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TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE: INDIAN CULTURE SERIES

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ABSTRACT

This volume in the "Temple Architecture and Sculpture: Indian Culture Series" is an exhaustive investigation of the many and complex architectural and sculptural traditions of India. This series dives into the tremendous importance of temples in Indian culture, stressing their position as not just religious sanctuaries but also as repository of art, history, and spirituality in addition to their religious significance. Temples have functioned as manifestations of architectural brilliance throughout all of India's many regions and historical eras, each reflecting the distinctive cultural and aesthetic sensitivities of its own time period. This series takes a painstaking look at the development of temple building, tracing its roots back to ancient Vedic traditions and examining the stunning stone-carved wonders created by the Chola, Hoysala, and other kingdoms along the way. It exemplifies the captivating mix of geometric accuracy, elaborate embellishment, and spiritual meaning that is characteristic of the architecture of Indian temples. In addition to this, the series examines the sculpting techniques that were used to decorate the temples. It investigates the rich symbolism and the stories that are expressed via the sculptures, which often relate religious epics and mythical tales. This provides insight into the development of India's spiritual and cultural traditions. This series seeks to foster a greater appreciation for India's architectural heritage and its enduring cultural significance by providing a profound and engaging insight into temple architecture and sculpture. By doing so, the series hopes to bridge the gap between the past and the present while also celebrating the enduring beauty and spirituality that these temples embody.

KEY WORDS: Architecture, Historical Eras, Establishment, Spiritual Meanings, Temples.

INTRODUCTION

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the fascinating world of Temple Architecture and Sculpture in India, a trip that will take you through the intricate web of India's cultural and creative history. This is the first article in our series on Indian culture, in which we will dig deeply into the astonishing expressions of Indian inventiveness that have lasted the test of time. The architecture and art of Indian temples are excellent examples of how spirituality, aesthetics, and engineering can be skilfully combined to create a unified

whole. These works of architectural brilliance are not only houses of worship; rather, they are treasuries that store narratives, symbols, and deep philosophical ideas. They are living testaments to the skilled workmanship and unyielding commitment of the individuals who were responsible for their construction. In this series, we will investigate the fine elements of the architectural designs of some of India's most famous temples and go on a virtual pilgrimage to some of the country's most famous religious sites. We will explore the variety and magnificence of Indian temple design, from the soaring vimanas (towering spires) of South Indian temples to the ancient cave temples hewn into rocky cliffs, and we will learn about how these structures got their names. In addition, we will investigate the sculptures that have been painstakingly chiselled to portray gods, goddesses, fantastical beasts, and scenes from ancient epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. These sculptures are affixed to the holy buildings that are adorned with exquisitely carved decorations. We hope that by the end of this series, not only will we have gained an appreciation for the beauties and artistry of Indian temple architecture and sculpture, but we will also have gained an understanding of the cultural and spiritual importance of these structures. Join us on a remarkable journey to explore the awe-inspiring beauty and deep spirituality of India's temples, where art and devotion meet in hypnotic harmony. We will be traveling throughout the country of India.

EARLY TEMPLES

Ancient Indian temples have a fascinating and varied history that reflects India's rich spirituality and architectural heritage. Some of these temples have been there since the 5th century BCE, attesting to India's long-standing religious traditions and its rising architectural prowess. In India, the first religious buildings were cave temples carved out of solid rock. The Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra are one of the best-known examples. Buddhist cave temples, elaborately adorned with murals and sculptures, were carved out of rock in these caverns in the second century BCE. The Ellora Caves, also in the Indian state of Maharashtra, have a wide range of religious architecture, from Hindu and Buddhist temples to Jain places of worship, and they serve as a symbol of the religious tolerance that existed in ancient India. When humans began constructing temples out of stone rather than within caves, a radical shift occurred in terms of design. A stunning example of the skill of ancient Indian craftsmen, the Kailasa Temple at Ellora is hewn entirely from a single block of stone. The god Shiva is worshiped in the temple. From the fourth to the sixth century CE, the Gupta dynasty oversaw significant advances in temple building techniques. Beautiful carvings and intricate sculptures are hallmarks of Gupta-style temples. One such Gupta-style temple is the Dashavatara Temple in Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh. Dravidian temple architecture owes a great deal to the Pallava dynasty, which controlled South India during its formative years. The pyramidal towers and beautiful bas-reliefs of the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram, built in the eighth century CE, are characteristic of this unusual architectural style. Architecturally diverse and spiritually significant, early Indian temples provide light on ancient India's social structure. This helps people become more aware of the religious practices that have been practiced in the nation for centuries.

