and the nationalist movements in India, comments: "Re-orientation consists of two strands, Westernization and Indianization; their synthesis results in a modernized Great Tradition, usually called Universalization" (243). This "modernized Great Tradition"

or "Universalization" is the coexistence of the traditional and the modern ideologies prevailing in the Indian society.

Gita Mehta, in her works, has allocated the contradiction of the old and the new as an important element of Indian culture. Taking into consideration the opinions of scholars on tradition, modernity, modernization and westernization, this article is an Endeavour to study Gita Mehta's exploration of the interaction of the twin aspects of the Indian sacramental past and its modern rational present, their interaction and their impact on the Indian culture as depicted in her non-fiction *Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of Modern India*.

## **2. CONFLUENCE OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY**

*Snakes and Ladders* is a collection of essays, compiled in a snapshot style, in which she explores the post-colonial modern India of awe-inspiring contradictions. Although some critics do not find the style appealing, Gita Mehta, defending her technique, in her interview with Wendy Smith asserts, "... there's that constant tension and contradiction of immense sophistication and an almost pre-medieval way of life. I thought the only way I could describe that collision was anecdotally, by taking snapshots, as it were" ("*Gita Mehta: Making India Accessible*"). The book is a panoramic view of the fifty four years of the socio-cultural, economic and political changes that took place due to India's transformation from colonization to decolonization and finally to the prevailing globalization.

Explaining her purpose behind this book, the author says that she intends to make modern India accessible to Westerners as well as to Indians. She further adds, "I am a camera and the reader can see through my eyes" ("Gita Mehta: Making India Accessible"). Her analysis illustrates that changing ethos of the contemporary Indian scene is a unique blend of the current and the conventional. The title, *Snakes and Ladders*, illustrates ups and downs of India's movement from an ancient land towards that of modern enlightenment. As per the review of Giuffrida, it is an "entertaining illustration of India's struggle to become modern without shrugging off the mantle of its rich and diverse history." The subtitle *A View of Modern India*, hides multiple concerns like culture and lifestyle, villages and cities, tradition and science, national and global interests.

The complexities of India have always bemused the world. Gita Mehta expresses similar kind of doubt in the opening line of the 3rd chapter of the book, "... I am not sure what India is" (*Snakes and Ladders* 18). The closest she comes to an answer to this query when she was driving through the jungle in eastern India and chanced to see a wooden plaque nailed to a tree and the words written on it were, "WELCOME TO INDIA - LAND OF HOARY ANTIQUITY AND FABULOUS CONTRAST" (18). It is the bewildering contrasts that have given rise to the cliché that India is not really a nation. Scholars believe that it is not even a single civilization. Gita Mehta, in her attempt to define India, writes, "Certainly it is not a nation with the diamond-hard convictions of national identity which

inspire many other countries ....

Rather, it is several civilizations in separate stages of development, co-existing despite their contradictions" (19). Definitions for India are hard to come, but there are some great descriptions. Mark Twain, dedicating his travel experiences to the land of contrasts, that is India, expressed his feeling of awe: "the sole country under the sun that is endowed with imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, the one land all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe combined" (Cited in *Snakes and Ladders* III). It has been noted that India is a civilization, and civilization is always a process; not a being but a becoming. Even today this observation proves relevant. India has managed to stay a civilization but is still unpredictable.

The pre-colonial era, in which the whites and the natives came in proximity with each other, has its own share of the amalgamation of such contrasts. Mehta highlights the irony pervading in the attitude of a band of young but modern freedom fighters who were supposed to be patriotic to the core. She writes with a touch of cynicism, "Styling themselves freedom fighters, frequently forced to go underground for their political activities against the British Empire, when they were not in jail they spent an inordinate amount of time dancing the rumba, the tango, the foxtrot, and hoping that the British departure from India was imminent"

(Snakes and Ladders 3). However, they should not be blamed for imbibing this rare mixture of patriotism and westernization as their action appears to be a youth's curiosity to know a new culture. Above all, we must not forget that it was among such youthful and modern patriots that many rose to the cause of fighting against the British. Mahatma Gandhi himself used to wear English dresses when he went to London for studying Barristership.

Mehta brings in the inter-play of tradition and modernity when she takes up the issue of inter-caste marriages performed in the colonial era. In a traditional society of those days, arranged marriages in the same caste were the accepted pattern. The nationalist movement broke so many taboos, related to women, prevalent in the conventional Indian society. Mehta talks about her mother, a freedom fighter, who was raised in purdah, used to play sitar, read classical Sanskrit and recite Persian quatrains. This kept her away from any influence of the contemporary British culture but not for long. After marriage her father taught her "... mother ballroom dancing. Then he taught her to play bridge. Then he put her on a bicycle, pushed it until she pedaled well enough to retain her balance... (Snakes and Ladders 5). Mehta speaks about her grand-mother who "had broken iron convention by marrying a prominent nationalist who was a Muslim from Northern India" ("Upfront Daughter..."124). She relates this breaking of convention and adopting a modern stand by a woman with "entering into an unknown world where they were forced to discover their own strengths" (Snakes and

Ladders 10).

One of the significant qualities of Indian culture is that it has never been static. India has always welcomed foreign cultures in their various forms, whether they came through merchants, tyrants or preachers accepting the best out of them. In spite of having a bitter past of communal blood-bath, we have innumerable examples of civilized tolerance of mutual faith. Mehta interestingly describes a tree in Bombay which houses on one side "a white plaster Christian cross. On another is a small image of the elephant-headed Ganesha, the Hindu God of protection. On the third side is a small concrete alter on which worshippers place the Koran when they pray to Allah" (Snakes and Ladders 24). While it might be difficult for the purists to digest the cosmopolitan nature of Indian culture, such acceptance has only resulted in the enrichment which in itself is part and parcel of the process of its modernization.

Mehta believes that the open-gate policy of Indian culture has provided it with special kind of stamina which on one side enriches the culture but on the other motivates Indians to retain their own conventions and identities. The author discusses about Japanese culture which fostered an "impenetrable civilization" (Snakes and Ladders 24), but their traditional dresses like Kimonos are hardly visible now. In India saris, dhotis and lungies are still worn by multitudes making their trade a great contributor to the Indian economy. India, despite her modernity, has retained such elements of Indian culture, in the words of Gita



Mehta"... not in defiant chauvinism but because quite simply that is how we dress" (24).

Indian culture also drives its strength from the cultural uniformity even among the economically diverse people. Mehta, during one of her tours to the Indian capital, came across a group of rag-pickers, collecting rags from the foul smelling garbage dumps. They were mostly women and kids while their husbands and fathers were working as labourers at road construction or building sites. They had been displaced from their native places in order to escape from the cruel clutches of money lenders. Moved by their pathetic plight, Mehta talked to them and came to know about the sharp contrast between their past and present. One of them was from the Bhoomiya tribe which traditionally consisted of the path-finders for travellers guiding them through deserts and jungles of Rajputana. The other was from the community of Bhats, the travelling storytellers, who used to recite in verse about the grandeur and the gallantry of kings. However, a young rag-picker from this community was found using the historical lyrics of bravery "to frighten the vultures away while he looks for rags" (Snakes and Ladders 38). The irony of the situation baffles Mehta and she moves on to the contractor of the rag-pickers. Mehta's short dialogue with him reveals that people like rag-pickers, however filthy their work might be and however poor they might be are an undisputable part of Indian culture. The contractor utters, "I know I deal in filth," he said ruefully. "But filth is my Laxmi. My Goddess of Wealth" (40). The

obvious paradox is of the traditional Hindu belief which states that goddess Laxmi is a symbol, not only of wealth, but also of purity. Ironically, the rag-pickers' wealth is the filth that provides them with money. They are the silent worshippers of rags - the Laxmi of their poverty.

The very awareness of the contractor regarding goddess Laxmi makes him as well as the other rag-pickers an integral part of Indian culture. Unfortunately this section of the Indian society appears to be the victim of a reverse movement wherein the bards of the yesteryears have degenerated into the rag-pickers of the present India.

In *Snakes and Ladders*, Gita Mehta highlights the progressive sensibilities of the colonial and the post-colonial Indian women. Sharing her information on one such women's organization, Gita Mehta, informs that this was a group of poor women who owned their own bank. "... the poorest women in Ahmadabad", the novelist adds, "pooled the meager sums they earned and started their own co-operative bank (Snakes and Ladders 43). In the early fifties, years before feminism became popular in the West, these women of Ahmedabad had started a Self-Employed Women's Association and called themselves S.E.W.A. (43). The association was founded in 1952 and today S.E.W.A.s bank "boasts twenty-five thousand savings accounts" (45). Traditionally Indian women are supposed to be physically weak and highly docile in their behavior, living incessantly with a mute surrender under the patronage of