THE PRIMARY SHAPES OF HINDU TEMPLE

The essential components of a Hindu temple are as follows: (i) sanctum (garbhagriha, meaning 'womb-house'), which started out as a tiny cubicle with a single entrance but expanded into a bigger chamber through time. The garbhagriha, which is designed to hold the main icon and is the focus of many rituals; (ii) the mandapa, the portico or colonnaded hall that provides space for a large number of worshippers; (iii) the mountain-like spire, which in freestanding temples can take the form of a curving shikhar in North India and a pyramidal

tower, called a vimana, in South India; (iv) the vahan, The Nagara in the country's north and the Dravida in its south are the two main temple styles. Some academics have highlighted the Vesar style of temples as a distinct architectural movement that emerged from the deliberate blending of the Nagara and Dravida orders. The numerous sub-styles within these orders have been the subject of in-depth research. Later on in this chapter, we'll get into the details of the various form distinctions. Additive geometry, in which more and more rhythmically projecting, symmetrical walls and niches were added to a shrine without altering its basic layout, was used to generate additional surfaces for sculpture as temples became more elaborate.

ORNAMENTATION, ICONOGRAPHY, AND SCULPTURE

Iconography is a subfield of art history that focuses on the identification of pictures based on the symbols and mythology they are thought to represent. And although the basic narrative and meaning of the god may be consistent through millennia, its particular use at a site may be a reaction to the current social, political, or geographical setting. Images from every era and corner of the globe showcase regional iconographic differences. Exquisite sculpture and ornamentation are integral to the design of the temple. Mithunas (erotic images), navagrahas (nine auspicious planets), and yakshas (guardian spirits) are all placed at entrances to temples for protection. The outside walls of the sanctuary have several depictions of the primary deity in various guises. On the exterior walls of the sanctuary and/or the outer walls of a temple, the deities of directions, i.e. the ashtadikpalas, face the eight main directions. Around the main temple are smaller shrines honouring the deity's offspring or previous incarnations. Finally, different decorative features, such as gavaksha, vyala/yali, kalpa-lata, amalaka, kalasha, etc., have different purposes and are employed in different locations throughout a temple.

NORTH INDIAN TEMPLE STYLE

Nagara refers to the type of temple construction that gained popularity in northern India. Northern Indian temples often include stone platforms with stairways going up to the main shrine. In addition, the region often lacks the ornate boundary walls and gates seen in South India. Later temples often had many shikharas (towers) although the earlier ones often only featured one. Under the highest tower is where the garbhagriha is usually found. Depending on the design of the temple's shikhara, nagara temples may be broken down into a wide variety of subtypes. However, the most frequent term for the basic shikhara that is square at the base and whose walls curve or slope inward to a point on top is the 'latina' or the rekha-prasada kind of shikhara, depending on the region of India you're in. The phamsana is the nagara order's second most important architectural style. Phamsana architecture is often shorter and wider than those of Latin America. Instead of seeming like quickly rising tall towers as in Latin America, their roofs are made up of multiple slabs that gradually rise to a single point over the center of the structure. Phamsana roofs have a uniform, upward slant rather than an inward bend. Phamsana is utilized for the mandapas in many North Indian temples, whereas Latina is used for the main garbhagriha. Later on, the Latina buildings became more intricate, and the temple ceased to look like it supported a single tall tower. Instead, it supported a number of smaller towers, arranged in a cluster like rising mountain-peaks, with the tallest tower located in the centre; this tower was always higher than the garbhagriha. The valabhi kind of nagara structure is the third primary variety. These structures are typically rectangular in shape, with a vaulted ceiling. The circular wall of this domed room recalls the bamboo or wooden carts that ancient bullocks would have pulled. Most often, these structures will be referred to as wagon vaulted. As was previously noted, the temple's design is based on precedents from ancient architecture dating back to before the

fifth century CE. One among them was the valabhi style of architecture. For instance, many of the Buddhist rock-cut chaitya caves have the form of long halls with a curved back, as can be seen by examining their floor plans. The interior of this section's ceiling is likewise vaulted like a wagon.