the male domination. However, in India there have been many cases of women who have shown exemplary feats of courage, taking serious responsibilities on their feminine shoulders that would defy even the strongest of men. Maharani Laxmi Bai and Sarojini Naidu are some to be remembered for their bold exploits. Sarojini Naidu, Mehta reports, "Shocked Indian sensibility by marrying beneath her own high caste. Such women were fearless, whether they were on the barricades or... leading marches against mounted police" (Upfront Daughter 124). Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the second woman in the world to be sworn in as a prime minister, (The first being Mrs. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka) who administered India for 15 years in two reigns, respectively from 1966 to 1977 and from 1980 to 1984. Although the author has been quite critical of Mrs. Gandhi's policies, she acknowledges the fact that Mrs. Gandhi could get the recognition of international import representing the contemporary woman of modern India. This contrast of the traditional and the contemporary could very well be observed even after almost half a century has elapsed after the Indian independence.

In her attempt to further highlight the contrasts of Indian culture, Gita Mehta discusses the crucial issue of the contrasting claims of the ancient craft and mechanization. Europeans may have come to the east looking for spices but soon they entered into trading with India on the Indian textiles. The Indian weavers created wealth of such magnanimity that the nations of Europe fought for supremacy over India's cloth. The Britain exported

raw cotton from India to the mills of England and later started importing "... those gods of progress, the machines of the Industrial Revolution, into India" (Snakes and Ladders 52), robbing the Indian weavers of the source of their income. The ancient Indian art of weaving was so much ingrained in the Indian way of life that it received an international acclaim not only as an art but also as a reflection of Indian culture. The author comments, "This precise paradox - craft and machine, an ancient culture or contemporary progress - haunts India today" (53). At present, the cottage industries of Indian weavers like Khadi Gram Udhogys still co-exist with the machine and survive. But they have to face a tough competition with the mechanized and computationally designed cloth and readymade garments. The modern Indians might consider the cultural craft as backward, but they do buy goods from the craft emporiums as the antique seem to be in vogue today. Mehta makes use of the spinning wheel or the Chakra, depicted in the centre of the Indian flag, as a symbol to emphasize upon the paradox of craft and machine. Gita Mehta adds: "A large school of Indian thought believes the spinning-wheel in the centre of the Indian flag is symptomatic of all that is backward in India. Symbols once useful in expelling a foreign empire and its exploitations are now dangerous anachronisms in a country where ... wealth must come from increasing and more efficient mechanization" (53). However, the co-relation of the Chakra of the Indian flag with a spinning-wheel seems to be misfit as in reality, it is King Ashoka's Chakra. Gita Mehta's article on

Ashoka, written after Snakes and Ladders, clarifies the point. She writes, "... modern India defines her sovereign status by two symbols from Ashoka's reign - the wheel in the center of our flag and the pillar crowned by four lions stamped on our coins .... these 2,300-year-symbols were not mere deference to antiquity; they were to inspire us to create a country governed by righteousness" ("Ashoka, Beloved of the Gods" 21). The Ashoka Chakra carries an aura of infinite variety as it can be inferred as a symbol that links a two and a half millennium old tradition of Ashoka's Dharma with the modern India's efforts to define herself by this symbol.

In spite of the emergence of modern technology, there are millions of craftsmen in India who are dependent on their crafts for their living. Here Mehta's viewpoint may be noteworthy when she affirms, "If twenty three million craftsmen depend on India's culture for their living, India's very culture depends on giving them a living" (Snakes and Ladders 56). This shows that the inter-dependence of Indian culture and the traditional art of India is possible only with a living culture like India whose roots are deep and strong and are always ready to withstand the test of time.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the reinforcement of Indian traditions is not at the cost of the scientific advancement which surprisingly goes on at a much faster rate than ever before. In the electronic age new gadgets are arriving. A few years ago, we were not allowed to import colored television sets but today the latest variety of color TVs are manufactured in India.

India-made computers, fax machines, telephone answering machines, mobile phones are making it possible for Indians to be a part of the global future. Mehta personifies this proximity of the old and the new through the image of an old villager, outside his mud and stone house "lying on his perennial string bed, a bullock or two tethered in the background, near an Indian car parked under the shade of a tree. The farmer himself will be drawing on his hookah and talking into a cellular telephone..." (Snakes and Ladders 81). Nowhere does science and tradition come so close as one observes in India. It surely leaves Westerners puzzled.