CENTRAL INDIA TEMPLE STYLE

Many similarities may be seen in the ancient temples of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The most readily apparent is that they are constructed of sandstone. Madhya Pradesh is home to some of the Gupta Period's oldest, still-standing temples. These shrines aren't much to look at; they each have four pillars supporting a little mandapa that's shaped like a porch leading up to a similarly tiny space that serves as the garbhagriha. The two remaining temples are located at Sanchi, next to the stupa, and in Udaigiri, on the outskirts of Vidisha, as part of a larger Hindu complex of cave shrines, the first temple to have a level roof, maybe. This indicates that advances in technology were being used in the construction of religious buildings across both faiths. In the early sixth century CE, Deogarh was constructed in the Lalitpur District of Uttar Pradesh. That is, about one hundred years after the Sanchi and Udaigiri tiny temples we've been studying. This makes it an excellent example of a temple from the late Gupta Period. The main shrine of this temple is located on a square or rectangular plinth, and four smaller subsidiary shrines are located at the four corners (for a grand total of five shrines; thus the term "panchayatana"). The date is further supported by the shikhara's tall and rounded shape. This temple is an early example of the traditional nagara style, as shown by the existence of a rekha-prasada or latina shikhara. The temple's main entrance faces west, and on each side of it are statues of women holding the rivers Ganga (left) and Yamuna (right). Because of the many representations of Vishnu inside the temple, it was once thought to be a dasavatara temple because of the four smaller shrines dedicated to the avatars. In truth, the initial devotees of the four offshoot temples are a mystery. Sheshashayana, Nara-Narayan, and Gajendramoksha are the three principal reliefs of Vishnu that can be seen on the temple walls. Most temples face east or north, but this one faces west, making it quite unusual. Numerous temples of varying sizes have been built throughout time. In contrast, the design and style of the nagara temples had grown considerably if one looked at the temples of Khajuraho built by the Chandela Kings in the eleventh century, i.e. roughly four hundred years after the temple at Deogarh. Dhanga, monarch of the Chandela people, commissioned construction of the Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho in 954. The shrine is dedicated to Vishnu. It's a nagara temple, and it's up on a stair-accessible platform. A horizontal fluted disc called an amalaka is perched on top of a kalash or vase, and there are four lesser temples in the corners. These towers, or shikharas, climb high, upward in a curved pyramidal shape, emphasizing the temple's vertical thrust. Every single nagara temple from this time period has the same amalaka and kalash at its peak.

The temple's protruding verandas and balconies set it apart from its Deogarh counterpart. The Khajuraho, India, Kandariya Mahadeo temple is the pinnacle of Central Indian temple design. This gigantic temple displays, in its construction and sculptures, all the hallmarks of central Indian temples of the medieval era for which they are renowned and admired worldwide. Khajuraho's temples are also well-known for its enormous sexual sculptures; sensual expression is valued just as highly as spiritual endeavour and is considered an integral component of the cosmos. As a result, statues of mithuna (embracing couples) are common in Hindu temples since they are seen as good luck. They may also be seen on the walls between the mandapa and the main shrine, but are most often found near the temple's entrance or on outside walls. The sculptures of Khajuraho are highly stylized, with common features like sharp noses, large chins, long slanting eyes, and thick, arched eyebrows. Most of Khajuraho's many temples honour Hindu deities. There are a few

interesting temples here, including one dedicated to the Chausanth Yogini as well as Jain ones. Small, square shrines carved from crudely hewn granite stones line the walls of this ancient temple, which dates back to before the tenth century and is devoted to the Devis' or goddesses linked with the spread of Tantric worship beginning in the seventh century. Throughout Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and even Tamil Nadu, there were a number of temples worshipping the yoginis. Few of the structures constructed during the seventh and eleventh centuries are still standing.