Another instance that brings the focus back on the confluence of ritualism and technology in India occurred when the novelist visited a typical Indian bazar strewn with dirty plastic bags and red streaks of betel juice. She saw a French lady standing in front of a video shop shouting angrily, "Do you know what these video people are doing? ... They have put religious rituals on film! Imagine switching on a machine so that your priest can chant prayers while you prostrate yourself in front of the television! ... People are worshipping their videos! (Snakes and Ladders 80). Mehta did not say anything but thought to herself, "This is India. We worship air-conditioners and computers and cash registers and bullock carts - in an annual ritual called Weapon Worship" (80). A westerner may consider it a scandal but Mehta considers it as a celebration. On this aspect, Usha Bande comments, "Modernization and ritualistic attitude stay cheek by jowl in India and that is probably

her beauty or let us say her post modernism " (168). Even in modern India, people of almost all the religions offer garlands to machines and computers hoping for an auspicious outcome. As per one of the estimates of Gita Mehta, by the end of the 80s, five thousand Indians were working on computers while today a quarter of a million Indians are producing software which is being bought by multi-national IT companies. India's youngest industry is also among the fastest growing one. Although this has led to the problem of brain- drain, many migrants - technocrats, professionals and doctors do not want to lose their bonds with a world of close family ties, traditions and festivals. The real India is one where the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, the past and the present meet in order to create an integrated future or the one as the writer calls, "... framed by the old India, determined to take advantage of the breaks that are coming its way" (Snakes and Ladders 82).

### 3. DISTORTION OF MODERNITY

In the proud exaltation of Indian values and the nation's march towards modernity, the bleak aspects of Indian culture cannot be overlooked. There have been instances of the unreasonable adherences to the practices like Sati, child marriages, shaving of a widow's head as a sign of one year mourning and blind idolatry of fake spiritualists. Although, it can be observed that the modern India has achieved a good deal of technical advancement, (Mehta also talks about India's march of technology) facts do indicate that still the country has to go a long way in achieving the research

standards of the West. Mehta brings the spotlight on this matter in *Snakes and Ladders* when she refers to an incident of 1987 in Rajasthan where a girl of just eighteen burnt herself on her husband's funeral pyre in full view of the thousands of spectators. Although sati practice has been banned in India for nearly two centuries, this "modern sati" (*Snakes and Ladders* 186) drew hordes of pilgrims, journalists from national and international press and women's rights groups among variety of insinuations about "the woman been forced to burn herself, (moved) by the avarice of her husband's family .... Or was it a plot in which all the villagers were involved" (187). although the novelist has not notified the name of the widow, from the given details it appears to be the infamous Roopkanwar sati case which was a deliberate attempt to prove the survival of the ancient tradition. Mandakranta Bose, in her article on the issue of sati, states that the advocates of the crime claimed that the act "reiterated the ancient values of Hindu society and rediscovered the power of spiritual and physical self-sacrifice ... (21). It has been reported that people still place garlands on the site of the immolation. Here one may notice how a bizarre happening makes a progressive India suddenly regress into the past of dominant conventionality. But when a reporter enquired if any of the village women was also likely to perform sati, he got a shocking answer: "Only if our husbands agree to burn themselves on our funeral pyres if we die first" (187). Mehta takes up the issue of matrimonial demands and she finds a dramatic change in the last few years. In addition to the reducing

number of advertisements on same caste marriages, what she finds poignant is "the willingness to marry widows ..." (185). Progression to regression and back to progression, such stunning contrasts can only be seen in India and they are sufficient to bemuse any distant observers of Indian culture. But certainly India is changing as the past has always paved the way for the present. . Jawaharlal Nehru, in his much acclaimed book *Discovery of India*, claims that in spite of India's weaknesses the positive aspect of her culture is its continuity which is marked by "a desire for synthesis between the old and the new. It was this urge and desire that kept (her) going and enabled (her) to absorb new ideas while retaining much of the old" (55).

Modernity is always welcomed when it goes in the right direction serving a national purpose of universal progress but it is not something that can be put in a water-tight compartment. Instances of distortion of modernity are common in India and westernization is one of its results. Mehta, in the chapter titled "The Old Ways" of *Snakes and Ladders*, focuses on the modern dismantled counter-part of traditional Indian knowledge. The ancient scriptures and the history of India talk at length about the knowledge evolved on this land through meditations of sages who in turn and as the religious scriptures propagate, were in communion with Gods. The author highlights that the ancient Indian disciplines of Ayurveda, Yoga, Mantras and Vastushastra were designed "to help mankind find the poise and balance necessary for stillness ... to "release energy" (*Snakes and Ladders*