WEST INDIA TEMPLE STYLE

Too many to mention in any meaningful sense, the temples of Gujarat and Rajasthan, and sometimes extending stylistically into western Madhya Pradesh, are located in north-western India. The stone used to construct the temples comes in a wide variety of tones and textures. Sandstone is the most frequent; however several sculptures from temples built between the 10th and 12th centuries are made of a grey to black basalt. The most extravagant and well-known is the soft white marble, which can also be seen in the Jain temples of Mount Abu, built between the years 1000 and 1200, and the temple of Ranakpur, built between the years 1400 and 1500. Samlaji in Gujarat is one of the country's most significant art historical monuments because it exemplifies how pre-Gupta creative traditions influenced the development of a unique sculpting style in the region. Numerous sculptures carved from grey schist and dated to the sixth to seventh century CE have been discovered in this area. Although its patronage is up for discussion, their stylistic characteristics allow for a reliable dating. In 1026, Raja Bhimdev I of the Solanki Dynasty constructed the Sun temple at Modhera, which makes it an early eleventh-century structure. In front of it stands a huge, rectangular, stepped tank known as the surya kund. The proximity of religious buildings to bodies of water like tanks, rivers, and ponds has been noted since ancient times. They started showing up in churches in the early eleventh century. This rectangular pool measures 100 square meters, making it the largest and most impressive temple tank in India. Inside the tank, 108 little shrines have been carved into the stairwell. In keeping with the style of western and central Indian temples of the period, the sabha mandapa (the assembly hall) is open on all sides. The elaborate carving and sculptural work shows the influence of Gujarat's woodcarving culture. However, the walls of the modest shrine at the temple's centre are left unadorned and uncarved so that the sun may beam in unobstructed during both the spring and fall equinoxes.

EAST INDIA TEMPLE STYLE

Temples in Eastern India may be found all across the region, especially in the Northeast, Bengal, and Odisha. The temples built in these three regions are all somewhat different from one another. Because many ancient buildings in the North-East and Bengal were repaired, the history of architecture in those areas is difficult to analyze because of the prevalence of subsequent brick or concrete temples at the locations of the original structures. It would seem that up to the seventh century, terracotta was the primary material used in Bengal for building and also for moulding plaques that portrayed Buddhist and Hindu deities. Numerous sculptures discovered in Assam and Bengal attest to the growth of significant local schools. An antique carved door frame from DaParvatia near Tezpur in the sixth century and a few stray sculptures from the Rangagora Tea Estate in Assam's Tinsukia district attest to the spread of the Gupta style there. The area maintained its post-Gupta architecture long into the ninth century. Assam, however, evolved its own distinctive style during the 12th and 14th centuries. As the Tai people of Upper Burma migrated to the Guwahati area, they brought with them a new style that eventually merged with the preeminent Pala aesthetic of Bengal to become the Ahom aesthetic. The Shakti Peeth temple of Goddess Kamakhya, the Kamakhya

temple, was constructed in the seventeenth century. The sculptures created in Bengal (including Bangladesh) and Bihar between the ninth and eleventh centuries are known as the Pala style, named after the reigning dynasty, and the sculptures created between the middle of the eleventh and middle of the thirteenth centuries are known as the Sena style, named after the Sena kings. The Palas are revered as sponsors of several Buddhist monasteries, and temples in the area are notable for expressing the Vanga aesthetic. As an example of the early Pala architecture, the Siddheshvara Mahadeva temple in Barakar, Burdwan District, was built in the ninth century and has a towering, curved shikhara topped by a huge amalaka. It looks like other temples built about the same time in Odisha. The passage of time elevates this simple shape. Telkupi, in the Purulia District, was the site of several temples dating from the ninth to the twelfth century. When dams were constructed in the area, they were flooded. These buildings are among the most significant in the area because they demonstrate a familiarity with the whole range of nagara varieties seen elsewhere in northern India. However, in Purulia District, some temples that were built during this time period have survived to the present day. The early Bengal sultanate structures at Gaur and Pandua were profoundly inspired by the temples' black to grey basalt and chlorite stone pillars and arched niches. Bengali temple architecture was heavily influenced by local vernacular construction practices. Among them, the sloping or curving side of a Bengali hut's bamboo roof stood out as particularly distinctive. The Bangla roof, as it is called across North India, was finally even incorporated into Mughal architecture. During the Mughal era and beyond, countless terracotta brick temples were constructed across Bengal and Bangladesh. These temples followed a distinctive style that fused local building techniques (such as those used in bamboo huts) with older forms (reminiscent of the Pala period) and Islamic architectural elements (such as arches and domes). Typically dated to the seventeenth century, they are abundant in the areas around Vishnupur, Bankura, Burdwan, and Birbhum.

Temples in Odisha may be broadly categorized into three classes based on their predominant architectural style: the rekhapida, the pidhadeul, and the khakra. Bhubaneswar, also known as ancient Tribhuvaneshvara, Puri, and Konark are only a few of the major temple sites of the Kalinga—modern Puri District. The temples of Odisha represent a unique branch of the nagara style. The shikhara, known as the deul in Odia, is typically vertical up until the very top, when it curls abruptly inwards. Mandapas, known as jagamohana in Odisha, are traditionally served before deuls. Generally speaking, a square ground design for the main temple gives way to a circular mastaka at the very top of the tower. This gives the impression that the spire is virtually cylindrical in length. The temples' exteriors are elaborately carved, whereas the interiors are often rather sparse. Temples in Odisha often have walls around their grounds. Majestic stone Surya or Sun temple ruins dating back to 1240 stand at Konark on the Bay of Bengal shoreline. The shikhara there was reportedly 70 meters tall, but it collapsed in the nineteenth century because it was too massive for the location. The jagamohana, or dance-pavillion (mandapa), which is no longer in use but is claimed to be the biggest enclosed area in Hindu architecture, is located inside the quadrilateral precinct of the enormous complex. The walls of the Sun temple are adorned with rich, intricate artistic sculpture, and it is perched on a high foundation. These contain seven carved horses pulling a chariot pulled by the Sun deity, as well as twelve pairs of gigantic wheels with spokes and hubs depicting the chariot wheels of the Sun god. As a result, the whole temple looks like a massive chariot used in a parade. A huge surya statue fashioned from green stone dominates the wall to the south. According to legend, there were three such statues, all carved from various stones and placed on the three walls of the temple. The real sunlight entering the garbhagriha would do so via a portal in the temple's fourth wall.

SOUTH INDIAN TEMPLE STYLE

The dravida temple, in contrast to the nagara temple, has a wall around its grounds. The central gopuram of the front wall serves as the main entrance. Unlike the curved shikhara of North India, the main temple tower (or vimana) of Tamil Nadu is more like a stepped pyramid that climbs up geometrically. The word 'shikhara' refers only to the apex of a South Indian temple, which is often formed like a tiny stupika or an octagonal cupola; in North Indian temples, this apex is called the amlak or the kalasha. Sculptures of mithunas and the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna are common at the garbhagriha of South Indian temples, while in the North, it is more common to see fearsome dvarapalas, or the door-keepers, defending the temple. A big water tank, sometimes known as a temple tank, is often hidden away within the structure. The subsidiary shrines are either built within the temple tower or situated as independent structures close by. The concept of a cluster of shikharas rising up together was not well received in the South. The main temple, where the garbhagriha is located, often has the shortest tower of all the temples in South India, despite its importance. As the oldest section of the temple, it has more historical significance. Over time, the surrounding town would have grown in size and population, necessitating construction of a new border wall around the temple. The gopurams of this structure would have been significantly higher than those of the previous one. Srirangam Temple, located in Tiruchirappalli, is a good example; it features seven 'concentric' rectangular enclosure walls, all of which are topped by gopurams. The newest is on the outside, while the oldest is found in the tower in the very center, which houses the garbhagriha.

This marked the beginning of urban planning that centred on temples. The most well-known temple cities in Tamil Nadu are Kanchipuram, Thanjavur or Tanjore, Madurai, and Kumbakonam, all of which date back to the seventh to twelfth centuries, a time period in which the temple had an important but not exclusively religious function. As a result of their rise to wealth and power, temples began to rule over expansive regions. There are numerous subtypes of dravida temples, just as there are many subtypes of nagara temples. Square ones are called kuta and caturasra; rectangular ones are called shala and ayatasra; elephant-backed ones are called gaja-prishta and vrittayata; circular ones are called vritta and octagonal ones are called ashtasra; and the octagonal ones are called ashtasra because their entrance facade is in the shape of a horseshoe. Generally speaking, the iconographic character of the dedicated god conditioned the layout of the temple and the form of the vimana, therefore it was suitable to construct particular sorts of temples for specific types of images. It is important to keep in mind that this classification scheme is too simplified. In some eras and locations, a fusion of diverse forms may provide a distinctive look. The Pallavas were one of the ancient South Indian kingdoms, originally from the Andhra area but later relocating to Tamil Nadu. They rose to power in the second century CE. From the sixth to the ninth century, when they erected many stone inscriptions and monuments, their history is well recorded. Their mighty rulers ruled over a vast empire that spanned throughout most of the Indian subcontinent, even reaching the boundaries of Odisha at one point; they also maintained close ties to Southeast Asia. There is little question that the ancient Buddhist history of the Deccan impacted them, even though they were predominantly Shaivite, and some Vaishnava shrines also remained from their rule. It is often believed that their first structures were rock cut, whereas their later ones were structural. While rock-cut structures were being dug, there is evidence to suggest that structural constructions were already widely recognized. Mahendravarman I, a contemporary of Karnataka's Chalukyan monarch Pulakesin II, is often credited for commissioning the first structures. Narasimhavarman I, also known as Mamalla, became king of the Pallavas around 640 CE. He is revered for expanding the empire, avenging his father's defeat at the hands of Pulakesin II, and opening the majority of the construction projects in what is now known as Mamallapuram, formerly Mahabalipuram.