208), achieve self-realization and develop spiritual coherence with the Almighty. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian art of healing, manifests itself in physical, mental and spiritual forms. Its main concern, as the author also surmises, is the well-being of human soul (209). The basic principle of Vastushastra, the Indian treatise on architecture, is "to allow the energies of the earth's magnetic fields to enter from all sides" (209) of a house. Mehta reports that such ancient disciplines are being presented today through their modern versions. She appears pained to feel that the modern context of such traditional know-how has been disharmonized in order to achieve monetary goals. Ayurveda seems to lose its original sheen when the manufacturers sell "beauty aids" (210) in the name of this ancient science or, to add to this author's comment, mix quick-relief supports to get faster results. In other words, Yoga drifts away from its philosophy when the modern trainers replace it with its hybrid variety of "Power Yoga". It has been defined as a generic term for Ashtanga yoga - a modern-day form of classical Indian yoga ("Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga") while Ann Pizer calls it a "gym yoga" ("Power Yoga"). Vastushastra is sold as commodity to exploit the superstitions and fears of the modern man. Despite her earlier acclamations of India's past and the glorifications of its awe-inspiring contrasts of its past and present, Gita Mehta this time gets critical and asserts that the modern practice of the traditional knowledge has "indeed fragmented a once intact vision of the world in which man is the guardian ... responsible for seeing

its fragile equilibrium is maintained" (Snakes and Ladders 210). Mehta's view on the disharmony of the ancient Indian knowledge is agreeable but if their hybrids are a product of sincere research based on their utility and adaptability to the modern way of life, there seems to be no harm in accepting them.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In Snakes and Ladders Gita Mehta attempts to trace India's 50 years journey since its independence. The book presents an unbiased discourse on good as well as bad conventions of India, the Western influence, the co-existing contrasts of the old and the new and the resulting India's struggling growth towards modernity. The book appears to support the point, what thinkers also advocate, that tradition and modernity cannot be looked upon as unbridgeable extremes and for a balanced growth of a society they always cohabit. Swami Vivekananda caught the pulse of India when he wrote, "On one side is modern Western science, dazzling the eyes with the brilliancy of myriad suns ... on the other are the hopeful and the strengthening traditions of her ancient fore-fathers" ("Modern India" 71). The modern India lives with this conflict and so the great saint questions, "In this violent conflict, is it strange that Indian society should be tossed up and down" (72). It is this dilemma of the Indians that Gita Mehta ventures to exhibit through Snakes and Ladders. The deep rootedness of Indian values, beliefs and superstitions, in spite of the acceptance of modern means of living and the undying tradition of following the scriptures, is an

important aspect of Indian culture. The West regards all such elements as a part of Indian mysticism. Gita Mehta, in her attempt to reinterpret Indian culture, has tried to demystify these concepts in her books. The following excerpt from Mehta's "Foreword" to Snakes and Ladders would be a befitting conclusion to the current study:

Living through our first half-century of nationhood has been a roller-coaster ride, the highs so sudden we have become light-headed with exhilaration, the lows too deep to even contemplate solution, as if the game of snakes and Ladders had been invented to illustrate our attempts to move an ancient land towards modern enlightenment without jettisoning from our past that which is valuable or unique.

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*"we are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the*

*power to make ourselves. if what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it*

*certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in the future can be produced by our present*

*actions; so we have to know how to act."*

*- swami Vivekananda produced by our present*

*actions; so we have to know how to act."*

**- Swami Vivekananda**



## THE STONE PRINCE

- RAFAT FARZANA

Come.....come Madam, and young kid. You have travelled the whole city, but don't go away t Canada without visiting this museum.

Yes, madam, it is evening.... Evening occurs daily. Every day, the east struggles to drag the sun towards the world to create light, and the west sinks into the darkness. Don't worry; before night comes, you will definitely reach your destination. In this museum, there are rare objects collected from different corners of the world. Look! This is the guide book of the museum.... and this is the album... I won't charge for this. You cannot see this museum without my help, madam... You need a guide.

Don't enter the museum now. You see the court of the king in front. Stand here and clap your hands.

The words, "some plaintiff has come." Echo in the whole palace. The king gets up, terrified. Then immediately, all the ministers stand beside him and assure him that it is only a gust of wind, else there is no need for anyone to make a plea in this court. Now take a look... this is a rare clock. One century passed, every hour, a slave comes out of the clock and bangs the drum, as if he wants to wake all those who are sleeping in the palace. Just wait... don't go in... Look at the statues of Negro slaves kept at the door first. Your son

says right madam, the eyes of the slaves were removed and they were masculated because they used to watch the palace of the queens and princesses.

Look! There are so many majestic machine guns at the door of the palace. You are correct young child; in those days when the king conquered a country, the people were stoned; as the time passed, people were killed with swords and guns; and now, atom bombs are tied to their heads and switches are pressed to kill the people... Ha...ha...ha! Come on let's enter the museum.