Later, perhaps during the reign of Narasimhavarman II (also known as Rajasimha) who ruled from 700 to 728 CE, the seaside temple at Mahabalipuram was constructed. The current orientation has it facing east toward the ocean, but a closer inspection reveals that it really has three shrines: one to Shiva facing west, another to Shiva facing east, and the third to Vishnu depicted as Anantashayana. It's rare for a temple to have three separate shrines, since most have only one. This suggests that its current form was not its original intent and that many shrines may have been built at various eras, maybe with modifications made as patrons came and went. Images of a gopuram, a water tank, and other structures can be seen throughout the area. The bull Nandi, Shiva's mount, is depicted in sculptures that line the walls of the temple; however, these and the carvings on the lower walls of the temple have been severely damaged over the years by the corrosive effects of salty air. Thanjavur is home to the biggest and tallest of all Indian temples, the Rajarajeswara or Brahadeeshwarar temple, dedicated to Shiva and finished about 1009 by Rajaraja Chola. Over a hundred significant Chola era temples have been well preserved, and many more are now functioning shrines, attesting to the period's prolific temple construction. The multi-tiered pyramidal vimana of this Chola temple rises to a height of 70 meters (230 feet) and is crowned by a monolithic shikhara, an octagonal dome-shaped stupika. This building dwarfs anything created by the Pallavas, Chalukyas, or Pandyas. The temple's two massive gopuras (gateway towers) have an ornate sculptural program that was created simultaneously with the structure. The shikhara's four corners are adorned with enormous Nandi statues, and the kalasha atop the structure stands at a height of around three meters and eight centimetres. The vimana is covered with hundreds of stucco figurines, some of which may not even date back to the Chola era but were added during the Maratha era. Shiva, represented here by a massive lingam housed in a two-story sanctuary, is the temple's primary deity. Extended legendary storylines are represented in the painted murals and sculptures that line the walls of the sanctuary.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Temple architecture and sculpture of India stand as magnificent testaments to the rich and enduring cultural heritage of the nation. These temples, with their intricate designs, exquisite sculptures, and profound spiritual significance, represent a profound fusion of art, religion, and architecture that has captivated the world for centuries. The Temple architecture, characterized by its distinctive styles such as Nagara, Dravida, and Vesara, showcases the remarkable craftsmanship and ingenuity of Indian architects throughout history. These temples serve not only as places of worship but also as repositories of history, culture, and tradition. The precise alignment, proportions, and symbolism embedded in their structures reflect the deep philosophical and spiritual beliefs that have shaped Indian civilization. Equally noteworthy are the sculptural masterpieces that adorn these temples. From the sensual and graceful depictions of deities to the intricate details of mythical creatures and intricate reliefs that narrate stories from the epics, Indian temple sculpture is a reflection of the artists' devotion, creativity, and skill. These sculptures serve as windows into the spiritual world, offering a tangible connection to the divine. Furthermore, the Temple architecture and sculpture continue to inspire contemporary art and architectural practices worldwide, showcasing their enduring relevance and influence. As guardians of India's cultural heritage, they remind us of the importance of preserving and cherishing our past while also providing a source of spiritual solace and aesthetic delight. In the grand tapestry of Indian culture, Temple architecture and sculpture shine as bright threads, weaving together the spiritual, artistic, and architectural facets of a timeless civilization. Their legacy is an enduring testament to the depth of India's cultural roots and its contribution to the world's artistic and spiritual heritage.

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