These are the shoes of King Babar. He entered India wearing these shoes. Now too, those who enter into the field of politics put their feet into these shoes. This is the crown which King Jahangir made for Anarkali... Later; Anarkali's head was removed from the crown.

Now you see...this is the sheath of King Akbar's sword. No! There was no sword in the sheath and they used to scare with the sheath only.

This is the bed room of the king...the cot... all made of gold Seven maidens were waiting with bowed heads in front of the king's bed. Who knows... who would be fortunate on that day?

That is statue of beggar, spreading his hands, asking for alms. It must have been sculpted by some king only.

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I too can't say with certainty, when a king didn't find beggars around him, with hands spread, and so got this statue made.

This is the cap of Mirza Ghalib. Yes! This is too big. Many poets attempted to wear it, but it covered their faces. Ha... Ha. Ha!

Earlier, the manuscript of Mizra Ghalib was in the museum... It is heard that some needy writers auctioned it.

Now you come into this gallery. Here is a collection of the world's rarest paintings.

Look at this... A poet is reciting an ode in praise of the king. This poet's mouth was filled with pearls. In those days, this was the trend for giving awards.

This is the court of another king. All the retinues are standing with closed eyes and bowed heads.

Madam, your son is asking whether this is a parliament house... Ha...ha...ha...

It is said that if people who came to this court were of bigger stature, they would be beheaded to make them short.

This is a collection of rare scripts from around the world. What is written in them is not yet seen.

First you look at this painting, madam. Socrates is being drunk on poison as a penalty for telling the truth.

Yes! Young boy, telling the truth was a sin in those days, as it is today. This is another painting... He is being stoned for his disobediences...young boy. Disobedient people were stoned in the past but as time as time progressed they were killed with swords and guns, and now ticking time

bombs are tied to their heads and switches are pressed to kill.

Yes... the world is progressing continually. This is Egypt's downtown.

Beautiful, partially naked women are attempting to attract the attention of princes and the rich by exposing their beauty and youth. No... young boy, this is not Connaught Palace.

In this frame is a king's message written in golden words. The translation of the script of this message is kept separately.

"The rewards of the two hundred queens of Seraglio were doubled,"

"Freedom for all the ministers."

"Robe of honour and awards for all the princes"

"Punishment and penalty were for all thoughtful youth."

The king has ordered the construction of a hell in the country for the rebels.

These are the ornaments of the queen.

This is the golden cradle of the prince.

These are the king's shoes, ornamented with diamonds and pearls.

This section comprises the rarest statues in the world, madam.

The sculptures have been marvellously carved on the stone the statues of great saints and the world's reputed personalities.

Please consider this madam; you are correct when you say that if stone is carved with love and devotion, it takes the shape of gods, but lecherous hands turn a woman into a stone.

Look at this... This is Meera Bai. It is said that her husband snatched Ek Tara from her hand and also songs from her lips. Now look, she appears to be a stone woman in this museum.

Look at these... pharaohs, Ravana, Mussolini, and Hitler's statues.

If you see it from far, it looks like a real Pharaoh standing to declare his godhood.

This is the line of kings and our leaders who also believed that they were the gods.

They are our ultimate counsellors.

Come near and see young boy... they have ticking time bombs in their hands to declare the destruction of the whole universe, but there is one obstacle. If they destroy the whole world, who will award them with the Nobel Prize.

Now look in front. What a big statue of Mahatma Gautama Buddha! Wherever you may stand, the eyes of Mahatma Buddha are directed towards you.

Madam halt here for a while, close your eyes, listen with care. Buddha asks you, "Whatever you say, listen to it also."

This painting was not here earlier; perhaps it has come just now. This is the last painting by a modern artist. It is said that all his paintings were destroyed. The title of this painting is, 'Stone Prince.'

Sorry madam, I do not know why the painter has given it this title.

The princes usually got the punishment for turning and looking backward, but this prince was turned to stone for the sin of looking ahead.

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### ***To India***

O YOUNG through all thy immemorial years!  
Rise, Mother, rise, regenerate from thy gloom,  
And, like a bride high-mated with the spheres,  
Beget new glories from thine ageless womb!

The nations that in fettered darkness weep  
Crave thee to lead them where great mornings break . . .  
Mother, O Mother, wherefore dost thou sleep?  
Arise and answer for thy children's sake!

Thy Future calls thee with a manifold sound  
To crescent honours, splendours, victories vast;  
Waken, O slumbering Mother and be crowned,  
Who once wert empress of the sovereign Past.

***-Sarojini Naidu***

## HOPE

- Y.M. JAYALAKSHMI

The four candles burn slowly. The ambiance was so soft you could hear them talking. The first one said, "I am Peace! However, nobody can keep me lit. I believe I will go out." Its flame rapidly diminishes and goes out completely. The second one says, "I am Faith! Most of all, I am no longer indispensable, so it doesn't make any sense that I stay lit any longer." When it finished talking, a breeze softly blew on it putting it out. Sadly, the third candle spoke in its turn: "I am love! I haven't got the strength to stay lit. People put me aside and don't understand my importance. They even forget to love those who are nearest to them." And waiting no longer it goes out. Suddenly, a child enters the room and sees three candles not burning. "Why are you not burning? You are supposed to stay lit till the end." Saying this, the child begins to cry. Then the fourth candle said: "Don't be afraid, while I am still burning, we can re-light the other candles, I am Hope!" With shining eyes, the child took the candle of Hope and lit the other candles.

Most of us heard the above story. The beauty of the story lies in its message of retaining hope despite life's ups and downs. Life is not the bed of roses neither it

is the bed of thorns. Everyone experiences failure(s) and faces problems at some point of time in their lives. Some might fail to get a score at school, some might fail to get a job, some might fail to get the love of their life and some might face other failures. One cannot escape from failure at times despite putting in their best. What one should do then? One should try to instill the virtue of HOPE into their life and continue to strive for success.

Problems and failures in our lives are like washing machines. They twist us, spin us and knock us around. But in the end, we come out cleaner, brighter than before. *Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill* rightly said that "*success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.*" Famous personalities did learn lessons from their failures and achieved success in their subsequent attempts without losing their hope. Let us look at some examples to see how these personalities excelled in their endeavours despite failing in their initial attempts.

Famous writer J K Rowling was once unemployed and one of her books "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" was rejected by 12 publishers before it was finally accepted. But today, the Harry

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Potter series is one of the world's most popular characters in fiction. American inventor and businessman Thomas Alva Edison tried over 2000 different experiments before his incandescent light bulb was invented and when a reporter asked him how did he feel to fail so many times he replied, "I never failed once. I invented the light bulb. It happened to be a 2000 step process." That should be the confidence one should have. American film producer, director, screenwriter, voice actor, animator, entrepreneur, entertainer, international icon and philanthropist, Walt Elias Disney was initially fired by an editor of a newspaper because "he lacked imagination and had no good ideas." Later, Disney started several businesses that didn't last long and ended with bankruptcy. But then, he didn't lose his heart and hope. He kept trying and finally found success. Abraham Lincoln was defeated many times and experienced personal tragedies but was elected as President of the United States at the age of 51. Amitabh Bachchan was initially rejected as a radio anchor in an audition test by All India Radio but today he is considered as one of the greatest and most influential actors in the history of Indian cinema.

There is a hidden lesson that we should learn from these examples. All these great personalities didn't lose their hope when they faced problems and failures. They realized that problems and failure in life bring with it an equivalent strength and success as it brings an opportunity to start an activity or thing

more intelligently. *winston c hurchill* says, "*The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.*" How to instill hope and maintain it at all times? There are some simple tips. First and foremost, try to overcome the fear of a failure or a problem and face it boldly with confidence. Don't blame yourself or others and search for the reasons for your problems. It is just a waste of time and makes your life more miserable. Another most important tip is to have continued hope when you are surrounded by problems. You shouldn't give up hope or doubt yourself as you know your capabilities and one problem/failure don't change your inherent strengths. Remember *george weinberg's* words, "*hope never abandons you; you abandon it*" and believe in yourself and your abilities, and put in your best to see the desired results that you cherished.

You can inculcate the virtue of hope and maintain it if you make use of the above tips. *oliver goldsmith* says that "*our greatest glory consists not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.*" One drop and one more and the river flows. One blow and one more and the mountain goes. When you want to create history, all you need to do is to take one step and one more and you will find that anything is possible. Have faith in yourself and always hope for the best, bear the pain confidently, tackle the problems, and bounce back with renewed energy to conquer the world.

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## A SOCIAL REFORMER AND A NOTED WRITER KANDUKURI VIRESALINGAM

- Y. Durga PrasaD

The personification of humanism Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu was born on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1848 in Rajamahendravaram (Rajahmundry). He stands supreme among the modern men of letters as one who served the cause of social reform, journalism and literature with great distinction. If women today play an equal part in life and exhibit wonderful talent along with men in our country, the credit goes largely to Viresalingam.

When Viresalingam was only thirteen years old, his marriage with nine year old Rajyalakshmi took place. He joined the Government School in his twelfth year to learn modern education. In 1870 he completed his school education and passed the entrance examination to get into college education. He had no liking for exams connected with civil, criminal and revenue subjects as he was afraid that they would curtail his freedom to achieve his individual enlightenment. He thought of taking up the legal profession which was considered an independent profession. But, observing his lawyer friends he set aside the idea of joining the legal profession also. Finally he chose teaching profession. He impressed his students and colleagues with

his ability, honesty, and discipline and won their hearts

He started writing in his school days itself. His first poem was titled “Shuddhandra Nirdishtya Nirvachana Naishadam”, the second poem was “Rasika Janamanoharam”. These were followed by “Gopala Shatakam” and “Markandeya Shatakam”. He worked as Head Master in Korangi, Dhawaleshwaram near Rajahmundry. It was here he gave shape to his interest in women’s education. He started giving lectures on the need for women’s education and wrote articles on the subject. He provided impetus for women’s education by establishing a school for girls. Viresalingam published a newspaper “Vivekavardhini” in Dhawaleshwaram. He carried on spirited propaganda on women’s education through his news paper. He criticised the society around him in strong terms for the deceit, immorality and the influence of prostitutes. Kokkanda Venkataratnam grew angry at the writings in Vivekavardhini and started a newspaper called “Hasyavardhini” in which he criticised Viresalingam’s works. Viresalingam responded to this with another newspaper naming it “Hasyasanjivini”.

Viresalingam started writing novels in 1878. He wrote “Rajasekara Charitra”

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on the lines of diver Goldsmith's novel "The Vikar of Wakefield". He translated Kalidasa's "Sakuntalam". He also translated Shakespeare's play "Comedy of Errors", under the title of "Chamatkara Ratnavali" as also Sri Harsha's "Ratnavali". The plays were also preformed on the stage. He translated many other English and Sankrit works. He wrote plays "Prahlada", "Satyaharishchandra" and "Dhakshina gograhanam". He wrote short works like "Mathru Puja", "Pitru Puja", "Satyaa Draupadi Samvaadam", "Sthree Neethi Deepika", etc. He published the histories of 240 telugu poets in three volumes. He wrote the histories of Raja Rammohan Roy, Jesus and Queen Victoria also. He published the life histories of Annie Besant, Ahalya bai, Shankaracharya, Raamanuja and Madhva. His literary activity extended from writing text books for children to the critical assessment of Shruthi and Smrutis. His writings dominated the nineteenth century Telugu Literature spreading like the branches of a huge banyan tree.

He won fame as a social reformer also. Progressive ideas and knowledge of the world were his two props that helped him in the pursuit of his ideas. He said that all were equal in God's view and there should be no room for inequalities and injustice in human society. We find in him a perfect and harmonious blend of three elements of mind, speech and action. He delivered lectures on the method of worshipping God without the need for installing idols.

He gave thought to child-widow remarriages as early as in 1879 and

propagated his idea from public platforms discussing the issues. His opponents wanted to attack him personally. But his students saved him. The youth were highly influenced by his preaching. Students came forward saying they were prepared to marry widows. The students made their own donations and held night classes to the children of poor labourers. They visited every house and spoke about widow remarriages. Girls were dressed up like boys. The volunteers walked for miles on end. On 11<sup>th</sup> December 1881, Viresalingam celebrated the first widow remarriage between twenty year old Sreeramulu and Twelve year old Gauramma. Within four days two more child widows were given in marriage to young men. Later widow remarriages took place without any obstacles.

Viresalingam established rehabilitation centre in 1898 in Madras. He was given the title, "Vidyasagar of South India". In 1901 he constructed the "Sangha Samskara Samaja Mandiram". In 1903 he built a prayer hall for women in Rajahmundry. In 1905 he established a school for girls in Rajahmundry. In 1906 he joined the Brahma Samaj.

The personification of humanism, Viresalingam Pantulu passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1919, IN Madras. Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu paid a rich tribute to Viresalingam, saying he was born a hero and died as a hero.

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maDurai meenakshi Temple is one of the oldest temples in India. It is dedicated to goddess Parvati (Meenakshi) and Lord Shiva (Sundareswarar). The temple was built by Pandya Dynasty king Sadavarman Kulasekaran in 12th century AD. The many south Indian kings contributed in adding, maintaining the legacy of this great temple of India. granite marble conglomerate was used in the construction of this temple.



The brihaDeeswara Temple in Tanja  
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